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Defining Christ
The Church of the East and Nascent Islam

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
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door

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geboren te Krommenie

promotor: prof.dr. R.B. ter Haar Romeny

Preface

This dissertation has profited much from valuable comments and advice provided by my supervisor Bas ter Haar Romeny. Theresia Hainthaler also provided very helpful comments and kind support. She brought for instance some of my writing, based on earlier chapters of this dissertation, to the attention of the late Luise Abramowski whose very positive reaction formed a welcome encouragement for this rather monastic exercise. My thanks also goes to the other members of the reading committee, Fred van Lieburg, Herman Teule, Hans van Loon and in particular to Lucas Van Rompay, whose detailed comments on a final draft version enriched it considerably. I owe much to Andrew MacDonald for helping me to streamline most of the English text. His questions also formed a stimulus to search and clarify further. All remaining errors are mine of course.
I am moreover grateful to live in a part of the world where academic freedom is held in high esteem and to have worked with generous people living up to its standards and values.

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INTRODUCTION: THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DEBATE OF 612 IN PERSIA

> In the following we write the thanksgiving and apology the Persian father bishops brought before the King, with the Fathers and monks who gathered with them in the royal court, in the 23rd year of King Khosrau bar Hormizd[1], when Gabriel the chief physician had incited the King to call us for a debate with the heretics who shared his opinion; which they, required by the King to show the truth of faith according to the facts, heroically and courageously clarified without fear.[2]

This fragment describes a debate on the true faith between the 'heroic' representatives of the 'Persian' Church and their 'heretic' opponents. It is preserved in the *Synodicon Orientale,* a collection of synods and accompanying patriarchal letters of the Church of the East,[3] Although already this fragment shows a rather biased perspective, and the whole account should be read with some caution, it offers several insights into the situation of this Church at the beginning of the seventh century. When the bishops of the Church of the East had to defend their faith in front of the Persian King Khosrau II in 612, many elements which are of interest came together:

1. The theological content, which was concerned mainly with questions about the possibility or impossibility of Christ being man as well as God, had already caused many schisms within the Christian Church. The East Syrians wanted to emphasize the distinction between the two natures of Christ and were therefore accused of still separating the natures after the union and even of professing two Sons. They were often called 'Nestorians', as the bishop of Constantinople, Nestorius (428-31), was indicted for holding this view. During this 612 debate the older traditions of the Church of the East were confirmed, and, using a slightly different terminology, the position of the Church of the East was now more pronounced. This became normative for centuries to come. Many of the concepts were indebted to the works of Babai, who was the abbot of an important reform monastery.

[1] Beginning on 21 June 612.

[2] J.-B. Chabot (ed. and trans.), *Synodicon Orientale ou Recueil de Synodes Nestoriens* (Paris, 1902), pp. 562-63 (cf. trans. p. 580); Oscar Braun (trans.), *Das Buch der Synhados oder Synodicon Orientale. Die Sammlung der Nestorianischen Konzilien, zusammengestellt im neunten Jahrhundert nach der syrischen Handschrift, Museo Borgiano 82, der vatikanischen Bibliothek* (Stuttgart, 1900; repr. Amsterdam, 1975), p. 307. Other accounts of this debate will be discussed in section 2.3.

[3] The *Synodicon Orientale,* as translated by Chabot and Braun, covers a period from 410 until 775 and was probably compiled around 800. Lucas Van Rompay, 'Synodicon Orientale', *GEDSH* , pp. 387-89. On the name 'Church of the East', see Chapter 1, note 12.

2. The bishops of the Church of the East had to defend their faith before Khosrau because it was being challenged by their main rivals, who are generally referred to as 'Miaphysites'. Simply speaking Miaphysitism (the doctrine of 'one nature') emphasized one nature in Christ after the union. As there were many aspects and nuances in the Christological discussion, further (sub)groupings can be identified, whose positions and alliances might change over time. Even within their own ranks dissenting views flourished. The Miaphysite Gabriel of Shigar, for instance, who had gained an influential position as chief physician at Khosrau's court, had several times changed sides between the Church of the East and Miaphysitism. Dissident elements within the Church of the East sought his support. Each party considered its own views orthodox and that of the others heretical.
3. In the records of the debate, the party opposing the Church of the East is often referred to as 'monks'. As the opponents consisted of representatives of Miaphysitism with whom dissenting adherents of the Church of the East had allied, it is not clear who actually are being addressed. Are these mainly Miaphysites who still lacked an officially recognized hierarchy, or rather students of Henana (ܚܢܢܐ), the controversial leader of the famous theological School of the Church of the East in Nisibis, or is some combination implied? As monks played a special role in the Church of the East and there was often tension with the clergy, the role of monks seems to require further investigation.
4. In order to 'show the truth of faith according to facts', the Persian 'father bishops' defended their view by referring to Bible passages and texts of Fathers considered authoritative. Their argumentation was further influenced by versions of the classical philosophical tradition that were current by that time and were often used in theological debates. Such Aristotelian and (Neo-) Platonic elements were not only being taught at their famous schools, but also in several monasteries, since such knowledge had received an important—though restricted—place in the effort of gaining some understanding of the transcendent God. The idea of education and learning, *paideia*, played an important role in the Church of the East, as God was seen as pedagogue who created the visible world as a tool with which to gain access to spiritual knowledge.
5. Maybe Khosrau was not really interested in the content. The official faith was Zoroastrianism and Christians were only a tolerated, though sometimes influential minority, which could be persecuted from time to time. But it was important to decide which Christian group would be dominant in his immense kingdom. The Persian Empire extended, after Khosrau's recent conquest of many territories of the Christian Byzantine Empire (its archenemy), from Persia as far as Damascus, Jerusalem and Alexandria and the Arabian Pen-

insula. Since the King favoured only one Christian denomination in his Empire, a well argued orthodoxy proved to be vital, even if this was at the cost of other Christian denominations in Persia. This tendency might have influenced the attitude of these Christians towards their later secular leaders, the Arabs. The political context in which religious views had to be defended, therefore also deserves further attention.

6. According to Muslim tradition, the Arab Muhammad began to prophesy in 610, which is very close in time to this debate. Among Muhammad's prophecies were comments about Christians and their views on Christ. Incorporating many Christian and Jewish traditions, Muslims accused Christians of distorting the truth about God, because Christians claimed Christ to be equal to God. The Muslims thus also became a new group participating in the Christological discourse in the Middle East. It was probably also some years before 612 that a psychologically important Arab victory over the Sasanians took place close to Hira, an Arab kingdom and formerly a vassal of Persia with strong connections to the Church of the East.

All these elements can also be detected in the letters of Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III, who not only must have been aware of the Christological debate when he still was a monk, as his monastery was closely connected to that of Babai, but who also experienced the Arab invasions and subsequent rule. Although the central theme of this dissertation is the Christology and the views on nascent Islam (from c. 610 to c. 692) held by the various seventh-century catholicoi of the Church of the East, most attention is given to Ishoʿyahb III.

This dissertation describes the position of the Church of the East in the Persian Empire when various Arab tribes were taking over power. It investigates the reactions of its highest Church leaders to these events and examines how these influenced their specific Christological statements, especially concerning the question of to what extent Christ has to be defined as divine or human.

Already the Bible reports that Jesus asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?', and their answers varied from 'one of the Prophets' to 'Christ, Son of God' (Matt. 16:13-17). The history of the Church shows that answers to this question, and variations in details therein, could be combined with varying degrees of more pragmatic and political considerations. This also applies to the Eastern Churches in the Persian Empire, where they formed only a minority and where the relative influence or even very existence of a certain view often depended on how the secular leader could be convinced that the view being propounded was the only orthodox Christological view. Similarly, political leaders could some-

times benefit from cooperation with a specific Christian group in the expansion or consolidation of power. However, the extent to which genuine religious feelings and convictions may have interacted with political strategies cannot be determined overall, and often not in particular cases either. Nevertheless, because of the interaction between religious and political motives, the Christological questions are not treated here in isolation, but have been put in the context of the main political events of the time.

The point of view of the catholicoi of the East during nascent Islam, and that of their tradition which they considered orthodox, is central to this dissertation—and not that of concurrent Christian movements. There are unfortunately no contemporary Islamic reports. From 612, the catholicoi of the Church of the East were defending the new doctrine not only outside their Church, but also within it, as there was a substantial opposition building forth on an already old tradition within the Church. The focus on the views and statements of the catholicoi entails a certain one-sidedness. Like others, the catholicoi tended to set their rival Christians aside as heretics or demons, and described their views in unfavourable ways which were often not justified.

The dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 1 discusses some general aspects of this Church and gives an overview of Christological statements of the main theologians and synods until the debate of 612. The relation between the Church of the East and the Arab kingdom of Hira will also be given attention, due to its multifaceted role in the early Arab conquests.

The second chapter describes the Christological view of the catholicoi of the Church of the East between 612 and 651. It also pays attention to Babai, who reformed monasticism, wrote an important Christological treatise and strongly influenced the new official Christology as formulated in 612. The chapter ends with the final breakdown of the Persian Empire in 651. During this period, the Persians and Byzantines fought each other until c.628, and thereafter they unsuccessfully tried to resist Arab tribes who took over power in Persia and in substantial parts of the Byzantine Empire. Some of the immense political and religious changes in the seventh century surrounding these developments and the Arab interactions with Christianity are described in this and the succeeding chapters.

The central Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to Ishoʿyahb III, who was Catholicos of the Church of the East from c.649 to c.659 and whose 106 letters cover a period from before 628 until the end of his life. These chapters describe the challenges met by Ishoʿyahb III and the way he reacted to preserve and defend his position. My new translation of Ishoʿyahb III's letters, which underlies this dissertation, leads to several new suggestions. However, his letters

are difficult to translate and understand because he often only hints at situations or ideas, and can also be very ironic, saying the opposite of what he means. It seemed therefore indispensable to add not only a description of the historical and theological background up to the year 612, but also a tentative reconstruction of contemporary events.

Chapter 3 describes the political context, in order to shed more light on Ishoʿyahb III's attempts to defend both his Christology and his position against various opponents in a rapidly changing world. As Bishop, Metropolitan and Catholicos he had to find ways to adjust to the Arabs. Such an adjustment was not new to him, because he had also had to do this with the Persians and the Byzantines. Unfortunately, an exact reconstruction of the period is difficult, due to conflicting and possibly biased reports, often produced in later times. Chapter 3 also contains statements from the Qurʾan on Christology and Christians, in order to estimate to what extent these may have affected Ishoʿyahb III.

Chapter 4 gives particular attention to Ishoʿyahb III's Christology and that of his rival Sahdona. It also describes his relationship with monasticism and his view on divine *paideia*, especially during his own life time.

The following short Chapter 5 describes the Christology and situation of the subsequent catholicoi during nascent Islam. This description sheds further light on the question of how far Ishoʿyahb III's situation may have been exceptional or according with a broader development. Finally, a summarizing conclusion highlights some of the main points.

The transcription of Greek, Syriac and Arabic terms and names is generally given as simply as possible and in Roman script. In many cases, the original script is also given the first time a term appears. Exceptions have been made for the Syriac ܫ (*sh*), and for the Syriac ܥ and corresponding Arabic ع, both of which are rendered ʿ. The *alep hamza* (ʾ) is not transcribed, except where it appears in the name *Qurʾan*. Syriac texts are given in Estrangelo script, generally with a minimum of diacritical marks.

When names have already a generally accepted English form, this will be given priority. However, in the bibliography the transcription by the respective author will be followed. Personal and possessive pronouns referring to God or Christ are consistently written without capitals. Where there are possible alternatives in English for the same original term, I have tried to maintain uniformity to assist comparison.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE CHURCH OF THE EAST UP TO THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DEBATE IN 612

1.1. General overview

1.1.1. The Church of the East

The beginnings of Christianity east of the Roman Empire are covered in legend, but from the early third century on there is evidence for the existence of Christian communities. As the eastern border of the Roman Empire fluctuated over the centuries due to many wars with the Persian Empire, the size and names of the territories involved changed accordingly. In this book a term frequently used is 'Syria' to describe the area roughly corresponding with present-day Syria, south-eastern Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and Iraq, with the western part belonging to the Roman Empire and the eastern part to the Persian Empire.

A diverse Christianity spread from Edessa and Nisibis over the huge Persian Empire. As Edessa was situated on important trade routes from the Mediterranean to China, the new religion could reach Edessa easily and spread further. The first Christian communities were partly formed by Jews, Jews having lived in Mesopotamia and east of the Tigris since the Babylonian exile. However, there were certainly many others who converted to Christianity.[1] Edessa had been an independent kingdom of a local Arab dynasty that had long been under Greek and Roman influence. In 214 it was made a *colonia Romana* which was often attacked by Persians. Edessa was so important for Syrian Christianity that the Aramaic dialect of this city, Syriac, became the language of the Bible and liturgy.[2]

Most Christians in Persia belonged to the Aramaic-speaking population; although one can assume that many of them were Hellenized and familiar with the Greek language, as was the case in northern Mesopotamia.[3] In the third and fourth centuries, many Greek-speaking Chris-

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[1] Bas ter Haar Romeny, 'Hypotheses on the Development of Judaism and Christianity in Syria in the Period after 70 C.E.', in Huub van de Sandt (ed.), *Matthew and the Didache. Two Documents from the Same Jewish-Christian Milieu?* (Assen, 2005), pp. 32-33.

[2] Dietmar Winkler, 'Zeitalter der Sassaniden (bis 653)', in Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar Winkler, *Die apostolische Kirche des Ostens. Geschichte der sogenannten Nestorianer* (Klagenfurt, 2000), p. 14; Han J.W. Drijvers, 'Edessa', in *TRE* 9 (1982), pp. 277-81.

[3] See for instance: Ute Possekel, *Evidence of Greek Philosophical Concepts in the Writings of Ephrem the Syrian* (CSCO 580, subs. 102; Leuven 1999), pp. 26-32. For recent discussions with further references on the use of Greek in Edessa, see Fergus Millar, 'Greek and Syriac in Edessa and Osrhoene, CE 213-363', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 32 (2011), pp. 93-111.

tians from Antioch, Cappadocia and Syria strengthened a 'western' element among Persian Christianity. They had either fled from Roman persecutions or had been deported by the Persians. Many of them seem to have kept their own Greek language and to have attended separate churches up to the fifth century. At the end of the third century a distinction was made between *nasraye* and *krestyane*. This might have referred to native Syriac-speaking and the deported Greek-speaking Christians respectively.[4]

Until 225 the Christians do not seem to have been hindered by the Parthian rulers and the church could grow. But under the succeeding Sasanian dynasty (225-651), Zoroastrianism became the state religion for their empire (roughly corresponding to Iraq and Iran) and in some periods apostasy was punished with death. Tensions arose because of differences between Christian and Zoroastrian customs and attitudes concerning food, marriage, burial and celibacy. Due to such pressure, the Synod of 486 allowed marriage to the whole clergy.[5] There were several persecutions, often dependent on the current relation with the Roman Empire and on the question whether the Persian ruler of the moment felt in control or not. When Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, for instance, all Christians in Persia were suspected of supporting this archenemy and the persecutions were intensified.[6] A wide collection of hagiographies developed and was handed down, describing the exemplary lives and deaths of martyrs, which were often surrounded with miracles.[7]

When Rome had to cede huge areas to the Persians in 363/64, Nisibis and six bishoprics of Antioch became part of the Persian Empire. Christians here were persecuted and deported far into the East. Many Christians from Nisibis, however, moved to Edessa which was still Roman and belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Antioch.[8] Syriac-speaking Christianity was thus already split into a western (Roman) and an eastern (Persian) part, when the weakened Roman Empire itself split in 395 into a western-Latin part and an eastern-Greek part

4 Sebastian Brock, 'Some Aspects of Greek words in Syriac', in A. Dietrich (ed.) *Synkretismus im syrisch-persischen Kulturgebiet* (Göttingen, 1975), pp. 91-95, also in idem, *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (VCSS 199; Aldershot, 1984; repr. 2001), Chapter 4; idem, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire up to the Sixth Century and its Absence from the Councils in the Roman Empire', in Alfred Stirnemann and Gerhard Wilflinger (eds.), *Syriac Dialogue* 1. *First Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue with the Syriac Tradition* (Pro Oriente; Vienna, 1994), p. 71, also in idem, *Fire From Heaven* (VCSS 664; Aldershot, 2006), Chapter 2.

5 Sebastian Brock, 'Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties', in Stuart Mews (ed.) *Religion and National Identity. Studies in Church History* 18 (Oxford, 1982), p. 9, also in idem, *Syriac Perspectives*, Chapter 6.

6 Brock, 'Christians in the Sasanian Empire', p. 7.

7 Georg Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus Syrischen Akten Persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig, 1880), pp. viii-xxi. See for further references: Jérôme Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide (224-632)* (Paris, 1904), p. xvi; Sebastian Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Kottayam, 1997), p. 298.

8 The ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Antioch became known as 'patriarchate' after the middle of the fifth century. Cf. Hidemi Takahashi, 'Antioch. Antakya', *GEDSH*, pp. 21-23; Theresia Hainthaler, 'Patriarch des Westens', in: eadem; F. Mali and G. Emmenegger (eds.), *Einheit und Katholizität der Kirche. Forscher aus dem Osten und Westen Europas an den Quellen des gemeinsamen Glaubens* (Pro Oriente; Vienna, 2009), pp. 59-77.

(Byzantium). The Christians in the western part of Syria now became subject to Byzantium, which considered its new capital Constantinople the legitimate heir of Rome. The shifting border between Persia and Rome (or Byzantium) from time to time hindered contacts between the respective spheres of influence which in the end led to a distinct East Syrian Christianity that had to deal with the Persian rulers. A formal distancing from the Byzantine state Church and some reorganization seem to have become necessary. When Persia and Byzantium were at peace around 410, the first synod of the bishops 'of the East' is said to have been convoked. The *Synodicon Orientale* describes how the first Synod was held thanks to the intervention of bishop Maruta of Maiparqat, 'a mediator of tranquillity and peace between the East and the West', who travelled from the West to visit Persia, 'the land of the East'. With him he had a letter for the Persian King from other nearby bishops of the Roman Empire (Edessa, Tella, and Amida) together with those from Antioch and Aleppo.[9] Shah Yazdgard I (399-420) thereupon in 410 convoked the bishops of the East in the capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon and he confirmed the decisions of the Synod. The bishops of the East were now formally placed under the primacy of the Catholicos, Bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. At this first Synod, the Church of the East formally accepted the Nicene dogmas and juridical decisions of 325, with some adaptations.[10] In this context it has to be noted that the councils of the Roman Empire had only been attended by bishops belonging to it.[11]

The terms 'East Syrian Church' and 'Church of the East' are nowadays generally accepted for this Church.[12]

1.1.2. Theological education in schools and monasteries

Until 489, the Church of the East was not totally isolated from theological developments in the West, because Persian students still visited the 'Persian' theological school in Edessa, with its Antiochene exegesis of Theodore of Mopsuestia. The Church of the East remained thus in

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[9] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale,* ed. pp. 17-18, (cf. trans. pp. 253-56).

[10] Dietmar Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum. Untersuchungen zur Christologie, Ekklesiologie und zu den ökumenischen Beziehungen der Assyrischen Kirche des Ostens* (Studien zur Orientalischen Kirchengeschichte 26; Münster, 2003), pp. 25-28.

[11] Sebastian Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', in D. Afinogenov and A Muraviev (eds.), *Traditions and Heritage of the Christian East* (Moscow, 1996), p. 161, also in idem, *Fire from Heaven,* Chapter 3.

[12] Winkler, 'Zeitalter der Sassaniden', pp. 11-12. A frequently used term for its adherents is 'Dyophysites'. As this strictly speaking also applies to Chalcedonians, it will not be used here. Generally, the name 'Church of the East' is preferred, as this was a term often used by themselves. In order to avoid too many lengthy circumscriptions when referring to its participants, such as 'followers of the East Syrian Church' or 'followers of the Church of the East', this study will also call them 'East Syrians'. This is in accordance with the fact that later Miaphysitism had more ties with the western part, and its adherents were therefore often called 'West Syrians', whereas the name 'East Syrian Church' already forms an indication in itself as it refers to the Church in the more eastern part. Where context allows, these terms can be used in this study as well, while it should be kept in mind, that mostly these terms do not necessarily refer to geography, but to denomination.

contact with the theological debates in the West while the strict Dyophysite ideas of this school were spread in East Syria by returning students.[13] After 431, the School of Edessa had become a centre of Dyophysite propaganda of Antiochene theologians.[14] It developed its own characteristics and was attacked by several former students who had turned to the Miaphysite camp, such as Philoxenus of Mabbug.[15] There was also resistance from the bishop of Edessa, Rabbula, who changed sides one year after Ephesus, anathematized thereupon Theodore in 433 and ordered his work to be burnt. He closed the school and expelled the scholars and students. Ibas (Syr. Hiba), however, who succeeded him in 436, was an admirer of Theodore. He had been professor at the School in Edessa and under him the works of Theodore were translated from Greek into Syriac. In 449 he and other bishops were condemned and replaced because of their Nestorianism. It is the first time the term 'Nestorian' appears in the texts preserved, although this is in a Syriac account, written in 535. Many students and teachers were also expelled. In 451, however, the Council of Chalcedon reinstated Ibas in office.[16] The School was finally closed in 489 in the aftermath of the whole process against the Dyophysite teaching in Edessa, of which the *Henotikon* (issued in 482 by the Byzantine Emperor Zeno) was a powerful expression.[17] The expelled fled to Persia and a new theological school was formed by Narsai in Nisibis. This strengthened the Antiochene influence in Persia during the fifth century.

Education had a highly theological bearing for the Church of the East. Although its pedagogical model of divine *paideia* with God as the educator of man was already familiar in Jewish and early Christian tradition (Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Basil the Great, Diodore and Theodore of Mopsuestia), the Church of the East developed it to an elaborate system, which was to become a profound characteristic of its theology. The world was seen as an educational and pedagogical setting in which the human soul could learn. This great value attached to ed-

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[13] Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', pp. 162-63; idem, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire', p. 75.

[14] Theresia Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule" und theologische Schulen im Bereich des antiochenischen Patriarchats', in Alois Grillmeier and Theresia Hainthaler (ed.), *JdChr* 2.3. *Die Kirchen von Jerusalem und Antiochien nach 451-600* (2002; Freiburg, 2004), p. 250.

[15] See Luise Abramowski, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie der edessenischen Theodorianer', in L. Greisiger, C. Rammelt, J. Tubach (eds.), *Edessa in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit: Religion, Kultur und Politik zwischen Ost und West. Beiträge des internationalen Edessa-Symposiums in Halle an der Saale, 14.-17. Juli 2005* (Würzburg, 2009), pp. 1-8. See also below, section 1.8.

[16] Alois Grillmeier with Theresia Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2. *Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert* (1989; enl. repr. Freiburg, 2004), pp. 432-33; Hainthaler, 'Der persische Disputator Simeon von Bet Aršam und seine antinestorianische Positionsbestimmung', in Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.3, p. 262; Han Drijvers, 'The Man of God of Edessa, Bishop Rabbula, and the Urban Poor: Church and Society in the Fifth Century', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4.2 (1996), pp. 241-43; Johannes Flemming (ed.), *Akten der ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449. Syrisch. Mit Georg Hoffmanns deutscher Übersetzung und seinen Anmerkungen* (Berlin, 1917), pp. iii and for instance 16-17 (see also index p. 185).

[17] On the *Henotikon*, see also below section 1.7.

ucation fostered the spread of many schools of pastoral character.[18] Adam Becker similarly states that this pedagogical model 'is the understanding of Christianity as a form of learning to be transmitted from master to student, a form of learning that ultimately derives from and concerns God himself'.[19] As will be seen, it appears in the work of theologians who were famous in the Church of the East, such as Ephrem, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Narsai, while its more scholastic form found its culmination in the School of Nisibis.

During the fifth and sixth centuries the Dyophysite Christology of the Church of the East was being taught at the famous theological School of Nisibis, situated at the contested border of the (Greek) Byzantine and the (Persian) Sasanian Empire. Independent schools similar to the School of Nisibis seem to have been founded from the mid-sixth century onwards. The Catholicos Mar Aba (540-52) might have played an important role in this school movement and especially in the School of Seleucia-Ctesiphon that in the late sixth century began to exert an influence comparable to that of Nisibis.[20] Paul the Persian, a convert from the Church of the East to Zoroastrianism, wrote at the court of Seleucia-Ctesiphon an introduction to logic following the Aristotelian tradition of Alexandria. Though probably written in Persian, it became influential within Syriac logic.[21] Catholicoi subsequent to Mar Aba might have been influenced by this developing intellectual culture at the Persian court, which was even visited briefly by expelled Athenian scholars.[22]

Discussions about Christology centred on Greek terms which were used differently and this became even more confusing when they were translated with Syriac terms bearing various meanings. This caused many misunderstandings. Starting from the same technical terms while trying to solve the same mystery of Christ being consubstantial with the Father, one could opt for opposite solutions. More precise translations could therefore be helpful. King suggests that the issue of precision in translations was connected with an increased use of patristic writings in the Christological debates and that this had started with the translation in

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[18] Theresia Hainthaler, 'Die verschiedenen Schulen, durch die Gott die Menschen lehren wollte. Bemerkungen zur ostsyrischen Schulbewegung', in Martin Tamcke (ed.), *Syriaca* 2. *Beiträge zum 3. deutschen Syrologen-Symposium in Vierzehnheiligen 2002* (Münster, 2004), pp. 175-78 and 191. Cf. also R. Macina, 'L'homme à l'école de Dieu. D'Antioche à Nisibe: Profil herméneutique, théologique et kérygmatique du mouvement scoliaste nestorien. Monographie programmatique', *Proche-Orient Chretien* 32 (1982), pp. 86-124 and 263-301; idem, *Proche-Orient Chretien* 33 (1983), pp. 39-103, esp. p. 45.

[19] Adam H. Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom. The School of Nisibis and the Development of Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 24-39, quotation esp. 38-39.

[20] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 157-59.

[21] Daniel King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation of Aristotle's Categories. Text, Translation and Commentary* (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus 21; Leiden, 2010), p. 7.

[22] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 128-29; Gerhard Endreß, 'Athen – Alexandria – Bagdad – Samarkand. Übersetzung, Überlieferung und Integration der griechischen Philosophie im Islam, in Peter Bruns (ed.), *Von Athen nach Bagdad. Zur Rezeption griechischer Philosophie von der Spätantike bis zum Islam* (Bonn, 2003), p. 47.

Edessa of Theodore's of Mopsuestia's commentaries.[23] Around 500, Philoxenus of Mabbug, who had been at the school of Edessa during perhaps the 450s/60s and had been strongly influenced by the Cyrilline party, questioned the reliability of the Syriac translation of the New Testament and the arguments of the Church of the East that were based on it. He argued that older Syriac translations were not always correct because of the inadequacy of the Syriac language, and should therefore be updated by neologisms which he introduced. Not only the biblical texts, but also the Creeds had to be revised. He undertook new translations and made corrections for dogmatic reasons.[24] In his earlier work, Philoxenus quoted especially Ephrem in support for his theological views. Some twenty years later, however, he scarcely quoted Ephrem and criticized him for his imprecise language such as the controversial expressions 'clothed itself with a body', which would express duality, and 'mingling'.[25]

Philoxenus' emphasis on a more precise translation technique from Greek into Syriac led to specific Syriac terminology. This more refined approach to Syriac translation developed between the late fifth to the seventh century, especially in West Syrian circles; it was less evident in the Persian Empire. Later, such translations also became familiar in the Church of the East, where they were adopted by Babai in the seventh century.[26] The growing Miaphysitism in Persia is likely to have fostered further reflection and debate among both Miaphysites and East Syrians, as various translations reflecting different interpretations on Christological texts must have come to exist alongside each other.

The theological School of Nisibis became a centre of Aristotelian studies in Persia. It is not clear how the neoplatonic Aristotelian commentaries came to be part of the School. Adam Becker suggests that Mar Aba and the intellectual culture at the court might have played a role. They might also have been introduced by the Miaphysite Christians who came to Persia in the early sixth century.[27] Several books of Aristotle had already been translated and commented upon in Syriac by 600. Although secular studies at the monastic schools seem to have

[23] Daniel King, 'New evidence on the Philoxenian versions of the New Testament and Nicene Creed', *Hugoye* 13.1 (2010), p. 27.

[24] King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria. A Study in Translation Technique* (CSCO 626; subs. 123; Leuven, 2008), pp. 15-16; Luise Abramowski and Alan E. Goodman (trans.), *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* 2. *Introduction, Translation and Indexes* (Oriental Publications 19; Cambridge, 1972), p. xxxi, with a reference to André de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog* (Leuven, 1963), pp. 117 and following.

[25] Lucas Van Rompay, 'Mallpânâ dilan Suryâyâ. Ephrem in the Works of Philoxenus of Mabbog: Respect and Distance', Hugoye 7.1 (2004), pp. 83 and 90-99.

[26] Sebastian Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East in the Synods of the fifth to early seventh centuries: preliminary considerations and materials', in G. Dragas (ed.), *Aksum-Thyateira: A Festschrift for Archbishop Methodios* (London, 1985), p. 130, also in idem, *Studies in Syriac Christianity: history, literature and theology* (VCSS 357; Aldershot, 1992; repr. 2001), Chapter 12'; idem, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', pp. 165-69; idem, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire', pp. 80-81.

[27] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 127-30.

been rather superficial, at the end of the eighth century they had become important sources of texts and learning.[28] Several modern scholars conclude that from the fourth to the seventh century the Syrian theologians tended to turn from a sharp criticism of Greek learning into a 'thoroughgoing assimilation'.[29]

From the middle of the sixth century the monasteries in the eastern and western parts of Syria became important centres for Aristotelian studies. The Miaphysite monastery Qenneshre in North-Mesopotamia which had been founded in 537 and Mar Mattai (near Mosul/Nineveh) became famous in this role. Abraham of Kashkar (490-588), a former pupil of Nisibis, who also had successfully evangelized in Hira, reformed East Syrian monasticism after the Egyptian example. In 570/71 he founded the 'Great Monastery' on Mount Izla, which became a spiritual and theological centre for the Church of the East during the sixth and seventh centuries.[30] This seems to have been in reaction to the growing Miaphysite influence in monastic circles.[31] The books studied were the Old and New Testaments, and works of Theodore, Abba Isaiah, Mark (possibly Markus Eremita), Evagrius, Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil. The *Liber Heraclidis* by Nestorius was also studied and Bar ʿEdta, one of the first pupils of Abraham is said to have learnt this recently translated book by heart.[32] The first canon of the second abbot, Dadishoʿ (588-604), required a strict adherence to the 'orthodox Fathers' (ܐܒܗ̈ܬܐ ܐܪ̈ܬܕܘܟܣܐ) Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius.[33]

This Great Monastery became the model for many others, of which Bet Abe and Bet Hale became most famous. Between 610 and 630 around sixty monasteries in the Northern provinces followed the rules of Abraham and stood under direct control of the church leaders.[34] Many monks from Bet Abe rose to episcopal ranks, which contributed to the expansion of the ideas of Abraham of Kashkar.[35] In the second half of the sixth century, however, conflicts

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[28] King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation*, pp. 8-14.

[29] Sebastian Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning', in Nina Garsoïan, Thomas Matthews and Robert Thompson (eds.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, 1982); p. 17, also in idem, *Syriac Perspectives*, Chapter 5; Peter Bruns, 'Aristoteles-Rezeption und Entstehung einer syrischen Scholastik', in idem (ed.), *Von Athen nach Bagdad*, pp. 38-39.

[30] Winkler, 'Zeitalter der Sassaniden', p. 38. Cf. Florence Jullien, *Le monachisme en Perse. La réforme d'Abraham le Grand, père des moines de l'Orient* (CSCO 622, subs. 121; Leuven, 2008), pp. 14-15.

[31] Gerrit Jan Reinink, 'Tradition and the Formation of the "Nestorian" Identity in Sixth- to Seventh-Century Iraq', in Bas ter Haar Romeny, *Religious Origins of Nations? The Christian Communities of the Middle East* (Leiden, 2010 = *CHRC* 89 [2009]), p. 231.

[32] Paolo Bettiolo, 'Contrasting styles of ecclesiastical authority and monastic life in the Church of the East at the beginning of the seventh century', in A. Camplani and G. Filoramo (eds.), *Foundations of power and conflicts of authority in late-antique monasticism* (OLA 157; Leuven, 2007), pp. 298-301; Addai Scher, 'Analyse de l'Histoire de Rabban Bar ʿEdta, moine nestorien du VIe Siècle', *ROC* 11 (1911), p. 406. The *Liber Heraclidis* probably was translated in 539-40. See also section 1.5.2.

[33] Jullien, *Le monachisme en Perse.* p. 144.

[34] Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse,* pp. 320-24.

[35] Jullien, *Le monachisme en Perse*, p. 275.

arose between the School of Nisibis on the one hand and reform monasteries and the higher clergy on the other hand, conflicts which had a high impact on the Church as a whole. These disputes were among others interwoven with the growing dominance of the rival Christian denomination, the Miaphysites.

1.1.3. The Miaphysites in the Persian Empire

Those labelled Miaphysites emphasize that Christ has one (composite) nature after the union of the two natures. Because all Miaphysites opposed the formula of the Byzantine Synod in Chalcedon (451) that accepted the two natures of Christ, another generally accepted name for them is 'Anti-Chalcedonians'.[36] As was the case for other Christian groupings, they did not form one massive block, but had their own variations concerning specific interpretations of Christ's nature(s), which moreover could change over time and place. This is reflected in the various names given to the different (sub)groupings which sometimes are indiscriminately applied to all. This dissertation often uses the term 'Miaphysites' as a term encompassing these groups.[37]

All Miaphysites had Cyril as their main authority. With Philoxenus, Severus (d.538) was the main theologian of the sixth century for the West Syrians. Both Severus and Philoxenus identified Chalcedon with 'Nestorianism'.[38] Severus was Patriarch of Antioch and propagated a strict *mia-physis* doctrine while opposing the teaching of two natures. His followers are known as 'Severians'. He opposed among others the teachings of his former ally Julian of Halicarnassus, whose followers ('Julianists') were later also to be found in Persia.[39]

When the new Byzantine Emperor Justin I (518-27) started to restore the Chalcedonian doctrine and forbade any opposition against it, many Anti-Chalcedonian bishops, including Severus and his hierarchy, had to leave the Byzantine Empire, and waves of Miaphysites entered the Persian Empire. Here, Miaphysite tendencies were not unfamiliar. Already the East Syrian Synods of 484 and 486 show the presence of a dissident camp within the Church of the East, with monks especially representing the 'doctrine of the heretics', but it is not sure whether these monks should already be identified as Miaphysites. One may assume, however,

[36] This Synod of 451 and many of the other events described briefly here will also be discussed in the rest of Chapter 1.

[37] They are sometimes also called 'Monophysites', which is not appropriate as this term refers to a Christology that acknowledges only one simple nature and not a composite nature. Theresia Hainthaler, 'Monophysitismus, Monophysiten', *LThK*[3] 7, col. 418-20.

[38] See also below, section 1.11.

[39] Hainthaler, 'Monophysitismus, Monophysiten', col. 419-20; Thomas Böhm, 'Severos v. Antiochien', *LThK*[3] 9, col 502-504; Sebastian Brock, 'Severus of Antioch (d. 538)', *GEDSH*, pp. 368-69. The Julianists believed in the incorruptibility of Christ's body, which would not naturally undergo changes or even death. Michael P. Penn, 'Julian of Halicarnassus (fl. ca. 520) [Syr. Orth.]', *GEDSH*, p. 236.

that their opposition was among other factors connected with the Christological conflicts around the School in Edessa and its closure in 489.[40]

After 520, the number of Miaphysites in Persia also grew thanks to the missionary work of Miaphysite monks, especially among Arab tribes.[41] The famous Miaphysite 'Persian debater' Simon of Bet Arsham (who died in old age, presumably in 540) converted many Arabs in Hira during the first decades of the sixth century. From here he tried to spread Miaphysitism to South Arabia engaging also with the Ghassanids, whose kingdom was located south-east of Damascus and who acted as vasals of the Byzantines [42] Simon fought the 'Nestorian' Church of the East as it would teach 'two Sons, one by nature and one by adoption'.[43] Simon debated with the East Syrian Catholicos Babai (497-502/3) in front of a Persian governor and also tried to convince the Persian Emperor that he and not the 'Nestorians' held the true Christian faith.[44] Later, in 542/43, the Ghassanids were allowed to consecrate two bishops in secret. One of them, Jacob Baradeus (whose followers became known as 'Jacobites'), became bishop of Edessa and took care of the Miaphysite communities in the near East. Jacob ordained Ahudemmeh of Balad, known as 'Bishop of the Arabs' among other titles, as the first metropolitan of the East. Ahudemmeh also argued successfully against the Church of the East thus ensuring that Khosrau I (531-77) granted the Miaphysites more protection and freedom in the Persian Empire. This freedom remained restricted, however, as Khosrau put him in jail (where he died) due to his conversion of one of Khosrau's sons. Ahudemmeh had also converted many Arab nomads in the region between Tagrit, Shigar, Balad and Nisibis.[45]

The number of Miaphysites further increased as a result of later deportations during the sixth century. In 540 Khosrau I sacked Antioch and he not only took the marbles and mosaics of its palaces, but also deported its population to Seleucia, where he built a new city for them, called 'the better Antioch of Khosrau'. In 573 he is even said to have deported two hundred and ninety thousand people from Roman territory to several towns in Persia.[46] According to Wigram they strengthened the position of Miaphysite minorities. He sees a connection be-

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[40] Alois Grillmeier, *JdChr 2.1. Das Konzil von Chalcedon – Rezeption und Widerspruch (451-518)* (2nd edn, 1991; repr. Freiburg, 2004), pp. 368-70; Jean Maurice Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'Église en Iraq* (CSCO 310, subs. 36; Leuven, 1970), pp. 118-21 and 127; Wolfgang Hage, 'Nestorianische Kirche' (*TRE* 24), pp. 265-66. On the Synods of 484 and 486, see section 1.9; on the School in Edessa, see section 1.1.2.
[41] See also below, section 1.14.5.
[42] Theresia Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam* (Leuven, 2007), pp. 101-104. On the Ghassanids, see also section 1.14.2.
[43] Sebastian Brock, 'Shemʿun of Beth Arsham (d. before 548)', *GEDSH*, p. 376.
[44] E.W. Brooks, 'John of Ephesus. "Lives of the Eastern Saints" (1)', PO 17 (Paris, 1923), pp. 145-54; Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 102-104.
[45] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 106-109; Fiey, *Jalons*, pp. 129-31;'Sebastian Brock, Aḥudemmeh of Balad (d.575)', *GEDSH*, p. 13.
[46] Fiey, *Jalons*, p. 61.

tween these events and remarks in the councils of 585 and 596 about the organized bodies of 'heretics' outside their Church that was so far the only recognized Church in Persia. For a long period it seems to have been quite easy to change sides.[47]

In the train of these developments, under Khosrau I the leading role of the Church of the East seems to have been challenged by the Miaphysites. Shigar, south of Nisibis was one of their most important study centres of the sixth and seventh centuries where Greek texts on Aristotelian Philosophy were translated and commented on.[48] They founded many new monasteries. In 628/29 the Miaphysites were allowed to install their first *Maphrian* (catholicos) in Tagrit. This was Maruta of Tagrit, who as monk already might have allied with Gabriel of Shigar, the instigator of the 612 debate. From this centre in Tagrit, Maruta seems to have intensified the attack on the position of the Church of the East.[49] Although the diverse Miaphysite groupings deserve further discussion, is the focus of this dissertation not on them, but on the views of the Church of the East, which tended to treat them as one of the same heretical kind.

1.1.4. The organization and growth of the Church of the East

The organization of the Church before the fifth century is not well known. Contradictory documents from the early fourth century suggest that Seleucia-Ctesiphon already strove for primacy among the bishoprics, while others like Fars preferred their own independence.[50] There are no reliable indications that the Church of the East was subordinate to Antioch.[51] But from the beginning of the fifth century a western influence can be traced as seen in the case of the western representatives at the first synods of 410 and 420, and the acknowledgment of the Nicene Council and the lesser fourth-century synods in 420.[52] However, the Synod of 424 declared the independence from the 'western bishops' and forbade any appeal to them.[53] The extent of this former dependency is unclear, although it is not unreasonable to presume that the declaration of 424 might have to do with some internal struggle and a continued involvement with their earlier major see of the former six Antiochene bishoprics that became part of Persia in 363.

[47] W.A. Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church or the Church of the Sassanid Persian Empire 100-640 A.D.* (Van, 1909), p. 76.
[48] John Spencer Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London, 1979), p. 170.
[49] Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse*, pp. 217-19, with references.
[50] Brock, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire', p. 71; Jean Maurice Fiey, *Pour un Oriens Christianus Novus. Répertoire des diocèses syriaques orientaux et occidentaux* (Stuttgart, 1993), p. 124.
[51] Brock, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire', p. 75; Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 32.
[52] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 38 (cf. trans. p. 278).
[53] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 51 (cf. trans. p. 296).

Already in the early fourth century, the Church had expanded over the Persian Empire. The records of their first Synod in 410 show that it contained six metropolitan sees and over thirty bishoprics. They were listed in order of precedence, as determined in Canon 21.[54] The six provinces with their metropolitan city were:

1. Bet Aramaye (Babylon), Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was the leader of all the metropolitans and bishops. The bishop of Kashkar, belonging to this metropolitan see, was his close assistant and temporarily governed his diocese after his death.
2. Bet Huzaye (Elam) (modern Khuzistan), Bet Lapat (Gundeshapur)
3. Bet ʿArabaye (Northern Mesopotamia), Nisibis
4. Perat d-Maishan,[55] Basra
5. Adiabene (Hedayab), Arbela (Irbil)
6. Bet Garmai, Karka d-Bet Slok (Kirkuk)

Fars (Persis) with Rev Ardashir was officially added in 424, its metropolitan Maʿna already being elected Catholicos in 420. The believers initially stemmed from deportees from Roman Syria in the third and fourth centuries, while commercial contacts with northern provinces fostered East Syrian Christianity later on. Because Fars claimed seniority in the Sasanian Empire and Apostolic mission, it continued to contest the position of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[56] Merw (Margiana) had bishops already before it became a metropolitan city in 524.[57] Still later Hulwan (seventh century), Herat, Samarkand, India and China were added.[58]

Since at least 410 the Church of the East was represented on the Arabian Peninsula. From the time of Shapur II (310-79), the oases of the coast were under direct Persian rule. After the fall of the kingdom of the Kinda about 530, the Lakhmids of the Arab kingdom Hira conquered Bahrain[59] and its hinterland with Persian consent.[60] The Sasanians successively not only placed the whole western shore of the Arab-Persian Gulf with Oman and the island of Socotra under the control of Hira, but also reached the region of the Hijaz in the northeast. The Church of the East had therefore access to these regions. From the fifth century on several bishoprics had come into existence: Mashmahiq, Dairin (ܕܪܝܢ), Oman, Hagar (ܗܓܪ), Ya-

[54] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 33-36 (cf. trans. pp. 272-75).
[55] Perat d-Maishan is in later times also known as 'Maishan'. J.P. Margoliouth, *Supplement to the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith, S.T.P* (Oxford, 1927), p. 192; cf. Fiey, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, p. 119.
[56] Fiey, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, pp. 124-25; Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam*, p. 99; Joel Walker, 'Fars', *GEDSH*, pp. 163-64.
[57] Fiey, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, p. 110.
[58] Müller, C.D.G., *Geschichte der orientalischen Nationalkirchen* (Göttingen, 1981), p. 295, with references.
[59] Bahrain designates here the eastern shores of Arabia and not only the island as it is today. Hira is located on the western bank of the Euphrates towards the south. See on Hira and the Lakhmids below, section 1.14.3-5.
[60] *W. Caskel, 'ʿAbd al-Ḳays', EI*^{2} 1 (1960), pp. 72-74.

mama (in the hinterland), Hatta and Socotra. They were attached to the Metropolitan see in Fars.[61] Bet Qatraye initially belonged to Fars as well, but later obtained its own metropolitan, as once attested in 676.[62] The bishoprics on the Persian Gulf had also ties to Hira and Edessa and undertook strong missionary activities. In the south-eastern strip of the Peninsula, East Syrian Christians were mainly found in the cities and harbours of Yemen.[63]

The Church of the East focused on mission and could expand very successfully along the well-established trade roads. This growth was facilitated as the huge Persian Empire expanded and deported captured Christians all over the empire. Meanwhile, many Zoroastrians had converted to Christianity by the sixth century, even though it could be punished by death. But where descendants of the families deported in earlier centuries from the Roman Empire 'had probably lost their separate identity' and therefore seem to have been integrated within the Church of the East,[64] later deportations seem to have strengthened a Miaphysite element in the population.

1.2. The main theologians of the fourth century

1.2.1. Aphrahat and Ephrem

Of the theologians of the early and varied tradition that was to play a continuous role in the Church of the East, most is known about Ephrem (*c.306-d.373), considered its main exponent, and less about his somewhat older contemporary Aphrahat (*c.270-d. c.345). Aphrahat does not seem to have been influenced deeply by Western theological developments, as the controversies of the Nicene council (325), like those on Arianism, are not reflected in his preserved works.[65] For instance the term 'Trinity' (ܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ, *tlitayuta*) is absent from his work and he does not seem to have used *qnoma* (ܩܢܘܡܐ) as the Syriac equivalent of the Greek term *hypostasis* (ὑπόστασις)—which played a major role in the theological discussions—in a similar theological manner, although he used this term several times.[66] Brock holds that Aphrahat

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[61] Jean Maurice Fiey, 'Naṣārā', *EI*^{2} 7 (1993), pp. 970-73. Fiey gives an extensive bibliography.
[62] Lucas Van Rompay, 'Beth Qaṭraye', *GEDSH*, pp. 72-73.
[63] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber vor dem Islam*, pp. 134-35.
[64] Brock, 'The Church of East in the Sasanian Empire', p. 72.
[65] Alois Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, *Von der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)* (3rd edn 1990; enl. repr. Freiburg, 2004), p. 447.
[66] Peter Bruns and Dietmar Winkler hold that Aphrahat did not know the theological term *qnoma*. Peter Bruns, *Das Christusbild Aphrahats des Persischen Weisen* (Bonn, 1990), p. 143; Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 47. The term *qnoma* appears for instance in Aphrahats *Demonstratio* 4:11; 6:11; 18:7 and 23:7. Ioannes Parisot (ed. and trans.), *Patrologia Syriaca* 1. *Ab Initiis usque ad Annum 350* 1, (Paris, 1894) and idem, F. Nau and M. Kmosko (ed. and trans.), *Patrologia Syriaca* 1. *Ab Initiis usque ad Annum 350* 2 (Paris, 1907), pp. 161, 283-86,

was 'far from untouched by the influence of Greek language and culture' but that his style and language was 'comparatively unhellenized'.[67]

In his writing, Aphrahat used many metaphors and names for Christ in expressing the tension between his divinity and humanity, but he did not speculate about this and he omitted abstract definitions. In his main Christological text written in 343-44, he discussed one of the many names of Christ, namely 'Son of God' (ܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ, *bar alaha*).[68] Aphrahat argued here mainly against Jews who formed a significant minority around him and accused Christians of calling the man Christ 'God'. He defended that this was not to be understood in a literal sense, but that Christ has been given many names.[69] Aphrahat had a point; the term *bar* often could indicate a figurative affiliation and not a physical son. Aphrahat argued moreover that the name 'God' for a human would be in line with tradition, which applied it to righteous men who had realized the divine presence in themselves by their knowledge of God.[70] Bruns holds that Aphrahat hardly elaborated Christ's transcendence in comparison to the Old Testamental forerunners, because his apologetical aim was not to say 'anything new'.[71] William Petersen, however, emphasizes the parallels between Aphrahat and earlier 'subordinationist Christology' which had links with 'primitive Semitic or Judaic Christianity'.[72] Grillmeier states in this respect: 'Vornicaenisch wie die Namenschristologie des persischen Weisen ist auch der Subordinatianismus'.[73]

It is in Aphrahat's work that we encounter the word ܟܝܢܐ (*kyana*, nature) for the first time in a Christological context. In a text meant for monks, for instance, Aphrahat referred to the change from one way of being into another. Where Christ in an act of humility 'put on a body of dust and drew it to his nature', the monks could participate in the heavenly way of being of Christ by following his humility and by honouring the Holy Spirit sent by Christ.[74] The possi-

836 and 21. It appears more in the sense of 'someone personally' or 'himself'. As will be discussed in the following section on Ephrem, it also may indicate a material substance or a fixed reality. This may be seen in 6:11 where Aphrahat explained how both Christ and the Father are one, but can exist in several just people. He compared this situation to the sun, which is fixed (ܩܒܝܥ) in the sky, and its rays which enter many houses and are also being called 'sun'. Meanwhile, 'the *qnoma* of the sun' remains undiminished in the sky.

[67] Sebastian Brock, 'Greek Words in Syriac: Some General Features', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 15 (1996), p. 253, also in idem, *From Ephrem to Romanos: Interactions Between Syriac and Greek in Late Antiquity* (VCSS 664; Aldershot, 1999), Chapter 15.

[68] *Demonstratio* 17, 'On Christ that he is the Son of God, ܕܥܠ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܒܪܗ ܗܘ ܕܐܠܗܐ), Parisot, *Patrologia Syriaca* 1.1, col. 785-816.

[69] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 44-47; William L. Petersen, 'The Christology of Aphrahat, The Persian Sage: An Excursus on the 17th *Demonstration*', *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992), pp. 249-50.

[70] Peter Bruns, *Das Christusbild Aphrahats*, pp. 122-28.

[71] Bruns, *Das Christusbild Aphrahats*, pp. 124 and 150.

[72] Petersen, 'The Christology of Aphrahat', pp. 242-44.

[73] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 448.

[74] Parisot et al., *Patrologia Syriaca* 1.2, *Demonstratio* 23.49, col. 95-96. ܠܒܫ ܦܓܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܥܦܪܐ ܘܢܓܕܗ ܠܟܝܢܗ

ble relation between the nature and form of ‘Adam from the earth’ and the ‘heavenly Adam’ also appeared in *Demonstratio* 6.18.

> As we put on the image (ܨܘܪܬܐ) of Adam who is from the earth, so we will put on the image of Adam who is from heaven. For the Adam from earth is the one who sinned; the heavenly Adam however is our reviver, our Lord Jesus Christ. For those who receive the Spirit of Christ are in the form (ܕܡܘܬ) of the heavenly Adam […]. Those who are changed put on the image of that heavenly Adam and become spiritual; those who are not changed stay in the natural (ܒܦܓܪܢܝܘܬܐ), in the created (ܒܪܝܬܗ) nature of Adam who is from dust, and they remain in their nature below on earth.[75]

Klijn argues that although *kyana* can have the same meanings as the Greek *physis* (nature), for Aphrahat it meant that ‘the existence of somebody or something is defined by the way it appears to men’ and that ‘God’s nature is not his unchangeable substance, but the things of God experienced by men’. Where the Greek use of *physis* tended to define the unchangeable essence of somebody or something, for Aphrahat it rather indicated the activity of something.[76] Such different way of thinking continued to play a role in the Christological discussions.

The other theologian, Ephrem, became famous for his many works on theology and his poetic language. His profound influence remained to be felt in both Syrian churches. Brock describes him as an exponent of characteristics of the Syriac-speaking world. Ephrem seems to have been concerned about some increasing tendencies in the Greek-speaking world of his time towards analysis, definition and a preference for elements of Greek philosophy, when he warned against ‘definitions’ of faith, because one cannot contain the Uncontainable.[77]

The poetic language enabled Ephrem to express the various aspects of his theology without narrowing them down into definitions. He rather used paradox and symbolism. Some basic themes are the contrast between: the Creator and creation; the Hidden and the Revealed; the ordinary, historical time and the sacred time (primordial and eschatological Paradise); and the one and the many. Meanwhile, Ephrem emphasized both the primacy of faith and free will.[78]

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[75] Parisot, *Patrologia Syriaca* 1.1, *Demonstratio* 6.18, col. 307-310.
ܕܐܝܟ ܕܠܒܫܢ ܨܘܪܬܐ ܕܗܘ ܐܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܐܪܥܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܢܠܒܫ ܨܘܪܬܐ ܕܗܘ ܐܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ. ܐܕܡ ܓܝܪ ܕܡܢ ܐܪܥܐ ܗܘ ܗܘ ܕܣܟܠ: ܘܐܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܐܚܝܢܢ، ܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܢܣܒܝܢ ܪܘܚܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘܝܢ ܒܕܡܘܬ ܐܕܡ ܫܡܝܢܐ [...] ܘܗܠܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܫܬܚܠܦܝܢ ܠܒܫܝܢ ܨܘܪܬܐ ܕܗܘ ܐܕܡ ܫܡܝܢܐ ܘܗܘܝܢ ܪ̈ܘܚܢܐ: ܘܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܝܢ ܡܩܘܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܒܦܓܪܢܝܘܬܐ ܒܟܝܢ ܒܪܝܬܗ ܕܐܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܥܦܪܐ: ܘܡܩܘܝܢ ܒܟܝܢܗܘܢ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܬܚܬܝܬܐ:

[76] A.F.J. Klijn, ‘The word *kejān* in Aphraates’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 12 (1958), pp. 65-66; Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 449-50. Bruns also holds that to Aphrahat, *kyana* signified ‘being’ or ‘way of being’. In a Christological context it was connected with the act of change into another form of being. Bruns, *Das Christusbild Aphrahats*, pp. 144-48 and 151-52.

[77] Brock, ‘The Christology of the Church of the East’, p. 165.

[78] Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World of Saint Ephrem* (Kalamazoo, 1992), pp. 23-36.

Sebastian Brock identifies three modes of divine self-revelation in the work of Ephrem: through types and symbols in both nature and Scripture; through 'names' or metaphors for God; and most of all in the Incarnation.[79] Some examples of the imagery used by Ephrem are: divinity as fire; the putting on and taking off of clothing; the light; and the (inner) eye of the mind. Ephrem was moreover fascinated by (metal) mirrors that had to be polished in order to reflect the light.[80] The mirror could reflect aspects of spiritual reality. Referring to *Carmina Nisibena* 16:1-4, Brock indicates that a clear mirror of the self could reflect the divine image. Ephrem wrote here that if the mirror's luminosity is darkened because it has stains in its *qnoma*, it should be polished. In this process, free will played an important role as becomes clear from the subsequent remark that if 'our mirror is polished and illuminated, then it is our free will that has been adorned'. Prayer could also be a mirror reflecting Christ's beauty. Similarly, the Gospel could be a mirror in which the kingdom of heaven is depicted.[81]

An important trait of the Church of the East was already extant in Ephrem's work. He valued learning (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ, *yulpana*: the Syriac word for the Greek *paideia*) highly, as it served the theological purpose of enabling human beings to understand God's creation. This pedagogical aspect was closely connected with his exegesis, which used few allegories and started from the historical framework of the biblical text. Ephrem connected the various stages in history with God's care for man, whereby both God's grace and the human free will continued to play a role. The believer could discover this grace and care not only through analogies, references and a restricted number of revelatory symbols and types in the Old Testament, but also in the whole visible world.[82] Although the ultimate object of learning, God, cannot be known himself, Ephrem encouraged learning a wide range of cultural skills.[83] As he was well aware of the limits of human knowledge, he sought for the right balance between knowledge and simplicity of thought as seen in the phrase: 'The soundness of everything which is successful with one thought is weakened by many thoughts.'[84] Rhetoric is nevertheless praised for defeating error and giving security.[85]

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[79] Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 40-43.
[80] Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 38-40.
[81] Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 74-77, with references. Edmund Beck (ed.), *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers. Carmina Nisibena 1* (CSCO 218, Scriptores Syri 92; Leuven, 1961), 16:1-4, p. 43. ܒܗܪܐ ܕܒܠܐ ܡܣܚܝܬܐ - ܐܢ ܒܡܘܡܐ ܫܦܝܦܘܬܗ̇ - ܕܐܝܬ ܟܘܬܡ̈ܬܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ̇ - ܕܗܘܐ ܠܗ̇ ܝܐܬܐ ܕܟܠܝܢܗ̇ - ܐܬܡܫܚܬܐ ܡܛܘ ܫܪܝܐ [...] ܡܣܚܝܬܢ ܐܢ ܡܥܘܪܐ - ܚܕܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܟܠܗ̇ ܕܗܘܢܢܐ - ܕܠܐ ܡܬܒܣܡܐ ܡܫܬܘܕܥܢ̈ܘܗܝ - ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܪܘܩܐ ܘܢܗܝܪܐ - ܕܚܐܪܘܬܢ ܗܝ ܕܐܬܨܒܬ.
[82] Lucas Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', in Magne Saebø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation* 1. *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300)* 1. *Antiquity* (Göttingen, 1996), pp. 623-26.
[83] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 26-27.
[84] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, pp. 33-44; J. Josephus Overbeck (ed.), *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque. Opera selecta: e codicibus Syriacis manuscriptis in Museo Britannico et Biblio-*

Ephrem fought many doctrines deemed heretic. In his polemic against Arians who investigated the divine, he warned against the 'poison of the wisdom of the Greeks' and any enquiry or speculative theory concerning the nature of the Trinity.[86] As 'Greeks' was often a synonym for 'pagans' or 'Hellenes', Ephrem did not exclusively criticize the culture of the Greeks, but any heretical speculation.[87]

After Ephrem had to flee westward from Nisibis to Edessa due to the Persian occupation of Nisibis in 363, he might have come in closer contact with the theological controversies in the Roman Empire. Edessa was an important polyglot city with significant Greek and Roman influences.[88] Ephrem and his students strongly influenced the School of Edessa for several decades.[89] As we have seen, Aphrahat and Ephrem did not use the abstract Greek theological terminology of their day, but rather used names and metaphors to describe the mystery of Christ.[90] Although Greek elements became more dominant in the fifth century, the Church of the East preserved such earlier phraseology.[91]

1.2.2. Ephrem's Christology

Ephrem emphasized that the names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are meant only as tools for strengthening awareness of an immense love and for attaining salvation.[92] Although their names are known, it is not allowed to study their nature. One can know only that they exist, but cannot define them or understand how they are.[93] God can only be adored and known by these names, but their substances (*qnome*, plural of *qnoma*) should not be studied.[94]

Consequently, Ephrem did not elaborate the relation between the 'higher' and 'lower' nature in Christ. He stated for instance: 'He (God) mingled (ܦܠܐ) the natures like pigments

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theca Bodleiana asservatis primum edidit (Oxford, 1865), p. 32: ܕܒܠܒܘܫ ܕܟܣܝ܆ ܗܘܫܒܐ ܣܠܝܩܐ ܡܢܗ܇ ܒܣܘܟܠܐ ܦܝܠܣܘܦܐ ܣܠܝܩܘܬܗ ܡܬܕܪܗܐ.

[85] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, p. 53.

[86] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 52-53, with references.

[87] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, pp. 47-48; Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, p. 17.

[88] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, pp. 20-22, with further references. See also Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337* (Cambridge MA, 1993), pp. 472-82.

[89] Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', pp. 248-49.

[90] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 49-54.

[91] Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. 165.

[92] Edmund Beck (ed.), *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers. Hymnen de Fide* (CSCO 154, Scriptores Syri 73; Leuven, 1955), 59:7, p. 184, cf. trans. idem, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers. Hymnen de Fide* (CSCO 155, Sriptores Syri 74; Leuven, 1955), p. 159.

[93] See also Edmund Beck (ed.), *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers. Sermones de Fide* (CSCO 212, Scriptores Syri 88; Leuven, 1961), 4:43-65, p. 35, cf. trans. idem, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers. Sermones de Fide* (CSCO 213, Scriptores Syri 89; Leuven, 1961), pp. 47-48.

[94] Beck (ed.), *Sermones de Fide*, 4:129-43, p. 35 (cf. trans. idem, p. 50).

and the image became God-man'.[95] Brock holds that Ephrem's theology of names basically followed a pattern of exchange between God and humanity in the salvation history of mankind. God both clothed himself with human names and gave human beings his own names, although this would not mean that the Creator and the creation had the same nature.[96] There are two kinds of names: 'perfect and exact names' are applicable at all times. They are contrasted to 'borrowed and transient names'. God's perfect names are for instance 'Being', 'Creator', 'King', 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. In order to reveal himself to human beings, God sometimes has clothed himself with borrowed and transient names (ܫܡܗܐ ܫܐܝܠܐ ܘܥܒܘܪܐ). Men can be called by God's names as well, but since they are not applicable to them all the time, these are borrowed names.[97] The following stanza might also give an impression of the way Ephrem might have seen the relation between Christ's divine and human nature.

> When God called us 'king', using the name appropriate to himself, the true use remains with him, the likeness applies to us. But when again he called himself by a name appropriate to his servants, the natural usage lies with us, but the appellation with him. The true name needs to be recognized, and the borrowed name needs to be recognized, both in his case and in ours.[98]

Ute Possekel gives an overview of the use of several important theological terms in the work of Ephrem, while correcting some assumptions by Han Drijvers, Edmund Beck and Alois Grillmeier. These terms are: (ܐܝܬܝܐ) *itya* and its cognate word (ܐܝܬܘܬܐ) *ituta,* (ܟܝܢܐ) *kyana* and (ܩܢܘܡܐ) *qnoma.* The first two cognate terms are generally used as synonyms and render the Greek 'Being' (τὸ ὄν, but not the Greek οὐσία). Possekel states that Ephrem understands both 'as a name for God's divine being and that both imply an uncreated, everlasting existence that can neither be changed nor destroyed'.[99]

Kyana (nature) can have three meanings. Firstly, it indicates a physical 'individual creature' or 'creation'. Secondly, it can mean 'inner nature' and 'element', denoting matter or substance 'which determines its qualities and actions'. Applied to God, it is similar to *itya* or

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[95] Edmund Beck (ed.), *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers. Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)* (CSCO 186, Scriptores Syri 82; Leuven, 1959), 8:2, p. 59. ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܥܡ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ – ܚܕ ܡܢ ܪܘܡܐ ܘܚܕ ܡܢ ܥܘܡܩܐ – ܚܢܢܐ ܦܬܟ ܠܐܢܫ [...] ܗܣܬܦܢܐ – ܘܗܘܐ ܠܨܠܡܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ. See also: Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 525-27; Tanios Bou Mansour, 'Einführung: Zur syrischen Christologie vor Chalcedon', in Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.3, pp. 446-48; Van Rompay, 'Ephrem in the Works of Philoxenus of Mabbog', p. 97.

[96] Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 64-66.

[97] Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 60-66, with references.

[98] Beck (ed.), *Hymnen de Fide*, 63:10, p.197. Translation after Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, pp. 64-65. ܟܕ ܩܪܐ ܠܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܒܫܡ ܢܦܫܗ - ܫܪܪܐ ܠܘܬܗ ܗܘ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܠܘܬܢ ܗܘ - ܘܟܕ ܬܘܒ ܩܪܐ ܗܘ ܢܦܫܗ ܒܫܡ ܥܒܕܘܗܝ، - ܟܝܢܐ ܠܘܬܢ ܗܘ ܠܘܬܗ ܐܦ ܟܘܢܝܐ - ܢܬܝܕܥ ܫܡܐ ܕܫܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܘܢܬܝܕܥ ܫܡܐ ܫܐܝܠܐ - ܒܗ ܐܝܟ ܘܐܦ ܒܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ،

[99] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts,* pp. 55-59, quotation esp. p. 59. ܐܝܬܘܬܐ further will be rendered as 'essence'.

ituta, although it cannot constitute itself. Whereas the human body is bound by its nature, the human will is free. Thirdly, it can refer to elements like fire or air. Possekel sees a Hellenistic influence in Ephrem's terminology because he used *kyana* also in an abstract sense and because it corresponded to the meanings of the Greek word *physis* (φύσις).[100]

Although Grillmeier stated, based on Beck, that the term *qnoma* ('Person') is absent in Ephrem's work,[101] Possekel shows various instances with different meanings. Firstly, it can indicate a material or corporeal substance. Secondly, it can mean the real existence or actual reality of something 'as opposed to its existence as a mere name or meaning'. Possekel concludes therefore that Ephrem would consider something with a *qnoma* as ontologically superior to something without *qnoma*. In some contexts the true existence (*qnoma*) depends on its being active, as in the case of wind, which only has *qnoma* when it is blowing. Further meanings are: thirdly, essence or inner nature and fourthly, person or self. The meaning 'essence' can become almost synonymous with *kyana* in the sense of 'inner nature' or even *ituta*. Only occasionally did Ephrem employ the word *qnoma* in the fourth meaning of 'person' or 'self'. The first three meanings of Ephrem's use of *qnoma* closely correspond with the various meanings of the Greek *hypostasis*. Possekel even sees a parallel to Stoic ontology, according to which only particulars exist and the basis of existence is 'the substance of each individual object, rather than their participation in some kind of universal'.[102]

An example of Ephrem's use of paradoxes to emphasize the unseizable and hidden nature of God can be found in a hymn on Faith. God was to be praised because 'he has appeared to our human race under so many forms (ܕ̈ܡܘܢ)' by clothing himself in human language, although he did not actually cloth himself. According to Ephrem, the fact that God puts on all sorts of forms, would inform us that these forms do not belong to God's hidden *ituta*. Thus, God would teach us two things: 'that he became and that he did not become' (ܕܗܘ ܗܘܐ ܘܠܐ ܗܘ ܗܘܐ). Although he made a countenance for himself so that his servants might behold him, they should not imagine that he was really like this and therefore he moved from one form to another to teach them that he has no form. And though he did not depart from the image (ܨܘܪܬܐ) of humanity, he did depart by his changes.[103]

[100] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, pp. 59-65.
[101] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 525.
[102] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, pp. 65-78, quotation esp. p. 77.
[103] Beck (ed.), *Hymnen de Fide*, 31, pp. 105-108; Sebastian Brock (introd. and trans.), *The Harp of the Spirit. Poems of Saint Ephrem the Syrian* (3rd enl. edn, Cambridge, 2013), pp. 84-89.

Of special interest for this study is that Ephrem held that the name is derived from the *qnoma*, which denotes a real (or true) existence. This can be seen in Ephrem's *Sermones de Fide*, which were probably written in Nisibis.[104] In *Memra* (treatise) 4 he stated:

> Where (something) is not in *qnoma*, an empty name is placed in the middle. A thing which does not have a *qnoma*, also its appellation is void. This *qnoma* teaches you that a thing exists in truth.[105]

Possekel clarifies that the expression 'exists in truth' designates 'the real, actual existence of the thing'.[106] Similarly, in his comparison of the unity of the Father and the Son to that of a tree (or root) and fruit, Ephrem argued that both exist in name and in reality (ܒܫܪܪܐ) and therefore must have a *qnoma.* Father and Son are one in one will and do not have two wills, but they are two because of the two names. Likewise, the tree and the fruit are not one, although they are one. They are united in love, but distinguished by their names. They are both united and separated. He concluded this *memra* stating that the First-Born (ܒܘܟܪܐ) is both far away and nearby and rhetorically asked who could speak of him.[107]

> 585 The root of the name is the *qnoma*, to it the names are bound.
>
> 587 For who would give a name to a thing (ܨܒܘ) which does not have a *qnoma*? […]
>
> 621 Fruit and tree are also not one although they are one; the fruit is known as fruit and the tree as root.
>
> 625 They are united by the same love, separated by the two names;
>
> 627 The name 'fruit' belongs only to the fruit, and the name 'tree' to the root.
>
> 629 Two names and two *qnome*; in one power and love they join together.
>
> 631 When there would be a name of the fruit, but there would be no *qnoma* of the fruit,
>
> 633 you would have named the tree a root, with the name of a fruit he did not bring forth.
>
> 635 But as the tree exists in name as well as in *qnoma,*
>
> 637 likewise the fruit, which also exists in name and in truth.
>
> 639 When the fruit would exist by name, but the root by its *qnoma,*
>
> 641 you would have named falsehood and truth; as the one would exist, the other not.[108]

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[104] These sermons are preserved in Br. Mus. Add. 12,166, which stems from the sixth century and in Vat. Syr. 117 (twelfth century). Beck (trans.), *Sermones de Fide*, p. i.

[105] Beck (ed.), *Sermones de Fide*, 4:53-58, p. 33 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 48). Translation after Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, p. 68. ܐܝܟܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ – ܫܡܐ ܣܦܝܩܐ ܣܝܡ ܒܡܨܥܬܐ – ܨܒܘ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܠܝܬܘܗܝ، ܐܦ ܟܘܢܝܗ ܒܛܝܠܐ ܗܘ – ܩܢܘܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܡܠܦ ܠܟ – ܕܗܘ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܨܒܘ

[106] Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, p. 68. The syriac root ܫܪܪ and its derivations denote that something is solid, firm, sound or true. For the sake of consistency, the present study will translate it preferably with forms of 'true' and 'truth', but in some instances as 'real' or 'reality'.

[107] Beck (ed.), *Sermones de Fide*, 2:585-713, pp. 20-22 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 29-33). The one will (ܚܕ ܨܒܝܢܐ) in Father and Son is expressed in 2:601-604.

[108] Beck (ed.), *Sermones de Fide*, 2:585-88 and 621-42, pp. 20-21 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 29-31). See also translation by Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, p. 68.

The above example is confined to the Trinity and not to Christology, but might have given rise to further discussions on how the reality of Christ had to be understood. Though Ephrem thus used the term *qnoma* without some implications later generations were to bestow on it,[109] it might be seen as an earlier current in the stream of thought which later produced the two-*qnome* doctrine.

1.3. The beginnings of the 'Antiochene School'

Around the same time a different school of thought with a typical exegesis had developed in Antioch. It is often associated with Diodore and especially with Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.350-428), whose work became the norm for theology and exegesis in the Church of the East. The Antiochene theologians emphasized a precise differentiation between, on the one hand, the utmost transcendence of the immortal and omnipotent God who cannot be known by creation and the mortal, suffering human nature on the other hand. Their soteriology required such a distinction between the divine and human nature of Christ, as they held that salvation was only made possible by the complete human nature of Christ (consisting of body and soul) that had been raised up in glory at the resurrection. Thus, both God's transcendence and the full humanity of Christ, the *homo assumptus*, had to be safeguarded.[110] This Antiochene emphasis on the complete assumption of the human nature—including his human soul—was in line with the *theologoumenon* 'what is not assumed is not saved'.[111]

[585-88] ܒܪܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܗܘ - ܒܗ ܗܘ ܫܡܗܐ ܡܬܬܐܡܪܝܢ - ܡܢܗ ܒܪ ܢܦܫ ܫܡܝܐ - ܠܚܕܝܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܠܝܬܘܗܝ,
[621-24] ܐܦܠܐ ܦܐܪܐ ܘܐܝܠܢܐ ܚܕ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܗ ܚܕ ܐܢܘܢ – ܚ̈ܕ ܦܐܪܐ ܐܝܟ ܦܐܪܐ ܘܐܝܠܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܒܪܐ
[625-26] ܒܢ̈ܝ ܫܡܫܐ ܥܡܗ ܫܠܝܛܝܢ ܒܠܐ̈ܝܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܝܗ ܡܬܦܪܫܝܢ
[627-30] ܥܡ ܦܐܪܐ ܕܦܐܪܐ ܗܘ ܒܠܒܗ - ܘܥܡ ܐܝܠܢܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܗܘ - ܬܠܬ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܝܢ ܘܬܠܬ ܡܢܝܢܝܢ - ܒܢ̈ܝ ܫܠܝܐ ܘܫܡܫܐ ܡܬܦܠܓܝܢ -
[631-34] ܐܦ ܚܕ ܐܢܬ ܥܡܗ ܕܦܐܪܐ - ܘ ܩܢܘܡܗ ܕܦܐܪܐ ܠܝܬܘܗܝ, – ܐܝܠܢܐ ܒܪܐ ܥܡܗܘܬ – ܒܥܡ ܦܐܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܠܕ ܠܗ
[635-38] ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܕܝܢ ܐܝܠܢܐ - ܐܦ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܐܦ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ - ܕܠܐ ܠܗ ܦܐܪܐ ܕܐܦ ܗܘ- ܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܐܪܥܐ
[639-42] ܐܦ ܦܐܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܒܫܡܝܐ - ܒܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ – ܥܡܪܐ ܘܐܪܙܐ ܥܡܗܘܬ – ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܘܐܝܬܝܢ ܠܝܬܘܗܝ,

[109] See also the remarks of Tanios Bou Mansour concerning the ambivalence later generations perceived in Ephrem's Christological terminology. Tanios Bou Mansour, *La pensée symbolique de Saint Ephrem le Syrien* (Kaslik, 1988), pp. 252-55.

[110] Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', pp. 175-76; idem, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire', p. 81; Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 117-23.

[111] Since Tertullian and Origen (first half of third century) and especially since Gregory of Nazianzus (330-89), this *theologoumenon* became very important. It was used against Gnosticism, Docetism, Arianism and Apollinarism. In the seventh century it was also used against Monothelitism. However, Miaphysites, such as Cyril of Alexandria and Philoxenus of Mabbug, applied this as well. Alois Grillmeier, 'Quod non assumptum – non sanatum' (*LThK*[2] 8; Freiburg 1963), col. 954-56; idem, *JdChr* 1, pp. 621 and 827; cf. also Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', p. 243.

The emphasis on both natures is partly to be understood as a defence against ideas that did not acknowledge the complete divinity of Christ or his complete humanity. To those suspected of reducing the divinity belonged the Paulianists, who followed the teaching of Paul of Samosata that Christ was only a man, and Arians who claimed that Christ is not truly God. Arius also belonged to those suspected of reducing the humanity because he claimed that the divine nature took the place of the human soul. Similarly, Apollinarius (d.390) claimed that Christ's human mind was replaced by the divine *Logos*. This could, however, at the same time form an example of a reduction of the divinity.[112]

The Antiochene theologians described the union of the distinct two natures in Christ in terms of an inhabitation of the *Logos* in Man, united in one *prosopon*. They further rejected Alexandrian allegorization, especially with regard to Christological interpretations of the Old Testament, while accepting only its prophecies with regard to the coming of a human Messiah. Theodore of Mopsuestia developed this exegesis, which is often called 'literal' because it gives priority to the 'meaningful integrity' of the biblical text and its narratives, and 'historical' because it interprets the various texts of Scripture as an expression of God's teaching modified for different generations depending on their understanding. This educational perspective (*paideia*) with God as pedagogue for different generations was a typical trait of Antiochene exegesis and enabled an acceptance of diverse explanations for the same truth. In line with Ephrem, Theodore's exegesis was closely connected with his soteriology, as he considered biblical history to be a manifestation of God's pedagogical measures that were aimed at leading man towards immortal life in heaven.[113] Because Antiochene Christology was to a great extent soteriologically determined, it was often defined in terms of the necessary guidance (οἰκονομία) of man.[114] Theodore used this term in his interpretation of God's salvation plan for man through history in which Christ played a central role.[115]

Already the method of Eusebius of Emesa (*c.300-d. before 359) can be described as 'one of Antiochene exegesis'.[116] Eusebius was born in Edessa and after his studies in Alexandria where he came in contact with Arian circles and Origenism, he went for further studies to

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[112] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 486-95, 509 and 515; Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', p. 243.
[113] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 117-19; cf. Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', p. 634.
[114] Luise Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum 'Liber Heraclidis' des Nestorius* (CSCO 242, subs. 22; Leuven, 1963), p. 193.
[115] The Syriac word *mdabbranuta* (ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ) literally means 'guidance'. However, it is usually translated as 'economy' or 'providence', terms which unfortunately do not reflect the instructional and guiding meaning it has in Syriac. As the word *mdabbranuta* became important in Syriac Christology, it will not be translated in the rest of this study.
[116] Bas ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress. The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis* (Traditio Exegetica Graeca 6; Leuven, 1997), pp. 89-91.

Antioch. All these influences are somehow reflected in his work, although sometimes difficult to distinguish. He accepted the divinity of the *Logos*, did not accept the Nicene ὁμοούσιος but opposed Arius. For Eusebius the *Logos* is a divine power (*pneuma* or *dynamis*) that is free of every kind of suffering and he emphasized therefore the duality of flesh and divinity in order to refute Arius' reduction of the *Logos* to a 'suffering soul'. Eusebius' Christology showed some 'Antiochene' characteristics, like his formula of the 'indwelling of the *dynamis* in the flesh' and 'the taking of flesh by the divine power', that allow a certain exchange between *dynamis* and flesh. Following Eusebius of Caesarea (d.339), who questioned the allegorizing exegesis of Origen, he rejected the allegorization of Bible texts which are not already allegorical.[117]

As a bilingual he had a great advantage in being able to compare Greek and Syriac texts. Because he considered the Syriac language the 'neighbour' of Hebrew**,** he used the Syriac translation of the Old Testament to correct the Greek Septuagint. He was keenly aware of inherent translation problems, which seem to have influenced his exegesis. He preferred a *sensus de sensu* translation whereby any obscurities in the text should not be allegorized.[118] Overall, he appears to have played a connecting role between Antioch and Alexandria, and to have influenced Diodore, who often used his works.[119]

Diodore, bishop of Tarsus studied in Athens, received his theological formation in Antioch and participated in the council of Constantinople in 381. He died before 394. In the fifth century the School of Edessa translated his works into Syriac, of which not much is preserved apart from some fragments in *florilegia* of his opponents.[120] Diodore denied teaching the belief in two sons. The union is effected by grace.

> Therefore, we do not say two [sons] of one Father, but that God the Word is by nature the one Son of God.
> And he, who [is] from Mary, [is] by nature David's son, but by grace [the Son] of God.
> Let us therefore grant also this: the two are one son.[121]

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[117] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 453-57; Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', pp. 232-33; see also eadem, 'Antiochenische Schule u. Theologie', *LThK*[3] 1, col. 766-67.

[118] Ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 107-110.

[119] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 505-506, 511-12; Ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 131-34.

[120] Luise Abramowski, 'Diodore de Tarse', in Roger Aubert (ed.), *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques* 14 (Paris, 1960), col. 497-502.

[121] Maurice Brière (ed. and trans.), 'Quelques fragments syriaques de Diodore, évèque de Tarse (378-394?)', *ROC* 30 (1946), fragment 30 (cf. fragments 31 and 33), p. 259 (cf. trans. p. 271); Behr (ed. and trans. with a historical and theological introduction), *The Case against Diodore and Theodore. Texts and their Contexts* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 192-93. This and the following quotations ascribed to Diodore are taken from a Miaphysite *florilegium* as preserved in the Brit. Lib. Add. 12,156. For further description, see below section 1.4.4.
ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܚܕ ܐܒܐ ܠܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ. ܚܕ ܕܝܢ ܒܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܟܝܢܐ. ܠܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ.
ܘܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܡܪܝܡ܆ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܘܝܕ. ܒܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܢܬܠ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܗܝ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܚܕ ܒܪܐ ܐܢܘܢ.

The 'son of Mary' was passible and mortal, but after the resurrection Christ's humanity is 'impassible and immortal'.[122] Diodore used the image of (royal) purple, temple and servant to describe the relation between Christ's humanity and divinity. He saw their union not in one essence, but in one adoration (ܣܓܕܬܐ). Diodore further used Philippians 2:7, which describes Christ assuming the form (ܕܡܘܬܐ, *demuta*) of a servant and which is considered the *locus classicus* of the Antiochene Christology, as biblical proof for the distinction between the form of God and the form of the servant.[123] Diodore explained that 'being in the form of God, he assumed the form of a servant' means that he was found like a man by appearance (ܐܣܟܡܐ), and is not to be interpreted as 'he became a servant' or 'he became man'. Whereas the human nature is 'servant', the hidden nature is 'like a man' on account of him who is manifest.[124] A similar passage—given as Cyril quoting Diodore—also appears in another *florilegium*:

> We worship the purple because of the one who puts it on, the Temple because of the one who indwells it, the form of a servant because of the form of God [...] the one who was assumed because of the One who assumed. [...] Confess the facts and offer one honour. One worship is not blasphemous if the facts are confessed. You say that there is one worship, but by means of this one worship you introduce blasphemy, if the one worship (is understood as) one essence (*ousia*).[125]

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[122] Brière, 'Quelques fragments syriaques de Diodore', fragment 19, p. 257 (cf. trans. pp. 266-67); Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 182-85.

[123] Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', pp. 242-43. See also Brière: 'Quelques fragments syriaques de Diodore', fragment 14, p. 255 (cf. trans. p. 264); Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 178-79. The Syriac term *demuta* (ܕܡܘܬܐ) can also be translated as 'image' or 'likeness', which seem more accurate terms. However, for the sake of consistent language, it will mainly be rendered as 'form', which the following NRSV also uses. Because the Peshitta version was to become highly influential in the Syriac Churches, especially since Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa (411-35) had enforced its dissemination, the Peshitta version will be given here as well. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the Peshitta does not correspond completely with the Greek version on which the NRSV is based. See also Bas ter Haar Romeny and Craig E. Morrison, 'Peshitta'. *GEDSH*, pp. 328-29. Phil. 2:6-8: NRSV: 'who, though he was in the form (ܕܡܘܬܐ) of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7. but emptied himself, taking the form (ܕܡܘܬܐ) of a slave, being born in human likeness (ܕܡܘܬܐ). And being found in human form (ܐܣܟܡܐ), 8. he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.' Peshitta: (6) ܗܘ ܕܟܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܚܛܝܦܘܬܐ ܚܫܒܗ ܗܕܐ. ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܦܚܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. (7) ܐܠܐ ܢܦܫܗ ܣܪܩ. ܘܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܢܣܒ. ܘܗܘܐ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ. ܘܒܐܣܟܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܝܟ ܒܪܢܫܐ. (8) ܘܡܟܟ ܢܦܫܗ. ܘܐܫܬܡܥ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܡܘܬܐ. ܡܘܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܙܩܝܦܐ.

[124] Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 178-79.
ܟܕ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܢܣܒ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܓܒܪ ܥܒܕܐ. ܘܒܐܣܟܡܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܝܟ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܗܘ ܕܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܗܘ ܢܣܒ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ. ܥܒܕܐ ܓܝܪ ܗܘ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܐܢܫܝܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܟܣܝܐ ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܐܝܟ ܒܪܢܫܐ...

[125] Iosephus Lebon (ed.), *Severi Antiocheni liber contra impium Grammaticum. Orationis tertiae pars posterior* (CSCO Syr. 4.6 = CSCO 101, Scriptores Syri 50; Leuven, 1933), Orat. 3:25, pp. 41-42. Cf. trans. idem, *Severi Antiocheni liber contra impium grammaticum. Orationis tertiae pars posterior* (CSCO Syr. 4.6 = CSCO 102, Scriptores Syri 51; Leuven, 1933), p. 30; Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 238-41. See also the English translation by Rowan A. Greer, 'The Antiochene Christology of Diodore of Tarsus', *JThS* 17.2 (1966), p. 338.

Although Diodore was considered orthodox during his life time, about 438 this was questioned by Cyril of Alexandria and in 499 he was officially anathematized by a synod in Constantinople.[126]

1.4. Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.350-428)

1.4.1. Theodore's position within the Church of the East and outside

Theodore of Mopsuestia who was born in Antioch is considered the classical representative of Antiochene theology. He became the most important theologian of the Church of the East. Already by the 430s the Persian School of Edessa had translated his work from Greek into Syriac and elevated his Bible commentaries to the standard for exegetical education; to some extent even replacing the works of Ephrem.[127] The bishops of the 544 East Syrian Synod declared in its final canon that he completely represented the Eastern standpoint concerning the Nicene Creed. The possibility of a later interpolation, however, should not be excluded.[128] According to the Synod of 585 the true faith was well kept in his works[129] and in 596 he was called 'holy' and the 'proven and true teacher (ܡܠܦܢܐ)'.[130] In 605 the synod of the Church of the East declared him and his works normative for orthodoxy.[131] Babai the Great (d.628) called him 'the perfect disciple of the apostles and the shrine of the Holy Spirit'.[132] It was often sufficient to refer to him as 'the Interpreter' (ܡܦܫܩܢܐ, *mpashqana*).[133]

Outside the Church of the East, however, his orthodoxy was already questioned by the Alexandrian Cyril (c.378–444). Initially, Cyril did not attack Theodore directly, but he instigated the condemnation in 431 of the Christological views of Nestorius who belonged to the same

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ܦܓܕܝܢ ܠܗܪ ܒܗܘܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܕܠܚܡ܆ ܠܫܡܥܐ ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܕܚܙܐ܆ ܠܡܚܘܬܐ ܕܚܒܪܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ܆ [...] ܠܗܘ ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܕܢܣܒ܆ [...] ܐܘܪܐ ܫܘܒܚܐ ܘܦܘܪܒ ܚܕ ܐܢܫܐ. ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܚܕܐ ܡܬܝܠܕܬܐ ܒܡ ܬܘܪܬܐ ܕܫܘܒܚܐ. ܚܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܠܡܬܝܠܕܬܐ܆ ܐܠܐ ܒܢ ܚܕܐ ܡܬܝܠܕܬܐ܆ ܡܢܠ ܐܢܬ ܠܝܘܕܥܐ. ܗܘ ܕܐܢ ܚܕܐ ܡܬܝܠܕܬܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܐܘܣܝܐ܀

[126] Abramowski, 'Diodore de Tarse', col. 503; Theodorus Mommsen (ed.), 'Victoris Tonnennensis episcopi chronica', in idem, *Chronica Minora. Saec. IV.V.VI.VII*, 2 (Berlin, 1894), p. 193.

[127] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 58-59.

[128] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 550 (cf. trans. p. 561). ܐܢܫ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܠܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܒܗܠܝܢ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ܆ ܕܟܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ. ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܠܬܠܬܡܐܐ ܘܬܡܢܬܥܣܪ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ܆ ܕܠܗ ܐܫܪܝ ܒܬܘܕܝܬ ܒܡܝܢ ܘܒܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܦܠܘܩ. ܗܘ ܕܚܒܝܒ ܠܛܘܒܢܐ ܘܪܫܝܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ܆ ܠܛܘܒܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܬܐܘܕܘܪܘܣ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܘܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ܀

[129] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 136-37 (cf. trans. pp. 398-99).

[130] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 197 (cf. trans. p. 457).

[131] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 210-11 (cf. trans. pp. 475-76).

[132] A. Vaschalde (ed.), *Babai Magni. Liber de Unione* (CSCO 79, Scriptores Syri 35; Leuven, 1915), 6.21, p. 246; Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. 163.

[133] Adam Becker translates the term *mpashqana* as 'exegete' and he notes that in translations and secondary literature this is often rendered 'interpreter'. This is also the case in the present study. Adam H. Becker (trans.), *Sources for the Study of the School of Nisibis* (Liverpool, 2008), p. 8.

school of thought. The reason Cyril and the Alexandrian theologians rejected the Dyophysite Antiochenes was prompted mainly by their soteriology. The *theologoumenon* 'what is not assumed is not saved' meant to Miaphysites that God the Word had to become fully man and therefore they emphasized that Christ has one nature after the union. They considered this oneness to be in 'one nature' (*mia physis*), which is the one incarnated nature of God the Word. The Dyophysite Antiochenes, in turn, accused the Miaphysites of Theopaschism and of mingling the two natures, whereby the human nature was fully absorbed.[134] Notably Theodore's view that the divine nature could not have been born from the human nature of the Virgin Mary, although present at the same time, played a significant role in his condemnation. Theodore acknowledged that Mary was both mother of man and of God, but he emphasized that by nature she was only mother of man, while God was in Christ by action (ܣܘܥܪܢܐ) and by the 'friendship of intention' (ܒܪܚܡܘܬܐ ܕܬܪܥܝܬܐ).[135]

Although the Edessene Bishop Rabbula anathematized Theodore in 433, in the same year the theologians in Antioch refused to follow Cyril's request to condemn Theodore. They stated that they would rather be burnt to death. Cyril thereupon tried to avoid a schism and wrote that it was not considered appropriate to condemn someone already dead.[136] In 553, Theodore's work and person were eventually condemned by the Synod of Constantinople. Most of his original Greek works were therefore destroyed and the works preserved are mainly the Syriac translations. Some Greek and Latin fragments have been preserved as the Christological debates centred on increasingly reduced hostile compilations. These were highly dependent on the 'Armenian' *florilegium* that possibly Rabbula made in the years following the condemnation of Nestorius in 431. Ibas had translated this into Syriac and defended it, but Cyril attacked it while making a further selection, though he might also have used additional sources.[137]

When referring to these and other sources, Christological terminology will be based mostly on the language preserved. If more versions exist, there is a preference for the Syriac, as this

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[134] Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', pp. 175-76.

[135] This view has been expressed in *Memra* 15 of Theodore's *On the Incarnation* and in Book 3 of his treatise against Apollinarius, which have been preserved in several *florilegia*. See H.B. Swete (ed.), *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni in Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii* 2 (Cambridge, 1882), pp. 310 and 312-14, with references. John Behr provides an overview of the various *florilegia* and discusses their context. Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, esp. pp. 244-45 (Syriac, Severus of Antioch); 303-309 (Greek, Leontius); 356-58 and 426-27 (Latin, Byzantine Council of 553).

[136] Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, pp. 433-35.

[137] Till Jansen, *Theodor von Mopsuestia. De Incarnatione. Überlieferung und Christologie der griechischen und lateinischen Fragmente einschliesslich Textausgabe* (Berlin, 2009), pp. 24-30, 129-31 and 136; Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore.* pp. 91-94 and 155-58.

might facilitate reading and give an indication of the terminology familiar within East Syrian circles.[138]

1.4.2. Theodore's Commentary on the Nicene Creed

After Scripture, the Nicene Creed was the norm for orthodoxy. As the East Syrian Synod of 544 explicitly adhered to Theodore's interpretation of the Nicene Creed, his commentary (ܦܘܫܩܐ, *commentary*) might be all the more interesting. Moreover, as the Nicene Creed, which was accepted in the 410 Synod, is preserved in two versions, it might be useful to compare these with the version Theodore might have used.[139]

The commentary was probably written in Antioch, after 379 but before 392/93 when Theodore was ordained bishop of Mopsuestia. The Greek original is lost, but the Syriac translation, probably made by Ibas as well, is preserved.[140] Theodore's *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* formed the first ten *memre* of his *Catechetical Homilies* that had to be learnt before baptism.[141] This seems to be a sign of the value attached to learning and knowledge with respect to faith.[142]

A reconstruction of the preserved Syriac translation of this commentary shows that he used a slightly different and expanded version of the Nicene Creed.[143] Peter Bruns detects several similarities with both the Creed of Constantinople (381) and an Antiochene Tomus (379). He concludes that the main body of Theodore's Creed is Nicene, while the expansions have Roman and Antiochene origins.[144] Meletius (ܡܠܛܝܘܣ), the bishop of Antioch, who probably had

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[138] Where I quote from scholars who refer to christological terms that have been variously translated, often resulting in confusion and impeding comparison, the original term preserved will be given. This will be indicated with an asterix (*) the first time it occurs, but omitted when context allows this.
[139] See also section 1.6.
[140] Peter Bruns, *Theodor von Mopsuestia. Katechetische Homilien I-II* (Freiburg 1994), pp. 21-23.
[141] Raymond Tonneau and Robert Devreesse (eds. and trans.), *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste. Reproduction phototypique du Ms. Mingana Syr. 561, Selly Oak Colleges' Library, Birmingham* (Studi e Testi 145; Vatican, 1949); Alphonse Mingana (ed. and trans.), *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Nicene Creed* (Woodbrooke studies 5; Cambridge, 1932), p. 7.
[142] Daniel L. Schwartz draws attention to the strong didactic element of the *Commentary* with its mnemonic devices and its communal and liturgical focus. Daniel L. Schwartz, *Paideia and Cult. Christian Initiation in Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, 2013), pp. 93-116.
[143] A reconstruction of the Creed Theodore might have used, is given by Peter Bruns, *Den Menschen mit dem Himmel verbinden. Eine Studie zu den katechetischen Homilien des Theodor von Mopsuestia* (Leuven, 1995), pp. 61-63, with references.
ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܒܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܒܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ. ܒܪܘܝܐ ܕܟܠܗܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܘܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ. ܒܚܕ ܡܪܝܐ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ. ܒܘܟܪܐ ܕܟܠܗܝܢ ܒܪܝܬܐ. ܗ̇ܘ ܕ ܡܢ ܐܒܐ ܐܬܝܠܕ. ܩܕܡ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܠܡܐ܆ ܘܠܐ ܐܬܥܒܕ܆ [ܐܠܗܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ] ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ. ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܒܘܗܝ. ܗ̇ܘ ܕܒܐܝܕܗ ܐܬܬܩܢܘ ܥܠܡܐ ܘܐܬܒܪܝ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ܆ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܡܛܠܬܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܘܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܩܢܢ ܢܚܬ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܬܓܫܡ ܘܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܐܬܝܠܕ ܡܢ ܡܪܝܡ ܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܘܐܙܕܩܦ ܒܝܘܡܝ̈ ܦܢܛܝܘܣ ܦܝܠܛܘܣ܆ ܘܐܬܩܒܪ ܘܩܡ [ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܡܝ̈ܬܐ] ܘܠܬܠܬܐ ܝܘܡܝ̈ܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܒܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ܆ ܘܣܠܩ ܠܫܡܝܐ܆ ܘܝܬܒ ܡܢ ܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ܆ ܘܬܘܒ ܥܬܝܕ ܠܡܐܬܐ ܠܡܕܢ ܚܝ̈ܐ ܘܡܝ̈ܬܐ܆ ܘܒܚܕ ܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ [ܪܘܚܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ]܆ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܡܢ [ܟܝܢܐ ܕ] ܐܒܐ ܢܦܩ܆ ܪܘܚܐ ܡܚܝܢܐ܆ ܚܕܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܩܬܘܠܝܩܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ܆ ܫܘܒܩܢܐ ܕܚܛܗ̈ܐ܆ ܠܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܦܓܪܐ ܘܠܚܝ̈ܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ܀
[144] Bruns, *Katechetische Homilien*, pp. 23-35; idem, *Den Menschen mit dem Himmel verbinden*, pp. 68-69.

called the Antiochene Synod, remained highly regarded within the Church of the East. Theodore praised him as defender of the truth against enemies who had won the favour of the emperor, sent Meletius into exile and caused confusion in the East.[145] Especially the Antiochene addition 'First-Born (Syr. ܒܘܟܪܐ) of every creature' (Col. 1:15) after 'Only-Begotten' (Syr. ܝܚܝܕܝܐ) remained important within the later Antiochene tradition.[146]

Theodore, who taught that the two natures of Christ are united in one *parsopa** (Syriac for *prosopon*), assigned the 'Only-Begotten' to the divine nature and the 'First-Born' to the human nature. In the third *memra* he stated that with these two epithets of Jesus Christ, the Nicene Fathers explained that Christ must have two natures and one *parsopa.* This single *parsopa* is a perfect and 'exact' conjunction (ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ, *naqiputa*, which renders the Greek term συνάφεια, *sunapheia*) of the two natures. God the Word 'put on a man' for our salvation, lived in him and was manifested by him and known to all men.

> When they (the Fathers) said these things and made known the divine nature and the human nature that God put on, they added this: 'the only (begotten) Son, the First-Born of all creatures'. By these two phrases, they made known the two natures and, by the difference (ܫܘܚܠܦܐ) of the terms, they instructed us about the difference of the natures. Now, (when) they said these two things about the one *parsopa** of the Son, they made us known the exact conjunction (ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܚܬܝܬܬܐ) of those two natures.
>
> But this was not of themselves that they used these words, but the teaching of Holy Scripture, as the blessed Paul said: 'From them (the Jews) descends the Christ according to the flesh, the God of all (ܐܠܗܐ ܥܠ ܟܠ)' (Rom. 9:5). The one belonging to the house of David according to the flesh is not by his nature God. For (Paul) said on the one hand 'according to the flesh' so that we may know that the human nature was assumed (ܐܬܢܣܒ), but on the other hand 'God of all', so that we may understand that the divine nature, which surpasses all, is the Lord. He mentioned these two (phrases) concerning the one *parsopa* at the same time, in order to teach the exact conjunction of the two natures (*kyane*), so that we may know the majesty and honour of the man assumed (ܐܬܢܣܒ) by God who 'put him on' (ܕܠܒܫܗ)'.[147]

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[145] Theodore mentioned especially Meletius' statement concerning the Trinity: 'We think of them as three, but speak of them as one'. A similar account appears towards the end of the sixth century in Barhadbeshabba's ecclesiastical history. Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 488-91; François Nau, 'Histoire de Barhadbešabba 'Arbaïa. Première partie', (PO 23; Paris, 1932), pp. 217-23.

[146] Bruns, *Katechetische Homilien*, p. 28; idem, *Den Menschen mit dem Himmel verbinden*, p. 64; Louis R.M. Sako (ed. and trans.), *Lettre christologique du Patriarche syro-oriental Īšōʿyahb yahb II de Gḏālā* (Rome, 1983), p. 161.
The Peshitta version of Col. 1:15 is as follows: ܗܘ ܕܗܘܝܘ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ. ܘܒܘܟܪܐ ܕܟܠܗܝܢ ܒܪܝܬܐ.

[147] Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 3:6-7, pp. 58-61. Cf. Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, pp. 141-42 (ed.) and p. 37 (trans.). See also translation by Frederick G. McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia* (New York, 2009), pp. 158-59.
ܟܕ ܐܡܪܘ ܗܟܝܠ ܗܠܝܢ: ܘܐܘܕܥܘ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܘܟܝܢܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܕܠܒܫܗ ܐܠܗܐ: ܐܘܣܦܘ ܗܝ ܕܒܪܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܒܘܟܪܐ ܕܟܠܗܝܢ ܒܪܝܬܐ. ܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ
ܒܬܪ̈ܬ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܐܘܕܥܘ ܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ. ܒܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܫܡܗ̈ܐ ܗܟܠܘ ܠܢ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܟܝ̈ܢܐ. ܕܥܠ ܚܕ ܕܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܐܡܪܘ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ ܐܘܕܥܘ
ܠܢ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܚܬܝܬܬܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ ܐܬܚܫܒܘ ܒܡ̈ܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܬ̈ܒܐ
ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܦܘܠܘܣ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܕܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܒܣܪ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܥܠ ܟܠ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܕܘܝܕ ܒܒܣܪ ܒܟܝܢܗ
ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܒܣܪ ܐܡܪ ܕܢܕܥ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ ܕܢܣܬܟܠ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܕܡܥܠܝ ܡܢ ܟܠ

Theodore did not interpret the Nicene expression 'inhominated' (ἐνανθρωπήσαντα) as a change, but as an assumption: Christ put on the nature in which he was and lived 'so that we might understand that he was not a man in appearance only, but that he was a real man who suffered all the human (passions) according to human nature'. He similarly held that the expression 'the Word became flesh and lived among us' (John 1:14) did not imply that the Word changed, because it assumed human nature.[148]

The inseparable union makes it impossible that the form (ܕܡܘܬܐ) of a servant (ܥܒܕܐ) can be 'separated from the divine nature which put it on' (ܕܠܒܫܗ.); they rather share the same honour.[149] Theodore referred several times to this form of a servant and the form of God (Phil. 2:6-7) in combination with the 'one assumed' and the 'one who assumed'.[150] But he rejected a doctrine of two Sons, of which he and his followers were repeatedly accused, while they were often compared with Paul of Samosata who taught a Christology of adoption.[151] In *Memra* 8, he stated that 'from the fact that we say two natures we are not constrained to say two Lords nor two sons' as this would be extremely naïve. He explained that all things can be two in one respect but one in another, like husband and wife who are said to be one flesh. In the same way, Christ can be seen as two according to nature, but one according to the conjunction because of the undivided adoration.

> Here also in the same appearance, we have two according to nature, but one according to conjunction (*naqiputa*): two according to nature, for there is a great difference between the natures; one according to conjunction, because the adoration is not divided. Rather, he who was assumed receives (adoration) with him

ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܡܪܢܐ. ܐܟܡܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܬܐܡܪ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܘܢ ܥܠ ܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܢܦܩܘܬܐ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܟܝܢ̈ܐ ܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ. ܘܕܢܘܕܥ ܕܥܒܕܘܬܐ ܘܡܘܬܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܒܫܗ.
(Note by Mingana, p. 141: ܘܐܬܕܒܩ : Cod. ܘܐܬܕܒܟ).

148 Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 7.1, pp. 160-61; Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, pp. 73 and 186-87; J.-M. Vosté (ed.), *Theodori Mopsuesteni Commentarius in evangelium Johannis Apostoli* (CSCO 115, Scriptores Syri 62; Leuven, 1940), pp. 33-34; cf. Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 623-24. In another work, *On the Incarnation* (*memra* 9), Theodore rejected the claim of those 'who nullify the duality' in claiming that the two biblical texts 'the Word became flesh' and 'he emptied himself and took (or: 'assumed', ܢܣܒ) the form of a servant' (Phil. 2:7) refer to the same process. Theodore pointed out the difference between 'becoming' and 'assuming'. 'Becoming' indicates that something which 'becomes' actually remains the same whenever the 'becoming' is perceived in a *qnoma* that 'became', whereas 'assuming' means assuming something different from the assumer. Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 472-73. ܠܐ[ܠ]ܐ ܗܘ, ܠܒܪ ܕܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܢ ܐܬܚܙܝ, ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܕܗܘܐ. ܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܬܐܡܪ ܕܗܘܐ. ܐܡܟܢ, ܕܗ, ܕܗ[ܘܐ] ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܬܬܚܙܐ ܕܗܘܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܢܣܒ. ܐܚܪܢܐ ܡܕܡ ܠܒܪ ܡܢܗ ܡܬܐܡܪ ܕܢܣܒ. The Syriac version of *On the Incarnation* and its translation as 'inhomination' will be discussed further below, section 1.4.4.2.

149 Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 8:12-13, pp. 204-205; Cf. Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, p. 206 (ed.) and p. 89 (trans.).

150 See for instance Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 6:5, pp. 138-39; cf. Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, p. 177 (ed.) and p. 65 (trans.).

151 Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 623.

> who assumed him, because he is the temple from which it is absolutely impossible that he who dwells therein should depart.[152]

Theodore further discussed the possibility of arguing that if Christ had two *parsope*, there had to be two Sons or Lords. Against such interpretations, he argued again that there was one Son, because of the perfect conjunction. The relation was again compared to God the Word dwelling in a temple.

> If each of them were by nature Son and Lord, we could have spoken of two Sons and two Lords, according to the number of the *parsope*; since, however, the one is by nature Son and Lord, whereas the other is neither Son nor Lord, and since we believe that it is by reason of the exact conjunction with the Only-Begotten, God the Word, that he has received these (ܗܠܝܢ) [titles], [therefore] we confess that there is only one Son. Of course we understand as Son and Lord primarily him who by nature has two titles, but we also include in our mind the temple in which he dwells and exists forever, while he is not separated from him because of the inseparable conjunction with him; this is the reason why we believe that he is Son and Lord.[153]

As already mentioned, Theodore's basic Christological formula was: two natures united in one *parsopa**, which is an exact conjunction of the two natures. Because several Christological terms were not yet well defined in Theodore's time[154] and could lead to various interpretations, some key words of his Christology will now be discussed in more detail.

1.4.3. Prosopon (*parsopa* in Syriac)

The term *parsopa* also appears in a Christological context in Theodore's *On the Incarnation*.[155] While the Word* (*Logos*, the divine Son)[156] inhabits the assumed human, the two na-

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[152] Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 8:14, pp. 206-207. Cf. Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, pp. 206-207 (ed.) and p. 90 (trans.) See also translation by W.F. Macomber, 'The Christology of the Synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, A.D. 486' (*OCP* 24, 1958), p. 151.
ܗܘ ܒܗܢܐ ܐܫܟܚܢܐ ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ ܬܪܝܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܐܠܐ ܚܕ ܒܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ. ܬܪܝܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܕܗܟܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܐܢܬ ܟܢܫܐ ܒܢܝܐ. ܚܕ ܒܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܡܛܠ
ܕܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܢܐ ܡܓܢܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ ܥܡ ܗܘ ܕܢܣܒܗ ܡܛܠ ܕܗܝܟܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܗ ܠܓܡܪ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܢܫܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܥܡܪ ܒܗ.
[153] Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 8:15, pp. 208-209; Cf. Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, p. 208 (ed.) and pp. 90-91 (transl). See also translation by Macomber, 'The Christology of the Synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, A.D. 486', p. 151.
ܗܟܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ ܐܠܘ ܠܟܠܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܒܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ ܘܡܪܝܐ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܒܢܝܢ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܡܪܘܢ ܐܝܟ
ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܗܘ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܪܐ ܘܡܪܝܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܟܝܢܗ ܠܐ ܒܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܪܝܐ: ܒܢܩܝܦܘܬܗ ܕܝܢ ܚܬܝܬܬܐ ܕܠܘܬ
ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ: ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܡܩܒܠ: ܚܕ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܪܐ. ܡܩܕܡܐܝܬ ܠܗܘ ܡܬܬܚܡ ܒܪܐ ܘܡܪܝܐ ܠܗ ܕܒܟܝܢܐ
ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܬܪܬܝܗܘܢ. ܡܣܩܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܪܢܝܬܐ ܐܦ ܠܗ ܠܗܘ ܗܝܟܠܐ ܕܥܡܪ ܒܗ ܘܡܟܠܠ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܟܕ ܒܗ ܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫ ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ
ܕܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܐ ܕܠܘܬܗ ܘܡܛܠܬܗ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܪܐ ܘܡܪܝܐ.
The unspecified 'these' (ܗܠܝܢ) is interpreted as: 'titles' by Tonneau and Devreesse; 'attributes' by Mingana; and 'Sonship' by Macomber.
[154] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 634.
[155] See on this text below, section 1.4.4.2.

tures are united in one *parsopa*. By the exact conjunction of the natures, who keep their properties, the assumed man participates in the honour of the divine Son.[157] As each of the two natures has its own *parsopa*, which unite into the one *parsopa* of Christ, one might expect some explication, but Theodore did not elaborate the relation of the two *parsope* to the one *parsopa* of Christ.[158] *Parsopa* refers more to the outward manifestation. In a quotation from Theodore's work against Eunomius that is preserved in a later Syriac collection stemming from at least the first part of the sixth century and that is marked by the notion of the '*parsopa** of revelation', *parsopa* is used at two levels. Abramowski explains that it can be understood at an ontological (searchable) level with respect to the two natures of Christ and their differences, but concerning the unity of Christ's person it can only be noticed at an ontic (unsearchable) level that is related with liturgy and worship.[159] Whereas *parsopa* signifies for normal human beings the *qnoma* and what each of them is, the *parsopa* of Christ signifies the honour of the divine *qnoma* that conjoins (ܡܩܪܒ) him who is visible. It does not signify the *ousia* of two natures. This interpretation of the union which is in honour seems to be in line with Diodore.

> *Parsopa** is used in a twofold way; for either it signifies the *qnoma**, and something (ܡܕܡ) which each one of us is, or it is conferred upon honour, greatness and worship; for example: 'Peter' and 'Paul' signify the *qnoma** and the *parsopa** (ܩܢܘܡܗ ܘܦܪܨܘܦܗ) of each one of them, but the *parsopa** of our Lord Christ means honour, greatness and worship. For because God the Word was revealed in humanity, he was causing the honour of his *qnoma** to conjoin (ܡܩܪܒ) the visible one; and for this reason, '*parsopa** of Christ' signifies that he is (made) of honour, not of the *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ) of the two natures (ܟܝܢܐ).[160]

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[156] The Greek name *Logos* for the second person of the Trinity is rendered *melta* in Syriac and will here be usually translated as 'Word'.

[157] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 627; Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', pp. 243-44. The authors refer here to a Greek fragment in Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni* 2, p. 296. The fragment is taken from Leontius' *Contra Nestorianos*. See also below, section 1.11.

[158] Luise Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais des Grossen', in Ignatius Ortiz de Urbina (ed.), *Symposium Syriacum, 1972: célébré dans les jours 26-31 octobre 1972 à l'Institut Pontifical Oriental de Rome* (OCA 197, Rome, 1974), pp. 225-26.

[159] Luise Abramowski and Alan E. Goodman (trans.), *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* 2. *Introduction, Translation and Indexes* (Oriental Publications 19; Cambridge, 1972), p. xlviii; Luise Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 72 (1961), pp. 263-65; eadem, 'Ein unbekanntes Zitat aus Contra Eunomium des Theodor von Mopsuestia', *Le Muséon* 71 (1958), p. 103.

[160] Luise Abramowski and Alan E. Goodman (ed.), *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* 1. *Syriac Text* (Oriental Publications 18; Cambridge, 1972), 9, p. 180 (cf. trans. eidem, p. 107).
ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܒܥܦܝܦܘܬܐ ܡܬܐܡܪ ܐܘ ܓܝܪ ܠܗ ܠܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܫܘܕܥ ܘܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܟܠ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܢ: ܐܘ ܠܘܬ ܐܝܩܪܐ ܘܪܒܘܬܐ ܘܣܓܕܬܐ ܡܬܦܪܫ ܕܐܝܟ ܐܡܪܢ܂ ܦܛܪܘܣ ܘܦܘܠܘܣ: ܩܢܘܡܗ ܘܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܕܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܫܘܕܥ. ܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܪܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܐܝܩܪܐ ܘܪܒܘܬܐ ܘܣܓܕܬܐ ܡܫܘܕܥ. ܡܛܠ ܓܝܪ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܒܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܐܬܓܠܝ: ܐܝܩܪܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܡܩܪܒ ܠܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܕܐܝܩܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܫܘܕܥ: ܠܐ ܕܐܘܣܝܐ ܕܬܪܬܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ.
[ܐܝܩܪܐ ܓܝܪ ܠܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܬܡܠܟܢܘܬܐ ܕܪܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܡܬܦܪܫܐ ܡܛܠ ܥܠܬܐ ܕܟܠܢܐ.]
The authors comment on p. xlvii that this text by (ps.) Nestorius is difficult and obscure due to a weak translation from Greek into Syriac.

> [For the honour is neither nature (ܟܝܢܐ) nor *qnoma**, but an elevation to great dignity which is awarded for the cause of the revelation.]
> What purple garments or royal apparel are for the king, is for God the Word the beginning which was taken from us without separation, alienation or distance in worship. Therefore, as it is not by nature that a king has purple robes, so also neither is it by nature that God the Word has flesh. For anyone who affirms God the Word to have flesh by nature (predicates that) he has (something) foreign to the divine substance by undergoing an alteration by the addition of a nature.[161]

The important place assigned to the shared adoration shows that liturgy plays an important role in Theodore's view of *parsopa*.[162] Grillmeier points at Theodore's search for a synthesis between the transcendence and immanence of God in human beings and in Christ. Theodore is said to have found this in the way the human nature of Christ participates in the divine adoration. Because the Word is *homoousios* with the other divine persons, Christ participates also with them and therefore all Christians will participate in this assumption through him, albeit in a different way.[163] Frederick McLeod states that the *parsopa* of Christ as a human might also imply 'the presence of all the members of his ecclesial and cosmic "body"'.[164] Kawerau holds that Christ has to be praised, because he belongs to Liturgy. This honour is so closely connected, that it has to be seen as his *parsopa.*[165] The interpretations of 'honour' and 'indwelling' are slightly reminiscent of the concepts of *shekinah* (שְׁכִינָה, indwelling) and *kabod* (כָּבוֹד, glory, magnificence) which the early rabbis used as synonyms when describing the presence of the infinite and transcendent God in finite places. They taught that this *shekinah* is God who only appears as such where a just human in the *imitatio dei* becomes an image of God.[166]

1.4.4. Hypostasis (*qnoma* in Syriac)

Abramowski states that Theodore used *qnoma** in a loose way and that it once indicated the *parsopa** of somebody and another time one person of the Trinity, namely the *Word*. She em-

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[161] Translation with some adjustments after Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, 9, p. 107. They comment that the observation between square brackets is an ancient gloss on Theodore's text.
[162] Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', pp. 264-66.
[163] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 617-22.
[164] Frederick G. McLeod, *The Roles of Christ's Humanity in Salvation: Insights from Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, 2005), pp. 151 and 163-65.
[165] Peter Kawerau, *Das Christentum des Ostens* (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. 50-55.
[166] Karl Grözinger, *Jüdisches Denken. Theologie. Philosophie. Mystik* I. *Vom Gott Abrahams zum Gott des Aristoteles* (Frankfurt/Main, 2004), pp. 254-57.

phasizes that in the above fragment against Eunomius, the word *qnoma** is not used for the human nature of Christ.[167]

1.4.4.1. Qnoma in the Commentary on the Nicene Creed

In *Memra* 3:3, the term *qnome* is used in the plural and in a Trinitarian context only, when it distinguishes between God (the Father) and the Lord (the Son, the Word).

> (Paul said) that 'God is one' and thereafter that 'the Lord is one' in order to distinguish the *qnome*. When he asserted this of both that they are one, (it was) that the two *qnome* are recognized as they are one divine nature, and this is in truth Lord and God.[168]

In the same *memra*, Theodore explained the relation of the distinct Trinitarian *qnome* that have the same nature, when he compared the relation of the Father and the Son to that of soul and word. He stated that the word comes from the soul. Consequently, they have the same nature while the soul is known by this word: as the word is rational, the soul is known to be rational too. Theodore called the word 'the *qnoma* of the soul', which is different from the soul and does not have its own *qnoma.* This seems to have been a generally accepted principle, as Theodore argued that in order to prevent the wrong conclusion that the Son has consequently no *qnoma* or is from a different nature, the Creed added: 'And the Word was God'.

> Because the word is seen as something (ܡܕܡ) different from the soul and yet is the *qnoma* of the soul (ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ), it does not have a *qnoma* indeed by which it is seen in the soul. In order now (to prevent), that when we follow this example, we also would [not] think that the Son has no *qnoma* or that he became alien to the nature of the Father, he (the Apostle) quickly added: 'And the Word was God' (John 1:1).[169]

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[167] Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', pp. 264-65.

[168] Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 3:3, pp. 56-57. Voici pourquoi, plut haut, (saint Paul) dit qu' «unique est Dieu» et, après cela, qu' « unique est le Seigneur», pour distinguer les hypostases; de chacune d'elles il affirme qu'elle est «unique», afin que les deux hypostases soient connues comme étant une seule nature divine, et celle-ci est en vérité Seigneur et Dieu.
ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܠܥܠ ܐܡܪ ܕܚܕ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ. ܘܡܢ ܒܬܪܗ ܕܚܕ ܗܘ ܡܪܝܐ ܠܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܕܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ. ܟܕ ܥܠ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܦܣܩ ܗܕܐ ܕܚܕ. ܕܢܬܝܕܥܘܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܕܚܕ ܗܘ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܘܗܘ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܫܪܪܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܘܐܠܗܐ.

[169] Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 3:14, pp. 74-75; Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, p. 148 (cf. trans. p. 42). ܘܡܛܠ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܝܢ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ: ܘܐܝܬܝܗ ܕܝܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ: ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܩܢܘܡܐ: ܒܗ ܕܝܢ ܒܢܦܫܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ. ܕܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܐܙܠܝܢ ܒܬܪ ܗܢܐ ܬܘܒܝܬܐ ܢܣܒܪ ܐܦ ܚܢܢ ܕܕܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܪܐ: ܐܘ ܡܢܟܪ، ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܗ ܕܐܒܐ: ܡܠܠܐܝܬ ܐܘܣܦ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܗܘܐ ܡܠܬܐ.
Because this fragment is rather complicated, the translation by Tonneau and Devreesse is given as well: 'Et parce que le verbe (issu) de l'âme parait être quelque chose d'autre qu'elle, tandis qu'il est l'hypostase de l'âme, — car il n'a pas lui-même d'hypostase, c'est en l'âme qu'il se voit, — de peur que, suivant cette comparaison, nous ne nous imaginions que le Fils aussi est sans hypostase ou étranger à la nature du Père, brièvement l'(évangéliste) ajouta que *le Verbe était Dieu.*'

The analogy of soul and word is also used to illustrate that just as the ‘word’ proceeds from the soul and they nevertheless always belong together without being separated or divided in time or place, similarly, the Son stems from the Father and yet he is always with him.[170]

In the Syriac version of *Memra* 5:15-16, the word *qnoma* is used five times when explaining the difference between men and animals. In three instances *qnoma* is explicitly brought in close connection to the soul (ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ).[171] Because animals have no *qnoma* of the soul, their soul has no separate existence, but perishes after the death of the animal. The soul of men is contrasted to this:

> (The soul) of men, however, is not like this, but exists in the *qnoma* of the soul and is much higher than the body, as the body is mortal and acquires life from the soul and dies and perishes whenever the soul leaves it. And this (the soul), when it goes out, it remains and does not perish but lasts forever in its *qnoma* because it is immortal and cannot receive anything naturally from men. […] The difference between the soul of men and the soul of animals is such that the latter is dumb (ܚܪܫܬܐ) and has no *qnoma* of the soul, while that of men is immortal and is rightly believed to be also rational (ܡܠܝܠܬܐ).[172]

This fragment does not use *qnoma* in a Christological context, but refers to the soul of human beings and animals. The fact, however, that the preceding text in this *memra* explained that Christ’s human body and soul with its rational mind had to be assumed by the Word, would imply that the *qnoma* of his human soul had to be assumed as well. Theodore criticized here followers of Arius and Eunomius who denied that Christ had assumed a soul. He explained that most sins stemmed from the will of the soul (ܨܒܝܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ) and that Christ therefore had to assume the soul in order to be able to overcome the passions of the body, sin and finally death.

> Our Lord assumed the soul so that it should be first delivered from sin and be transferred to unchangeableness by the grace of God through which it overcomes also the passions of the body. When sin is abolished

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[170] Vosté (ed.), *Theodori Mopsuesteni Commentarius in evangelium Johannis Apostoli*, p. 21. See also Johan Douwe Hofstra, *Ishoʿdad van Merw. ‘En het woord is vlees geworden’. De plaats van het commentaar van Ishoʿdad van Merw op Johannes 1, 1-18 binnen de Syrische exegetische traditie* (Kampen, 1993), pp. 10-11 and 53-54.

[171] Tonneau and Devreesse render ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ as ‘hypostase-propre’. Considering the context, which discusses the soul (ܢܦܫܐ), a more literal translation seems more applicable (‘*qnoma* of the soul’).

[172] Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 5:15-16, pp. 120-23; Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, pp. 169-70 (cf. trans. pp. 58-59).
ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܘܣܓܝ ܡܥܠܝܐ ܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܕܦܓܪܐ ܡܝܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ܆ ܘܚܝ̈ܐ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܐ ܩܢܐ
ܘܡܐܬ ܘܡܬܚܒܠ ܐܝܟ ܕܢܦܩܐ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܢܗ ܠܘܬܗ. ܗ̇ܝ ܕܝܢ ܡܐ ܕܢܦܩܬ ܡܩܘܝܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܒܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܠܥܠܡ ܡܩܘܝܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ
ܡܝܘܬܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ܆ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܡܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܡܕܡ ܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܠܡܣܒ.[...] ܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܒܝܢ ܢܦܫܐ ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ ܕܚ̈ܝܘܬܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ
ܕܗ̇ܝ ܚܪܫܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܠܝܬ ܠܗ̇. ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܡܝܘܬܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܘܒܟܠܝܘܬܐ ܡܬܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܡܠܝܠܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ.

from every place and has no more entry into the soul which has become unchangeable, every kind of condemnation will rightly be abolished and death also will perish.[173]

1.4.4.2. Qnoma in On the Incarnation (Inhomination), Memra 8.

A quotation from Theodore's *On the Incarnation* (ܕܥܠ ܡܬܒܪܢܫܘܬܐ)[174], *Memra* 8, has led to different interpretations of his Christology and terminology, especially concerning the question whether Theodore spoke of one or two *qnome* in Christ or none at all. This question became highly disputed in the sixth and seventh centuries and therefore deserves special attention.

Theodore's quotation is preserved in two Syriac versions. Under the heading *The Blasphemies of Diodore, Theodore, and the Impious Nestorius*, one version was part of the Syriac Miaphysite *florilegium* which has already been mentioned and which is preserved in Brit. Libr. Add. 12,156. The fragment discussed is numbered as 'section 63'. Cyril was the main authority for this *florilegium*.[175] Even if the (Greek) selection is highly one-sided, it is considered reliable. The Syriac translation represents the genuine text as the meaning has been kept intact, while typical 'Antiochene' expressions are used.[176] The Syriac translation is ascribed to Ibas and is dependent on the 'Armenian' *florilegium* that appeared several years after the condemnation of Nestorius in 431.[177]

The other manuscript is preserved in Brit. Libr. Add. 14,669. This edition might stem from a (friendly) fifth century Edessene translation that remained the 'authoritative and normative one' in the School of Nisibis until at least the eighth century.[178] This version was, however,

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[173] Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 5:14, pp. 118-21; Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, pp. 168-69 (cf. trans. pp. 57-58); Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 620-21. See also section 1.4.4.2. for further discussion on the question whether Theodore taught one ore two *qnome** in Christ.

[174] This title derives from the Syriac title preserved in the Miaphysite *florilegium*. Cf. Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 194-95. The English and Latin titles for this work are not literal translations. 'Inhomination' would be more accurate and is to be distinguished from 'incarnation'. As we will see in section 1.6, the Church of the East also followed the Nicene distinction between 'incarnated' (or 'embodied') and 'inhominated' (Greek: σαρκωθέντα and ἐνανθρωπήσαντα). The English term 'inhomination' appears also in the work of for instance Iain R. Torrance, *Christology After Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite* (Cambridge, 1998). A slightly different translation ('inhumanation') has been chosen by Hans van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria* (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 96; Leiden, 2009), p. 13.

[175] Paul de Lagarde (ed.), *Analecta Syriaca* (Leipzig, 1858), pp. 100-108, Luise Abramowski, 'Zur geplanten Ausgabe von Brit. Mus. add. 12156', *Texte und Untersuchungen. Zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 133 (Berlin, 1987), pp. 23-24; Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore,* pp. 164-65.

[176] Luise Abramowski, 'Über die Fragmente des Theodor von Mopsuestia in Brit. Libr. add. 12.156 und das doppelt überlieferte christologische Fragment', *OC* 79 (1995), pp. 3-5; Francis A. Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Rome, 1956), pp. 64-65.

[177] Jansen, *De Incarnatione,* pp. 129-131 and 136. See for a slightly different interpretation Behr, pp. 91-94 and 155-58.

[178] Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation' pp. 228-29.

already questioned in the late seventh century.[179] It probably contained the complete Syriac translation of *On the Incarnation,* but unfortunately only a small part is preserved and the fragment from *Memra* 8 is defective and difficult to understand and translate.[180] It is not clear when the translation was made. The manuscript preserved probably stems from the fifth or sixth century, with punctuation added in the late sixth to seventh century.[181] The translation has been ascribed to the Edessene School under Ibas, with a probable date varying from early after Theodore's death[182] to the middle of the fifth century.[183]

Later references to these texts do not always accurately indicate which fragment from which manuscript has been used. Combined with sometimes inconsistent translations and numbering, secondary literature on the theology of Theodore can be confusing. Till Jansen gives an overview of the transmission history of these fragments and he points out many mistakes.[184]

The two versions explain the two levels of Christology by means of a comparison to the union of husband and wife, and of soul and body. As the argumentation is closely intertwined with these examples, the section 63 will be given here in whole, except for the introduction. In order to facilitate comparison, Add. 12,156 and Add. 14,669 will further be referred to as 'M' (*Miaphysite*) and 'N' (*Nisibis*) respectively; the texts are divided into several more or less independent statements which have been numbered newly, and the translation has been kept as simple and consistent as possible.[185]

[179] Luise Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona and Dissent in the Church of the East', in Christelle Jullien (ed.), *Controverses des Chrétiens dans l'Iran sassanide* (Paris, 2008), p. 17.
[180] Luise Abramowski, 'Die Reste der Syrischen Übersetzung von Theodor von Mopsuestia, De Incarnatione, in add. 14.669', Aram 5 (1993), pp. 23-26; eadem, 'Über die Fragmente', pp. 3-5.
[181] Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, p. 433.
[182] Eduard Sachau (ed. and trans.), *Theodori Mopsuesteni. Fragmenta Syriaca* (Leipzig, 1869), p. 80.
[183] Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, pp. 80-82.
[184] Till Jansen reports for instance that Abramowski observes that the Syriac fragment H.B. Swete gave to fill up a gap in the extant Greek is identical to the fragment from Add. 14,669 instead of Add. 12,156, and should therefore be replaced. Jansen, *De Incarnatione*, p. 126; for his overview see also pp. 15-18 and 119-126; Abramowski, 'Die Reste', pp. 31-32; Swete, *Theodori Episcopi Mopsuesteni* 2, p. 289. Another translation of the two compilations, with an edition of the corresponding Syriac parts from 14,669, has been made by Eduard Sachau *Theodori Mopsuesteni. Fragmenta Syriaca*, translation pp. 28-57 (14.669) and pp. 63-68 (12.156). More recently, in 2011, John Behr incorporated the correct editions with a translation in his *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 206-209 and 468-71. This facilitates comparison. It should be noted that before this time, scholars may have used Swete's version, including its erroneous part. See for instance, McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, p. 136.
[185] The part that should be replaced in Swete's edition concerns numbers 8-10.

Add. 12,156, section 63 (M, *Miaphysite*)

1. What our Lord said of husband and wife that ‘they are no longer two, but one flesh’,
2. we too may rightly say, according to the definition of union (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ): ‘they are no longer two *parsope* but one’, although it is known that the natures are divided.
3. And in such a way the mention of ‘one flesh’ does not further oppose the number of the duality: for it is clear in what (respect) ‘one’ is said.
4. So also here the union of *parsopa* does not affect the difference of natures:
5. for when we divide (ܡܦܪܫܝܢ) the natures, we say that the nature of the God Word is perfect and that the *parsopa* is perfect
6. —for one cannot speak of a *qnoma* without a *parsopa*; further on is also the nature of the man complete, and his *parsopa* likewise.
7. But when we look at the conjunction, then we speak of one *parsopa*.
8. For also in the case of a human being, when we divide the natures, we say that the nature of the soul is one, and of the body another, a single *qnoma* of the former and a single of the latter.
9. This is how we know that they are distinct: that when the soul is removed from the body, it is on its own and remains in its own *parsopa*, and therefore also is each one of them, according to the definition of nature, said to be with its *parsopa*.
10. In the same way the names ‘inner man’ and ‘outer man’ are used by Paul (2 Cor. 4:16), while each of them individually deserves the term of the whole. For it is clear that with the addition of ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ we should understand the whole at once, not because of the general word and the limitation by the adjective, but to the extent that we are told that he conjoins these two that are brought together.
11. In the same way also here, we say that the nature of the God Word is single, and single that of the man, the natures being divided, but one *parsopa* being effected in the union.
12. Therefore also here: when we want to divide the natures, we say that the *parsopa* of the man is perfect, and also perfect is that of the divinity;
13. but when we look at the union, then we proclaim that the *parsopa* of both natures is one,
14. humanity with divinity unitedly, receiving an honour beyond all creation, and divinity in it, accomplishing all things that were necessary.[186]

[186] Syriac text after De Lagarde, *Analecta Syriaca,* pp. 104-105; compare also Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore,* pp. 206-209.

1. ܡܢ ܪܫܐ ܕܫܬܝܢ ܘܬܠܬܐ܀ ܗܿܝ ܕܡܪܢ ܥܠ ܗܿܝ ܕܓܒܪܐ ܘܐܢܬܬܐ ܐܡܪ. ܕܠܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܪܝܢ: ܐܠܐ ܒܣܪܐ ܚܕ.
2. ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܦ ܚܢܢ ܙܕܩܐܝܬ ܐܝܟ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܚܕܝܘܬܐ. ܕܠܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ. ܐܠܐ ܚܕ. ܐܢ ܝܕܝܥܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܕ ܡܬܦܪܫܝܢ ܟ̈ܝܢܐ.
3. ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܗܠ ܠܐ ܢܩܘܡ ܠܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܬܪܝܢܘܬܐ܆ ܗܿܝ ܕܚܕ ܡܬܐܡܪ ܒܣܪܐ܆ ܓܠܝܐ ܗܘ ܓܝܪ ܒܡܢܐ ܚܕ ܡܬܐܡܪ.
4. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ ܠܐ ܡܚܒܠܐ. ܠܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܟ̈ܝܢܐ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ.
5. ܐܡܬܝ ܓܝܪ ܕܠܟ̈ܝܢܐ ܡܦܪܫܝܢ ܚܢܢ. ܕܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܗܘ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫ. ܘܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܗܘ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ.
6. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ. ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ. ܐܦ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܒܗ̇ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ.
7. ܐܡܬܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܠܘܬ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܢܚܘܪ. ܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܗܝܕܝܢ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܚܢܢ
8. ܐܦ ܓܝܪ ܒܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ: ܐܡܬܝ ܕܠܟ̈ܝܢܐ ܡܦܪܫܝܢ. ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ. ܘܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܦܓܪܐ. ܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܚܘܕܝܐ ܕܗܿܝ ܘܠܚܘܕܝܐ ܕܗܢܐ.
9. ܗܟܢܐ ܕܡܬܦܪܫܝܢ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ. ܕܒܕ ܡܬܦܪܫܐ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ. ܒܠܚܘܕܝܗ̇ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܘܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܠܗ̇ ܩܝܡܐ. ܘܒܗܕܐ ܐܦ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ. ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܬܐܡܪ.

Add. 14,669 (N, *Nisibis*)

1. Just as our Lord said of husband and wife that 'they are no longer two, but one flesh',
2. so we too say, according to the definition of union, 'they are no longer two but one', despite clearly being different natures.
3. And as henceforth the mention of 'one flesh' does not damage the duality—for it is clear how these things are said—
4. so also here the union of *parsopa* is not harmed by the difference in natures:
5. for when we consider the natures, we recognize the divine nature in its own *qnoma* and the human nature
6. -
7. but when we look at the conjunction (*naqiputa*), we say one *parsopa* and one *qnoma.*
8. For in the same way that, when we divide the nature of the human being, we say that the nature of the soul is one thing and that of the body another, knowing, that each of them singly has a *qnoma* and a nature,
9. and convinced that when the soul is separated from the body, it remains in its nature and its *qnoma*, and each one of them has a nature and a *qnoma*.
10. For this is also how we are taught by the Apostle of 'the inner man' and 'the outer man' (2 Cor. 4:16), and their individuality (ܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܗܘܢ)[187] we name on the basis of something (ܡܕܡ) that belongs to the common with the addition of 'inner' and of 'outer', so that we do not name them with a simple word. But when they are conjoined one, we say they are 'one *qnoma* and one *parsopa*', and name both of them with one.
11. In the same way also here, we say that there is divine nature and human nature, and while the natures are recognized there is one *parsopa* of union.
12. And therefore when we wish to consider the natures, we say that the man is perfect in his *qnoma* and we also say that perfect is God;

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10. ܗܟܢܐ ܚܢܢ ܐܦ ܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܠܓܘ. ܘܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܠܒܪ. ܡܢ ܦܘܠܓܐ ܡܫܬܡܗ ܒܪ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܠܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܓܒܐ ܐܬܬܘܣܦ.، ܡܒܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܬܪ ܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܗܿܝ، ܕܠܓܘ ܘܕܠܒܪ. ܕܠܐ ܒܟܠܗ ܫܪܝܐ: ܠܟܠܗ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܘܒܒܨܝܪ ܢܘܬܪܐ ܕܫܘܡܗܐ ܢܦܬܠ. ܒܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܢܩܦ ܒܐܬܪܘܬܗܝܢ ܕܒܢܝܫ ܡܬܐܡܪܢ.

The last sentence of M-10 is very difficult to understand and translate. Behr solves it thus: 'And it is clear that with the addition (of "inner" and "outer") he explicitly does not nullify the whole <man> altogether and <that he> understands <the whole man> in accordance with a reduced <scope> of the denomination <man> and to the extent that he pairs joined terms.' Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, p. 209.

11. ܒܗ ܕܝܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ. ܐܡܪܝܢ ܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ. ܠܟܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ. ܡܦܪܫܝܢ ܓܝܪ ܟܝܢܐ. ܚܕ ܕܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܓܒܪ.
12. ܡܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ ܐܡܪܬ، ܕܠܟܝܢܐ ܠܡܦܪܫܘ ܢܩܦܢ ܚܕ: ܕܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܐܬܘܗܝ، ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ. ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ.
13. ܐܡܪܬ، ܕܝܢ ܕܠܘܬ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܚܙܝܢ ܚܕ. ܗܝܕܝܢ ܕܚܕ ܐܬܘܗܝ، ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܒܫܡܐ ܡܟܢܝܢ.
14. ܒܪ ܡܚܝܕܐܝܬ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܥܡ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܐܡܪܢܐ ܕܥܡ ܒܟܠܗ ܒܪܢܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܐ. ܐܦ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܒܗ̇. ܒܠܚܘܕ ܐܠܗܢ ܕܡܒܒܝܢ ܡܫܡܠܝܐ ✤

[187] Behr translates ܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܗܘܢ as 'particular features'. Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, p. 471. He probably follows Robert Payne Smith, who indicates that it means 'proprietas' in the work of Theodore. However, Brockelmann and Sokoloff do not give such a meaning. Here, it is translated as 'individuality' since all lexica consulted indicate that its first meaning should be interpreted in the sense of 'being alone'. Robert Payne Smith (ed.), *Thesaurus Syriacus* 1 (Oxford, 1879), col. 1589; J. Payne Smith, (ed.), *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary. Founded upon the 'Thesaurus Syriacus' of R. Payne Smith, D.D.* (Oxford, 1902; Eugene, 1999), p. 191; Karl Brockelmann, *Lexikon Syriacum* (2nd edn, Halle, 1928; facs. edn, Hildesheim, 1995), p. 300; Michael Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon. A translation from the Latin, Correction, Expansion, and Update of C. Brockelmann's 'Lexicon Syriacum'* (Piscataway, 2009), p. 572.

13. but when we wish to consider the union, we proclaim one *parsopa* and one *qnoma* with respect to both natures,
14. while we know that because of the union to divinity, the humanity receives honour from creation and the divinity in his effecting everything.[188]

Because the two versions differ, it has been debated which one was the most authentic, as this would be an indication of what Theodore really would have taught. This discussion is still not settled. Abramowski argues since 1990 that Add. 12,156 (M) is more authentic than Add. 14,669 (N), because the latter simplifies a difficult part and contains a late Nestorian expression that is not known to appear in Theodore's other works. Acknowledging the work of Francis Sullivan, she thus rejects the view of Marcel Richard, who considers N authentic. Marcel Richard bases his judgment on the statement of Joseph of Hazzaya (eighth century) who held that the one *qnoma* formula in M must be Theodore's own. Gerrit Jan Reinink approves of Abramowski's conclusion.[189]

In general, forms of *parsopa* appear most frequently in M, whereas N has more forms of *qnoma*. The texts start with a comparison of husband and wife that also appeared in Theodore's *Commentary*. According to the definition of union, they are no longer 'two *parsope* but one' (M2), though N2 does not contain the explanatory *parsope*. The general line of thought is that similarly, when Christ is considered as the union, there is one *parsopa;* but when considered as the natures, there are two *parsope*.

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[188] Sachau, *Theodori Mopsuesteni*, ܟܐ-ܟ; Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 468-71.

1. ܘܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܡܪܢ ܥܠ ܓܒܪܐ ܘܐܢܬܬܐ ܕܠܐ [ܐܝܬ]ܝܗܘܢ ܬ[ܪ̈ܝ]ܢ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܠܐ ܚܕ ܒܣܪ.
2. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܚܢܢ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܚܝܝܕܘܬܐ. ܕܠܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܐܠܐ ܚܕ. ܘܟܠܢܐ ܗ[ܘ] ܕܒܗ [ܩܢ̈ܘ]ܡܐ ܒܟܝ̈ܢܐ.
3. ܐܟܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܠܘܬ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܐ ܡܢ ܡܛܠܬܐ ܕܬܪܝܢ ܕܡܬܐܡܪܘܢ ܚܕ ܒܣܪܐ. ܟܠܢܐ ܗܘ ܓܝܪ ܐܡܟܢܐ ܡܬܐܡܪܝܢ:
4. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܗܪ [ܠܐ ܠܐ] ܡܫܬܟܚܐ ܚܝܝܕܘܬܗ [ܕܦ]ܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܡܢ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܕܟܝ̈ܢܐ.
5. ܡܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܥܠ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܪܢܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܫܬܟܠܠܝܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܘܟܝܢܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ:
6. -
7. ܡܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܡܨܝܥܘܬܐ ܢܚܘܪ. ܚܕ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܘܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫ.
8. ܐܟܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܗܟܢܐ ܕܡܦܪܫ[ܝܢ] ܐܢܫ ܒܟܝܢܗ ܕܒܪ ܐ[ܢ]ܫܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܚܝܕ ܗܘ ܒܟܝܢܗ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܘܐ[ܚܪ]ܝܢ ܕܦܓܪܐ܆ ܒܪ ܠܚܕ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܩܢܘ[ܡ]ܐ ܘܟܝܢܐ ܢܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ
9. ܘܡܦܫܝܢ ܕܒܗ [ܡܬ]ܦܪܫܐ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܟܝܢܗ ܘܒܩܢܘܡܗ: ܘܟܠ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ:
10. ܗܟܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܦ ܒܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܠܟܠܐ ܘܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܥܠܝܡܐ ܠܦܩ ܐܢܫ: ܘܫܘܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܟܠܗܐ ܢܦܫܗ ܒܬܘܩܦܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܟܠܗܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ: ܕ ܠܐ ܒܟܢܘܬ ܡܠܐ ܥܫܝܢܘܬܐ ܢܦܫܗ ܐܢܘܢ. ܒܗܕܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܢܦܫܝܢ ܒ[ܚܕ] ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܚܕ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܚܢ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܠܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܒܚܕ ܡܫܡܗܝܢ ܐܢܫ.
11. ܗܘ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܘܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ. ܘܟܕ ܢܚܝܢ ܒܟܝ̈ܢܐ. ܚܕ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܕܚܝܝܕܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ.
12. ܘܟܡܕܐ ܐܡܟܝ ܕܒ[ܬܪ]ܐ ܢܝܕ ܟܐ ܠܡܫܬܟܠܠܘ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫ܆ ܕܡܫܬܟܠܠܐ ܗܘ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ. ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܦ ܡܫܬܟܠܠܐ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ.
13. ܡܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܝܝܕܘܬܐ ܢܝܕ ܟܐ ܠܡܫܬܟܠܠܘ. ܚܕ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܘܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܟ[ܪܙܝܢ] ܐܢܫ ܠܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ.
14. ܟܕ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܒܝܕ ܚܝܝܕܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܐ[ܝܩ]ܪܐ ܡܩܒܠܐ. ܘܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܒܗ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܣܥܪܐ...

[189] Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 16-17; eadem, 'Über die Fragmente' pp. 1-2 and 6-7; eadem, 'Die Reste', pp. 31-32; Marcel Richard, 'La tradition des fragments du Traité Περί τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως de Théodore de Mopsueste', *Le Muséon* 56 (1943), pp. 67-69; Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, pp. 80-82; Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 228-29; Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 434-38; Jansen, *De Incarnatione*, pp. 5-6.

Both versions use neutral verbs like ‘consider’ and look’ when discussing the union. But where N continues to do so when discussing the natures of Christ, the hostile M uses forms of the verb ‘divide’ (Pael of ܦܪܫ), while N uses this only with respect to the human soul and body which can be separated.[190] N, interestingly, has additional *qnoma/qnome* when describing the union. N5 recognizes a divine nature in its *qnoma* and a human nature (no specifications given). In their union there is one *parsopa* and one *qnoma* (N7). In N10 and N13 the union is also marked by having one *parsopa* and one *qnoma*.

M5-6 seems comparable to N5. However, M6 contains a statement that is also found in a Greek parallel, but not in N. It states in explanation that a *qnoma* cannot be without a *parsopa.* It is difficult to see whether this statement refers only to the divine nature, or to the human nature as well. When one accepts M6 in isolation, not considering the context or other texts, this could allow an interpretation for both the divine and human nature having their own *parsopa* plus *qnoma.* To Edessene Christology, however, which is thought to have restricted *qnoma* to the divine nature of Christ, this must have been illogical. Most importantly, the text itself acknowledges only one *parsopa* (M7 and 13) in the union, or does not even mention *parsopa* and *qnoma* at all (M10). However, when one were to strictly apply M6 to M7 and M13, this could allow the interpretation of one *qnoma* in Christ.

According to M8 and N8, both soul and body have their own *qnoma*. M9 explains their distinction by the fact that each remains in their own *parsopa* when they are separated. N9 does not use the word *parsopa*, but *qnoma*. Abramowski concludes that N had completely eliminated the doctrine of two *parsope** that are one *parsopa** when looking at the union of the natures. Instead, the words *parsope/parsopa* have been replaced by *qnome*/ qnoma*.* She further notes that this is also the only fragment in the whole manuscript in which *qnoma* is added to the human nature of Christ.[191]

The reasons for the differences between the two versions are not clear. Sullivan conjectures that *parsopa* was changed into *qnoma* in order to avoid the anathematized ‘two *parsope*’, because Ibas recently had been rehabilitated by the Council of Chalcedon after accepting its dogmatic decrees and subscribing to the condemnation of Nestorius and had to avoid thereafter anything too reminiscent of the formula of Nestorius.[192] This explanation does not fully match Abramowski’s conclusion that the Edessene School had restricted the use of both the

[190] On the translation of forms of ܦܪܫ (divide or distinguish) see also section 1.5.4.
[191] Abramowski, ‘Die Reste’, pp. 27-29.
[192] Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, pp. 80-82.

terms *parsopa* and *qnoma,*[193] but both Sullivan and Abramowski agree that terminology was adapted in order to avoid indictment by opponents.

The Nisibene version gave rise to two conflicting interpretations, because it both emphasizes the two *qnome* and speaks of only one *qnoma* in Christ as well. Grillmeier discusses N7-14 while putting 'one *qnoma*'* within brackets when this refers to Christ (this occurs in N7, 10 and 13).[194] He further combines this reduced N7-14 with the example we already have seen in *Memra* 5:15-16 of the human soul that can live apart from the body thanks to its *qnoma*. This would show that *qnoma* is needed for a separate existence. Because the two natures of Christ are capable of existing separately, Grillmeier concludes that according to Theodore, Christ must have two *qnome* as far as one considers the differentiation of the natures. He denies, on the other hand, that Theodore used the formula of two natures and the one 'Person oder Hypostase', because this would not be in line with authentic texts in which he always puts *physis* and *hypostasis* side by side while *prosopon* is clearly distinguished from them. The difference is on the side of *physis-hypostasis*; the unity is in the one *prosopon.*[195]

Alluding also to *Memra* 5:15-16, Peter Bruns comments that it was problematic for Theodore (and later for Babai) that the assumption of a complete human implied assumption of a human 'seelischen Hypostase'.[196] McLeod argues that according to Theodore, Christ must have two *qnome*, because Theodore would interpret *qnoma* in a transitive sense signifying 'an extraneous power that grants life to concrete natures'. This would mean that in natures that really exist, there must always be a *qnoma* involved.[197] As we have seen above, Ephrem's work might have given rise to such considerations, but not necessarily with this postulated 'transitive sense'.

Abramowski, however, holds that the authentic Theodore did not use the term *hypostasis* (*qnoma*) to describe the union of the two natures in Christ and she explicitly excludes the possibility that Theodore was 'a possible starting point of the Christology of the one hypostasis with the East Syrians'. She emphasizes that Theodore could use the term *hypostasis* (*qnoma*) in several ways. In a Christological context it was not used for the human nature of Christ, but

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193 Abramowski, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie', p. 2.

194 Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 633-34 and 832; Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, p. 464, note 514 and p. 590. In the later volume and in the addenda of both, there are references to the recent insights offered by Abramowski, which were about to be published.

195 Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 630-34; Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies,* 5:15-16, pp. 120-23.

196 Bruns, *Katechetische Homilien,* p. 57.

197 McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia,* pp. 44-47; idem, *The Roles of Christ's Humanity in Salvation,* pp. 150-54.

only for the *Logos*.[198] This can actually be seen in M which mentions only the two *qnome* with respect to the soul and body of a man, and the (single) term *qnoma* with respect to the *Logos*.

Whatever was the view held by Theodore himself, the fact remains that his preserved texts could lead to divergent interpretations within the Church of the East. Reinink suggests that in the internal conflict of the sixth and seventh century concerning the question whether Theodore had taught one *qnoma* or two in Christ, both parties within the Church of the East focused exactly on the fragments from the Nisibene version.[199] When taken sufficiently out of context, elements from the Miaphysite fragment might have been used as well.

1.4.5. Soteriology, the two Catastases

In Theodore's soteriology, God's salvation plan (οἰκονομία) is oriented towards immortal life in heaven. This view is connected with his distinction between two *catastases* (eras or worlds). The individual believer lives in the era of mortality, change and sin, and he only reaches his final salvation and will be resurrected at the end times when Christ returns and the second era begins. Christians who die before can still hope for the resurrection, because their souls remain after death, thanks to their *qnoma*, which animals do not have. It is through Christ's humanity that human beings have the possibility to share in his resurrection. But where the human nature of Christ already takes part in the resurrection, believers in the first era can only enjoy preliminary participation in this Resurrection by means of the Sacraments.[200]

Meanwhile, believers can also develop their virtues in this world that has instructional qualities. As the word *yulpana* (learning)[201] and its derivations appear throughout the Syriac version of Theodore's *Catechetical Homilies*, this might be seen as another indication that *paideia* played an important role in his thought. The believers need their reasoning faculty to find a balance between their needs and the commandments of the law, and they are endowed with free will in order to choose between good and evil.[202] The human free will and its possibility to conquer sin is so important for the salvation of mankind, that in Christ the human rational soul (or mind) has to be assumed as well. This view intensified also Theodore's defence against Apollinarism.[203]

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[198] Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', p. 17, including quotation; eadem, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', pp. 264-65; eadem, 'Die Reste', pp. 27-28.
[199] Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 228-29.
[200] See also Bruns, *Katechetische Homilien*, pp. 63-69.
[201] See also section 1.2.1.
[202] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 117-19.
[203] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 620-22. See also above, section 1.4.4.1.

A reconstruction of Theodore's commentary on *Genesis* shows God moreover as the teacher of angels. The angels who are rational (ܡܠܝܠܐ, *mlila*) recognize the Creator when he uses his word (*melta*, ܡܠܬܐ). The angels have to use their reason to learn about God when they compare the objects of this world through a process of analogy. God instructs humans throughout history.[204]

Related to the distinction between the two *Catastases* is an emphasis in exegesis on the discontinuity between the Testaments: the Old Testament is seen as a separate and propaedeutic text, in which only those *typoi* of Christ are acknowledged that are given by the New Testament.[205]

1.4.6. Participation: Baptism and Eucharist

With a wealth of references Luise Abramowski draws attention to the importance of participation in Theodore's theology. Theodore used this concept of participation to express that Christians can really obtain the heavenly reward (immortal life), the aim of his theology. The present participation in this era is a prerequisite for the next. It is facilitated by the grace of the Holy Spirit, but participation in immortality is only made possible by the resurrection of Jesus.[206] Abramowski further states that baptism is decisive for this participation and more important than the Eucharist. 'An die Taufe werden alle typologischen, durch *participatio* realisierten Beziehungen rückwärts in die Heilsgeschichte, vorwärts zum Eschaton und "aufwärts" zum heiligen Geist und zu Christus geknüpft.' Christ is the *filius dei proprius*; Christians are *filii dei adoptivi* and connected with Christ by *participatio*. They can share in his divine honour because they have the same nature as the assumed man. But only in the coming era they can share in the divine nature. Christ is the prototype and the important stages of his life will be mirrored in the life of the Church. The typology of Theodore puts Christ in a central position between the two eras. Both periods have to take part in his life. Baptism is the turning point in the life of both Christ and of Christians, at which the Holy Spirit and the struggle with the devil are received.[207]

Theodore's conviction that Christ's human nature could not be substantially united with the transcendent divine nature lead to different views on baptism and the Eucharist as compared to those of Cyril. Theodore could consider baptism a transformation into the one body

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[204] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom,* pp. 123-24, with references.
[205] Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', pp. 236-37; Hainthaler, 'Antiochenische Schule u. Theologie', *LThK*^{3} 1 (2006), col. 766-67.
[206] Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', pp. 274-76.
[207] Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', pp. 281-89, quotation esp. p. 281.

of Christ, the head of the Church, but he rejected the possibility of the real presence of the Word in the Eucharist which he explained as a spiritual transformation into the 'human' body and blood of Christ. Cyril, however, took this interpretation literally as Christ's human body. For him Christ's human nature was the body of the Word and participated therefore spiritually in God's nature and those receiving the Eucharist were also sharing in it in the same way.[208] Referring to Cyril's view on the Sacraments, Abramowski states: 'Die Christologie Theodors (und nicht die des Nestorius) ist damit auch in ihrem religiösen Interesse das genaue Gegenbild der Christologie Kyrills von Alexandrien. Denn wenn dieser auf ein Sakrament im Zusammenhang mit der Christologie rekurriert, so ist es die Eucharistie und nicht die Taufe.'[209]

According to Abramowski, the central position of baptism seems to be a feature peculiar to Theodore as it is not seen in his forerunners or his followers. The (partial) participation in the divine nature of Christ because of the common human nature is very important and is often overlooked. Through the Holy Spirit, which plays a central role in baptism, the difference between Christ and Christians can be overcome. But where Christians enjoy only partial grace of the Holy Spirit, Christ has full possession because of his exact (or close) *synapheia* with God the Word. The Christian life, which is made possible through baptism, is a typos of the heavenly reward in which Christians can partly participate through divine service, liturgy and Eucharist. Abramowski holds that Theodore's students took over his solutions of the Christological problems, ignoring its background consisting of baptism and participation. Moreover, the discussion changed more and more into ontology,[210] against which already Ephrem had warned.

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[208] Frederick G. McLeod, 'The Christological Ramifications of Theodore of Mopsuestia's Understanding of Baptism and the Eucharist', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10.1 (2002), pp. 73-75. Later, Cyril would accuse Nestorius of making the Eucharist into an act of cannibalism. Henry Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', *JThS* 2 (1951), pp. 155-56.

[209] Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', p. 293.

[210] Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', pp. 292-93. See also the English translation, eadem, 'The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia', in eadem, *Formula and Context: Studies in Early Christian Thought* (VCSS 365; Ashgate, 1992), pp. 35-36.

1.5. Nestorius versus Cyril of Alexandria

1.5.1. Nestorius and Cyril

Nestorius (c.381? – died after 449 but before 451)[211] came from Antioch. From 428 until his condemnation in 431, he was bishop of Constantinople which recently had become the new capital and considered itself the 'New Rome' of the Christian world. Nestorius was influenced by Theodore. According to Abramowski, much of Theodore's rich Christology did not reappear, because Nestorius did not use the teaching concerning the *Catastases*, participation or baptism with their eschatological traits that were all intertwined in Theodore's Christology.[212] Nevertheless, Roberta Chesnut's explanation of his interpretation of *prosopon,* which will be discussed later, might allow recognition of a greater role for participation in the Christology of Nestorius.[213]

The conflict with Cyril started after a dispute arose about whether Mary should be called *Theotokos* (Mother of God) or not. Nestorius then opted for a form of compromise and decided Mary should be called *Christotokos* (Mother of Christ), because his Antiochene emphasis on the differences between the perfect divinity and humanity in Christ led him to reject any concept that implied a physical or *hypostatic* union between the natures. For Cyril, who belonged to the patriarchate of Alexandria that was competing with Antioch and Rome for influence, and who rather emphasized the union according to *hypostasis* and therefore recognized only one *hypostasis* in Christ, this provided an opportunity to question the orthodoxy of Nestorius officially.

According to Marcel Richard, the Christology of Cyril can be summarized as follows when one concentrates on the *hypostasis*: first, it is not allowed to separate (διαιρεῖ) the *hypostaseis* or natures (Cyril treated these terms as synonyms) after the union, although their distinction (διαφορά) is not annulled; second, the properties (ἰδιώματα) are not to be distributed between two persons or *hypostaseis* (or two independent natures), but should only refer to 'the one incarnated nature (or *hypostasis*) of God the Word' (μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη). Finally, the union of the Word with the flesh is according to *hypostasis* (καθ' ὑπόστασιν).

[211] Luise Abramowski,'Narsai, Homilie XI. "Über die Väter, die Lehrer", ed. F. Martin, *Journal Asiatique* 1899 (Text), 1900 (Übersetzung)', *The Harp* 20 (2006), p. 339; George A. Bevan, 'Nestorius (ca. 381? – ca. 450)', *GEDSH*, pp. 306-307.
[212] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 226.
[213] Roberta Chesnut, 'The two Prosopa in Nestorius' *Bazaar of Heracleides*', *JThS* 29.2 (1978), pp. 400-402.

Grillmeier comments that these formulas were to become the main objects of further dispute.[214]

The Christology of Nestorius was based on a distinction between Word (the divine nature) and Christ (the union of divine and human nature) as seen in the phrase: 'Therefore, the two natures belong to Christ and not to God the Word (*Logos*)'.[215] This stood in sharp contrast to Cyril, who emphasized that Christ and God *Logos* are one and the same. The paradox of Christ with his two natures being the same as God the Word, who has one nature, could be seen from different angles: either starting with God the Word (Cyril and the Miaphysites) or with Christ (Nestorius and the Church of the East). Nestorius argued that he, and not Cyril, was in line with the Nicene Fathers in ascribing the *parsopa of the union* to the two natures in Christ first, and not only to God the Word.[216]

Already in 430, Nestorius had written something similar in his reply to Cyril's second letter, trying to convince Cyril of his interpretation of the Nicene Creed and Paul:

> 'I believe, therefore, in our Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son.' Notice how they place first as foundations the words, Lord, Jesus, Christ, Only-Begotten, and Son, the words common to divinity and humanity. Then they build upon it the tradition of the Inhomination (ἐνανθρωπήσεως), the Resurrection, and the Passion. They do so once the terminology signifying what is common to both natures has been presented, so that what belongs to filiation and lordship may not be separated, and what belongs to the natures be in no danger of confusion in the oneness of filiation.
>
> For in this Paul himself has been their teacher. When mentioning the divine Inhomination and about to go on to the Passion, he uses first the name Christ, a name common to both natures, as I said a short time earlier, and then he adds a specific term. What are his words? *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but*, to omit details, *became obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross*.[217] When he was about to mention his death, in order that no one might assume from this that God the Word was subject to suffering, he put the word Christ first as a name signifying the substance (οὐσίας) capable of suffering and of the nature incapable of suffering in one *prosopon*, so that without danger Christ may be called incapable and capable of suffering, incapable because of his divinity and capable because of the nature of his body. I could say much

[214] Marcel Richard, 'L'introduction du mot "Hypostase" dans la Théologie de l'Incarnation', *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 2 (1945), pp. 245-52; Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 681-86, with references; Van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 335. See also the summary of Cyril's anathemas in section 1.7.

[215] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 710-11; François Nau (trans.), *Nestorius. Le livre d'Héraclide de Damas. Traduit en français, suivi du texte grec des trois homélies de Nestorius sur les tentations de Notre-Seigneur et de trois appendices: Lettre à Cosme, présents envoyés d'Alexandrie, lettre de Nestorius aux habitants de Constantinople* (Paris, 1910), p. 150; Paul Bedjan (ed.), *Nestorius. Le Livre d'Héraclide de Damas* (Paris-Leipzig, 1910), p. 248; ܡܛܠ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢ̈ܐ: ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ.

[216] Bedjan (ed.), *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* pp. 210-11; Nau (trans.), *Le livre d'Héraclide*, p. 127; cf. English translation by G.R. Driver and L. Hodgson (trans.), *Nestorius. The Bazaar of Heracleides* (Oxford, 1925), p. 143.

[217] Nestorius' accurate quotation from a part of Phil. 2: 5-8 in which he noted that he omitted details, is given here in the NRSV. See for the full version the comments above on a fragment from Diodore, section 1.3.

about this and, as said earlier, that the holy Fathers mentioned not a begetting (γεννήσεως) according to the 'economy' (οἰκονομίας), but an inhomination (ἐνανθρωπήσεως).

Nestorius further commended Cyril for sharing orthodox insights, which, however, probably rang differently to Cyril's ears:

> […] In it, I praise the division (διαίρεσιν) of the natures according to the definition of humanity and divinity, and the conjunction (συνάφειαν) of them into one *prosopon*, and not saying that God the Word had need of a second begetting from a woman, and the profession that the divinity does not admit of suffering. In truth such doctrines are orthodox and opposite to the infamous opinions of all heresies concerning the natures of the Lord.[218]

Nestorius could not convince Cyril, who wrote a third letter with twelve anathemas. Nestorius' letter thereupon was condemned at the Council of Ephesus of 431, which was highly influenced by Cyril and eventually led to the condemnation of the works and person of Nestorius. The council remained unacceptable to the Church of the East. Nestorius still tried to defend his position, but did not succeed. He retreated in 431 and was sent into exile in 435. Abramowski states that Nestorius only consented that the two natures of Christ implied two *hypostaseis*, after this was concluded in Cyril's anathemas. This made Cyril the 'Erfinder des Nestorianismus'.[219] Cyril in turn wrote that he felt compelled by Nestorius to state that the unity is 'according to *hypostasis*'.[220] The fact remains that after Cyril's anathemas, Nestorius argued that each nature has its own *hypostasis* which in turn has its own *prosopon*, though in Christ both *prosopa* unite to one *prosopon*. He mainly did so in order to prove how the two *prosopa* could become one.[221]

The first time Nestorius wrote on the two *hypostaseis* of the natures was probably in a sermon in March 431.[222] Nestorius' Christological formula could be summarized as 'two natures, two *hypostaseis* and (two *prosopa* that unite into) one *prosopon*.' It is found in his *Liber Heraclidis* that was inaccessibly kept in Constantinople for a long time and was consequently

[218] Van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 334-35, with further references; Eduardus Schwartz (ed.), *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 1 *Concilium Universale Ephesenum* 1 *Acta Graeca* (Berlin, 1927-29), pp. 29-32; translation with some adjustments after John I. McEnerney, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria, Letters 1-50* (Washington, 1987), pp. 44-45, also in Bart D. Ehrman and Andrew S. Jacobs, *Christianity in Late Antiquity, 300-450 C.E. A Reader* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 179-82.
[219] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 223-24. Hans van Loon also concludes that Cyril had introduced the word *hypostasis* into the Christological debate, as Nestorius had not used it before. Van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 511.
[220] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 686, with references.
[221] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 223-24.
[222] Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum 'Liber Heraclidis'*, pp. 214-15.

unknown to the Antiochenes in Edessa.[223] Sebastian Brock leaves it undecided whether an extreme Antiochene Christological position teaching two *prosopa* was taught by Nestorius or not.[224] The above discussion seems to indicate that Nestorius did teach this, but he did so in respect to the two natures. When looking at the unity he taught only one *prosopon.*

Although adherents of the Church of the East were often pejoratively called ‘Nestorians’, his actual influence in the Church is sometimes questioned.[225] As will become clear, this probably has to do with the fact that in the fifth century Nestorius’ name, doctrine or vocabulary were often suppressed in order to prevent condemnation by the powerful Byzantines. Already in the sixth century, however, some representatives of the Church of the East openly praised Nestorius or dared to refuse requests to suppress his name.[226]

1.5.2. The ‘Liber Heraclidis’

Nestorius’ works were deemed heretical by several councils and destroyed accordingly. It is therefore difficult to assess his work properly. Fortunately, a Syriac translation of his apologetic *Liber Heraclidis,* which was a reaction to the Council of Ephesus written at the end of his life, is preserved. The Greek version was discovered in Constantinople by Mar Aba I.[227] After its Syriac translation was made in 539/40, it became a basis for theology in the Church of the East, although the older form of Antiochene Christology remained here in use as well.[228] Before this time it does not seem to have been studied much, except for some fragments, which were attributed to him and stemmed from the first part of the sixth century.[229] Brock states that this translation ‘had little influence on any Syriac writer apart from Ba-

[223] Abramowski, ‘Die nachephesinische Christologie’, pp. 1-2; eadem, ‘Aus dem Streit um das “Unus ex trinitate passus est”: Der Protest des Ḥabib gegen die Epistula dogmatica des Philoxenus an die Mönche’, in Grillmeier and Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.3, pp. 641-42.

[224] Brock, ‘The Christology of the Church of the East’, p. 164.

[225] Brock does not credit Nestorius with much actual influence on the Church of the East, but sees him merely as a rather ‘symbolic figure or someone who was a martyr to the Antiochene cause’. He argues that Nestorius is not mentioned in their own fifth and sixth-century synods and that the earliest reference to him in Narsai’s *Memra* 11 shows very little knowledge of him. Without further substantiation, however, Abramowski indicates that she does not fully agree with such a reductive trend as expressed by Brock. Nikolai Seleznyov is more explicit and recognizes a stream within the Church of the East that always venerated Nestorius, despite others who condemned him and erased his name from the books of this Church. Moreover, his name could be suppressed for pragmatic reasons. Brock, ‘The Christology of the Church of the East’, pp. 176-77; Abramowski, ‘Narsai, Homilie XI’, p. 333; Nikolai Seleznyov, ‘Nestorius of Constantinople: Condemnation, Suppression, Veneration, with Special Reference to the Role of His Name in East-Syriac Christianity’, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 62 (2010), pp. 169-70 and 188.

[226] See for instance section 1.4.4.2, 1.8, 1.11 and 2.6.1.

[227] Abramowski, ‘Der Protest des Ḥabib’, p. 642.

[228] Abramowski, ‘Die Christologie Babais’, pp. 221-22.

[229] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, p. xlviii.

bai'.[230] However, as we have seen above, the sixth century monk Bar ʿEdta is said to have known it by heart.[231]

The whole book was considered authentic until the middle of the twentieth century, when the authenticity of the extended introduction (ending on p. 125 of Bedjan's edition) and several interpolations at the end were questioned by Luise Abramowski, who referred to the author of the first part as 'Pseudo Nestorius'. Though other scholars considered it authentic[232] and Abramowski reviewed these positions, she holds on to this distinction.[233] She argues that this Ps.-Nestorius did not apply the word *hypostasis* in a Christological context, whereas the real Nestorius did. She holds that Ps.-Nestorius attacked some keywords of Philoxenus of Mabbug that implied a unity of the nature, but not of the *hypostasis*.[234] Abramowski presumes that the reason Ps.-Nestorius did not use the word *hypostasis* at all might have been that he was a monk in Constantinople who wanted to protect the book from destruction by adding several 'Chalcedonian' interpretations and eliminating in his introduction the two *hypostaseis* which the real Nestorius had used. In the avoidance of the term *hypostasis* (*qnoma*) she sees a resemblance with the Theodorians of Edessa and then of Nisibis.[235]

Driver summarized in 1910 the teaching of the *Liber Heraclidis*: Nestorius denied that the unity of Christ is a 'natural composition' in which two elements are combined by the will of some external 'creator', but rather asserted that the union is a voluntary union of divinity and humanity. He denied that the incarnation effected any change in the divinity or humanity and that the divine Word might suffer. He also denied that God was in Christ in the same way as in other saints or that the divinity and humanity of Christ are 'fictitious' and not real. Against many attacks he denied repeatedly that the union of two natures in one Christ involves any duality of sonship. Further Nestorius asserted that the principle of the union is to be found in the two *parsope* of the divinity and the humanity uniting into one *parsopa*.[236]

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230 Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. 177.
231 Scher, 'Analyse de l'Histoire de Rabban Bar ʿEdta', p. 406.
232 See for an overview, Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 708-710.
233 Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 20-24; eadem, 'Histoire de la recherche sur Nestorius et le nestorianisme', *Istina* 40 (1995), pp. 44-55
234 Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 224-25.
235 Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 20-22.
236 Driver and Hodgson, *Nestorius. The Bazaar of Heracleides*, p. xxxii. For the last assertion, see pp. 23, 53-62, 81 (Ps.-Nest.) and 89, 156-59, 163-64, 172, 182, 207, 218-19, 227, 231-33, 245-48, 260-61.

1.5.3. Nestorius' Christological terminology

Nestorius distinguished between *ousia*, nature and *parsopa* although they cannot exist without each other.[237] Abramowski holds that the authentic Nestorius was provoked by Cyril to use 'a scheme of individuation which runs physis, hypostasis, *prosopon*'. Referring to the two natures, Nestorius consequently acknowledged two *hypostaseis* and two *prosopa*, while he had the difficult task to explain how the two *prosopa* became one in Christ. Although Abramowski holds that such a consequence is lacking in the fragment of Theodore's *On the Incarnation* discussed above, the possibility is not to be excluded that Nestorius might have derived this concept of two *prosopa* in Christ from this text.[238] He also might have used this for the concept of two *hypostaseis*, though this is difficult to judge from the Syriac versions preserved.[239]

Grillmeier holds that Nestorius rightly distinguished between two levels of speculation in Christology: one for the unity and the other for the two natures in Christ. As has been discussed above, Theodore did the same in his *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*.[240] Nestorius described the level of the two natures in terms of *ousia* and *physis* (both indicating a real entity), *hypostasis* and *prosopon.* The *hypostasis* is the *ousia* as far as it is determined by all its properties: the *prosopon.* The *ousia* and *physis* receive thus first a form (μορφή) or *schema* or appearance, which is the *prosopon*. This *prosopon* has the meaning of 'role' and 'function', but also of 'human individual'.[241] Nestorius' view is similar to that of the Cappadocian Fathers (second half of the fourth century). His work can be considered an example of the difficulties arising from the Cappadocian distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* in the Trinity when these terms were applied to Christology.[242]

In a Christological context, the meaning of *prosopon* shifts more to 'form', 'image' or 'appearance of a nature' showing all the properties. Nestorius held that the *prosopon* is needed to perceive the nature. Each nature in Christ has therefore its own 'natural *prosopon*' that should be kept distinct to avoid a mixture. *Hypostasis*, accordingly, is a nature in its 'natural *proso-*

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[237] Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* p. 425. ܘܠܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ: ܘܠܐ ܬܘܒ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܘܣܝܐ

[238] Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 21-22; eadem, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 223-25. See also above, section 1.4.4.2.

[239] Abramowski, 'Der Protest des Ḥabib', p. 642.

[240] See above, section 1.4.2.

[241] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 712-13.

[242] Gregory of Nyssa held that what was in common belonged to nature (or *ousia*), while the specific properties pertained to the *hypostasis.* The specific properties thus made the common nature to a *hypostasis*. Especially Heb. 1:3 (see section 2.6.5) and Phil. 2:5-11 (see section 1.3. for Phil. 2:6-8) form the biblical foundations for this view. Gregory compared this distinction to human individuals who are one in being human, but different in their 'hypostatic properties'(ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἰδιώμασι τῆς ἑκάστου αὐτῶν ὑποστάσεως), which are noticeable in the *prosopon.* Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 542-45.

pon', or put differently: it is the same as nature, as far as it is characterized and determined by the *prosopon*. The level of unity in Christ was explained in terms of *prosopon.* Nestorius called this the *prosopon of the union,* whereby each nature uses the natural *prosopon* of the other.[243] This one *parsopa** is also the name.

> And consequently there must be two natures, that of the divinity and that of the humanity, that which has emptied itself into the form (*demuta*) of a servant and the form of a servant which has been raised into *the name which is above all names.* For he who does not remain in his own *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ) can neither be emptied nor diminished nor even raised above all names. Therefore has he said 'the form' and 'the name' which it has taken, which indicates a *parsopa* as of one; and this same name and *parsopa* make the two of them to be understood; and the distinction of nature, one *qnoma* and one *parsopa,* is theirs, the one being known by the other and the other by the one, so that the one is by adoption what the other is by nature and the other is with the one in the body.[244]

While each nature has one *qnoma* and one *parsopa*, the two *parsope* become one in the '*parsopa** of the union' (ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ) of Christ, a term found in the *Liber Heraclidis*[245] and in a Syriac fragment of an earlier sermon ascribed to Nestorius, which is considered authentic.[246]

> - For Christ, it is said, is consubstantial with us (*bar kyanan*) and our Lord: consubstantial with us in the nature of his humanity, our Lord in the nature of his Divinity, and we worship him as one Christ. - In that he is Christ, he is undivided; the Son in that he is Son, is undivided. For we do not say 'two Christs' or 'two sons'. - But the Son is twofold, not in honour, but in the nature, lest we should seem to be making Christ our Lord into an ordinary man or God divested of humanity. - Our Lord Christ is the same, omnipotent and man, but not in the same way. For it is not being God that he was man, but in his Divinity, (he was) God, and in his humanity, (he was) man, and in the two of them, Christ. Christ is the *parsopa* of the union of the natures. For he is the form of him who assumed and of him who was assumed.[247]

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[243] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 712-17.

[244] English translation (with small alterations) after Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, p. 55. Nau also follows the interpretation that each nature has its own *qnoma* and *parsopa*: Bedjan (ed.), *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* pp. 80-81: ܘܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ: ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ. Cf. trans. Nau, *Le livre d'Héraclide*, p. 52**:** 'Ils possèdent la distinction de nature, une seule hypostase et un seul prosôpon (pour chaque nature)'. Luise Abramowski does not agree with Nau's interpretation and holds that 'one *qnoma*' is a problematic interpolation in the Ps.-Nestorian introduction. Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', p. 20, eadem, *Untersuchungen zum 'Liber Heraclidis'*, pp. 184-85.

[245] For example, in Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* pp. 210-12, 223, 305.

[246] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, p. xxxv-xxxvii.

[247] English translation (with adjustments) after Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection,* 5, pp. 72-73; cf. ed. eidem, p. 126.
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܡ ܒܪܟܝܢܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܘܡܪܢܐ ܕܝܠܢ. ܒܪ ܟܝܢܢ ܒܟܝܢ ܐܢܫܘܬܗ. ܡܪܢ ܒܟܝܢ ܐܠܗܘܬܗ܀ ܘܣܓܕܝܢ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܚܕ܆ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܗ، ܕܐܝܬܘ̈ܗܝ
ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܠܐ ܡܬܦܠܓܢܐ ܗܘ܀ ܒܪܐ ܗܘ، ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܪܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܦܠܓܢܐ ܗܘ܀ ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܡܫܝܚܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܬܪܝܢ ܒܢܝܢ܀ ܐܠܐ ܗܘ
ܒܪܐ ܐܝܬܘ̈ܗܝ ܒܥܦܐ. ܠܘ ܒܐܝܩܪܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܟܝܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܦܫܝܛܐ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܪܢ ܢܬܚܙܐ: ܘܠܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܫܠܚ ܡܢ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ.

The union into one *parsopa** is that of two *parsope**, but not a union of the two natures into one nature. As Nestorius emphasized the integrity of the two natures, their properties should be without mixture (ܡܘܙܓܐ), confusion (ܒܘܠܒܠܐ), composition (ܪܘܟܒܐ) and change of *ousia* or form (ܫܘܚܠܦ ܐܘܣܝܐ - ܫܘܚܠܦ ܕܡܘܬܐ).[248] These properties remained in their own *qnoma*. Moreover, the human nature needed its own *qnoma*, as he would be a mere name without a *qnoma*. This argument is reminiscent of the second *Sermo de Fide* of Ephrem discussed above. According to Nestorius, Cyril censured him because…

> [...] because I divide (ܡܦܪܫ) the properties of the union which belong to each of the natures, so that each one of them subsists in its *qnoma*. […] But in name alone he has a body, without *qnoma* and without activity; and for this reason you call him man as something superfluous only in word (ܒܪܬ ܡܠܐ) and in name (ܫܡܐ), because you do not accept to speak of the *ousia* or activity of the man in order that there would not be two natures, each of them with properties and *qnome* and *ousia*.[249]

Nestorius further stated that Cyril also confessed 'of two natures' and he repeated that neither of them is known without *parsopa* and without *qnoma*. In the union, the natural *parsopa* of the one uses that of the other and there is therefore one *parsopa* of the two natures.[250]

The fact that Nestorius could speak of both one and two *parsope* of Christ is explained in various ways. Bedjan assumes that in order to avoid condemnation, Nestorius invented the phrase 'common *prosopon*', which was just a name, to cover the fact that he taught two *prosopa*.[251] Abramowski indicates that the two *prosopa* becoming one was the very problem Nestorius dealt with.[252] Chesnut holds that the two *prosopa* are important, especially in their becoming one. As *prosopon* is also understood in terms of image and will, unification is possible through human obedience that is interlinked with the *prosopon* of God. Working out the passage in Philippians 2:6-7, Nestorius explained that when the man Jesus accepts God's will to become the *prosopon* of God, then 'God becomes the *prosopon* of the man'. The man Jesus

ܡܬܢܟܣܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܒܪ ܗܘ ܐܢܫܘܬ̄ܐ ܐܢܫܝ ܥܠ ܘܦܪ ܢܦܫܐ:ܐܠܐ ܠܗ ܒܗ̇ [ܐܠܐ ܠܗ ܒܗ ܒܪ] ܒܗ܇ ܠܐ ܚܢܝܪ ܒܗ، ܕܐܢܫܘܬ̄ܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܫܘܬܗ،
ܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܐܠܗܐ. ܒܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܝܢ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܘܒܐܬ̈ܘܬܗܘܢ ܡܬ̈ܚ܇ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܗܘ ܕܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܒܢܝܐ܀ܗܘܘ ܚܢܝܪ
ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܗܘ̇ ܕܢܣܒ ܘܕܗܘ̇ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ܀

[248] Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* p. 291.
[249] Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* p. 291.
[...] ܡܛܠ ܕܡܦܪܫ ܐܢܐ ܠܕܝ̈ܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܩܘܡ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ. [...] ܒܫܡܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ:
ܕܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܦܓܪܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܕܡ ܝܬܝܪܐ ܒܒܪܬ ܡܠܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܘܒܫܡܐ ܩܪܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܒܪܢܫܐ: ܒܗ;
ܕܐܘܣܝܐ ܘܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܠܐ ܡܩܒܠ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܐܡܪ. ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ: ܕܕܝ̈ܠܝܬܐ ܘܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܘܐܘܣܝܐ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ.
Translation differs partly from that of Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, pp. 208-209.
[250] Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* pp. 304-305; Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides,* pp. 218-19.
[251] Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide*, pp. xvii-xx.
[252] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 224-25.

has to be obedient so that the image (ܨܠܡܐ) of a servant (the fallen human) that had been assumed can be turned into the image of God (the unfallen human image), as the expression of himself, his *prosopon*. Chesnut summarizes this as follows: ‘To be the *prosopon* of God means to Nestorius to be the Image of God, and to be the Image of God is first and foremost to will what God wills, to have the will and purpose of God.’[253] Here the participation, so emphasized by Abramowski in her treatise on Theodore’s theology, seems to play an important role again, when one combines it with a notion of *parsopa* that may include all Christians.[254] The next fragment illustrates how Christ prayed to be an image of the Archetype, and to remain firm in doing God’s will, so that they might be one *prosopon* without division.[255]

> He raised up his very soul unto God, adapting that which (was) of his will to the will of God,[256]
> in order that he might be the image (ܨܠܡܐ) only of the Archetype (ܕܪܝܫ ܛܘܦܣܐ) and not of his being (ܕܝܠܬܗ);
> for the image according to its (own) being is without form (*demuta*) and its proper (ܕܝܠܝܐ) form is that of the Archetype, and they are indeed two, but it is one and the same appearance.[257]
> Since in activities (ܒܥܒܕ̈ܐ) in bodily things he has preserved the form of God from (ܡܢ) all the sufferings of the body, it was preferable to him that the will of God should be done and not that of the flesh;
> and in activities he made himself a form (ܘܥܒܕ̈ܗ ܠܗ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܒܥܒܕ̈ܐ) to will that which he wills,
> that there might be one and the same will in both of them, and one *parsopa* without division; the one is the other and the other is the one, while the other and the one remain. As he remained firm in all things.

According to Chesnut, Nestorius contrasted the *hypostatic* union—which he considered to be a union of the two natures—with the *prosopic* union in three ways. First, a *prosopic* union is seen as a voluntary union and therefore not forced and passible, but free and permanent. *Prosopon* and will were in fact closely associated terms: ‘to have the *prosopon* of God means to will what God wills’ (Bedjan, p. 348). Moreover, will, purpose and rationality were already related terms that stood in contrast to ‘nature’. In monastic life, ‘nature’ was something to be avoided as one tried ‘to free oneself from the level of nature as far as possible in order to live at the level of will the rational life of the angels’. Second, the *prosopic* union is interpreted as acting as God acts (Bedjan, p. 76). Third, the *prosopic* union is also soteriological. As each nature or *ousia* must have a *prosopon* which reveals it, the *prosopon* is therefore the revela-

[253] Chesnut, ‘The two Prosopa in Nestorius’ *Bazaar of Heracleides*’, pp. 400-402; Bedjan, *Le Livre d’ Héraclide,* p. 267; see for a similar description also Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum ‘Liber Heraclidis’*, pp. 190-93.
[254] McLeod, *The Roles of Christ’s Humanity in Salvation*, pp. 151 and 163-65.
[255] Bedjan, *Le Livre d’ Héraclide,* p. 96. English (with small alterations) after Driver and Hodgson, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, p. 66.
[256] ܟܕ ܡܠܝܫ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝ̈ ܒܨܒܝܢܗ ܠܨܒܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ.
[257] ܘܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ: ܗܘ ܚܕ ܗܘ ܘܚܕܐ ܚܙܬܐ

tion of the nature or *ousia* of God. Further elaborating Phil. 2, Nestorius explained that the one *prosopon*, Christ, reveals the nature of humanity and of divinity that are operating in each other. Each nature reveals the other. Christ the Word exists in two modes: he is by nature God, but in *schema* (ܐܣܟܡܐ) a man. *Schema* (appearance) is almost synonymous to *prosopon* or form (ܕܡܘܬܐ), (Bedjan, pp. 241-42). To exist in *schema* (in manifestation) is contrasted with existing in nature or *ousia* (in concrete reality). The human nature has become the image of God and is therefore the manifestation (the *prosopon*) of the nature of God to the world. The emphasis on following Christ (who followed the will of God) in order to become part of the *prosopon* of Christ is connected with rationality. Moreover, as ascetics intended to live the rational life of angels, this can be seen as a strong expression in Nestorius' thinking of a form of Christian *paideia* that fostered rationality and that pervaded the whole life. Chesnut assumes that the Platonic notions of the reflecting images, whereby true images of each other share a common being, is essential to Nestorius' thought and allow him to speak of one and two wills, activities (or operations) and *prosopa.*[258]

Abramowski holds that the soteriological and pedagogical aspects of Ps.-Nestorius' Christology can also be noticed in his Christological expressions. He often brought *parsopa** into connection with *mdabbranuta* (the guidance of man intended for his salvation) and spoke for instance of 'the use of the *parsopa of mdabbranuta* (ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ) for our sake'.[259]

1.5.4. Comparisons with the Christological terminology of Cyril

Nestorius was aware of the linguistic problems and tried to clarify these with Cyril, while asking him how he interpreted some of the key words.[260] This did not seem to help. Now as then, the meanings of these abstract terms applied to explain a paradox are complex, difficult to prove and often used in contradicting ways. Cyril had made a selection from Nestorius' texts while applying his own terminology. In the Synod of Ephesus this was used as 'proof' of Nestorius' heresy and Nestorius had to defend himself with this prescribed terminology.[261]

André de Halleux holds that it was due to their different understanding of *hypostasis* that Nestorius was led to distinguish two *hypostaseis* in Christ because he understood it at the level of nature, with a real and personal character.[262] Grillmeier states that for Cyril *physis* and

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[258] Chesnut, 'The two Prosopa in Nestorius' *Bazaar of Heracleides*', pp. 403-408.
[259] Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum 'Liber Heraclidis'*, p. 193; Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* p. 13.
[260] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 715-6; Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* pp. 229-30.
[261] Abramowski, *Untersuchungen zum 'Liber Heraclidis'*, p. 206.
[262] André De Halleux, 'Nestorius. Histoire et Doctrine', *Irenikon* 66 (1993), pp. 175-78.

hypostasis belonged together, and that *hypostasis* meant to him ‘existent, real substance’.[263] As already mentioned briefly above, McLeod points at different interpretations of *hypostasis* dependent on its transitive or intransitive use. Cyril is thought to have understood *hypostasis* in the intransitive way, signifying that a nature is really existing and is therefore a substantial individual in a concrete way. Nestorius and Theodore, on the contrary, are thought to have interpreted *hypostasis* in a transitive sense, and therefore as ‘an extraneous power that grants life to concrete natures’. Natures that exist need therefore their own *hypostasis*. The one *hypostasis* propagated by Apollinarius and Cyril of Alexandria meant consequently for Nestorius and Theodore that Christ had only one nature, as a *hypostasis* could not be separated from its nature.[264]

After investigating the meaning of Christological terms in the work of Cyril during the first years of his conflict with Nestorius, and comparing these to the formulations of more recent scholars, Hans van Loon argues that Cyril interpreted *hypostasis* as an individual or even separate reality. Although Cyril recognized the two natures, he rejected a division of Christ in two separate realities, because his emphasis on a union according to *hypostasis* was meant to indicate that the *Logos* together with his humanity is one separate reality, one entity.[265]

All these interpretations seem to point in the same direction. As a basis for their defence of either one *qnoma* or of two *qnome* in Christ, both Cyril and the Antiochenes could have taken the view (as expressed at least by Ephrem) that something needs a *qnoma* in order to really exist. Where one *qnoma* indicated to Cyril the reality of Christ, two *qnome* indicated for the Antiochenes the reality of both his divine and human natures. Subsequent chapters will show that such views seem as applicable in the seventh century as in Cyril’s time. However, each party went further than Ephrem had allowed in investigating and trying to define the divine.

As we have noted above, Cyril did not allow a separation (διαίρεσιν) of the *hypostaseis* or natures after the union, but he recognized their distinction (διαφορά).[266] Such refined terminology might have complicated the debates even more.[267]

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[263] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 683-86; quotation, Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1. *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)* (English translation, 2nd edn; London, 1975), p. 481.
[264] McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*, pp. 44-47.
[265] Van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 578-81.
[266] Van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 335.
[267] King discusses such terms as used in the Greek letters of Cyril and compares these with Syriac translations. In general, several terms for ‘less harsh notions of separation, distribution, attribution and distinction’ (e.g. διαιρεῖν, διαφέρειν) tend to be rendered in the Peal of ܦܪܫ. The Pael ܦܪܫ sometimes can have a stronger meaning. ܦܠܓ is often used for ‘stronger notions of dividing and splitting, usually used by Cyril in a pejorative sense and attributed to the thinking of his opponents’. Cyril usually used here διορίξειν, which in Syriac also can be rendered as ܦܠܓ, especially for the distinction of the ‘Sayings of Christ’. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 144-46.

An example of the main difference between Cyril and the Antiochenes is shown in their interpretation of the phrase ‘the Word became flesh’ (John 1:14), which played a key role in their controversies. In his second letter to Nestorius, Cyril used this phrase to support his view of the single nature of Christ, when he interpreted it as ‘became a partaker of flesh and blood like us’. The Antiochenes, however, could only understand this as an unacceptable ‘change’ of the Word into flesh. Emphasizing the distinction between the natures of Word and flesh, later representatives understood the phrase as ‘took our humanity’, ‘took flesh’, or ‘he was revealed in the flesh’. This in turn was objectionable in Miaphysite eyes.[268]

Nestorius and Cyril argued over whether or not their views were in line with the Fathers who had formulated the Nicene Creed. During their life time this Creed was also accepted at the first Synod of the Church of the East.

1.6. The first Synod of the Church of the East, 410

Some decades before enmities and contradictory interpretations would result in new schisms, the first Synod of the Church of the East took place in 410. Although this was already enmeshed in internal struggles, there seem to have been no clear indications for the imminent new Christological conflicts. The preserved account of this synod recognized the Nicene Creed (325) including its anathemas. It is found in the *Synodicon Orientale*,[269] a collection of synods and accompanying letters of the Church of the East from 409-10 until the end of the eighth century, probably put together under Timotheos I, Catholicos from 780 until 823.[270]

The *Synodicon Orientale* offers a ‘pure’ form of this Nicene Creed. André de Halleux, however, points out several Syrian neologisms that stem from the sixth century, which would indicate that this version contains later revisions.[271] Only this later Syriac version of the Creed shows the word *qnoma* as the translation for *hypostasis:*

> We believe in one God, Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all that is seen and that is not seen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, who was born from the Father, the Only-Begotten; that is,

[268] John 1:14, NRSV: ‘And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.’ Peshitta: ܘܡܠܬܐ ܒܣܪܐ ܗܘܐ. ܘܐܓܢ ܒܢ. ܘܚܙܝܢ ܫܘܒܚܗ. ܫܘܒܚܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܒܐ܆ ܕܡܠܐ ܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܘܩܘܫܬܐ܀ Sebastian Brock, ‘“Syriac Dialogue” – An example from the Past’, *The Harp 15* (2002), pp. 312-13; reprint with small changes in *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18.1 (2004), pp. 64-65. Brock referred for these later examples to the Synod of 585 and to Babai (d.628).
[269] Chabot (ed. and trans.), *Synodicon Orientale*; Braun (trans.), *Synhados*, see also Introduction, note 2.
[270] Fiey, *Jalons*, p. 17.
[271] Brock, ‘Christology in the Synods’, with references, p. 126. See for further discussion of the various Syriac terms for the incarnation, Daniel King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 126-36.

> from the Essence (ܐܝܬܘܬܗ, *ituta*) of the Father; God from God and Light from Light, true God from true God, who was born and was not made (ܐܬܥܒܕ), of the same essence (ܒܪ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ, *bar ituta*) as the Father, through whom everything came into being that is in heaven and on earth; who for the sake of us human beings and for the sake of our salvation came down from heaven and was embodied and inhominated (ܘܐܬܓܫܡ ܘܐܬܒܪܢܫ, *etgasham w-etbarnash*; compare Greek: σαρκωθέντα and ἐνανθρωπήσαντα); and he suffered and rose after three days, and ascended to heaven; and he is coming to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Spirit.
>
> Those who say that there is (a time) when he was not, and that before he was born he was not, or that he came into being from nothing; or who say that he is from [another] *qnoma* or from another essence (*ituta*); or who consider that the Son of God is subject to change and alteration (ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܐ ܘܡܫܬܓܢܝܢܐ, *meshtahlpana w-meshtagnyana*): such people the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.[272]

Another, West Syrian, version seems to be older and probably contains elements of a local Persian creed.[273] The oldest extant manuscript stems from the eighth century.[274]

> *We believe in one God, Father,* who in his Son, made *heaven and earth*; and in him were established the worlds above and below; and in him he effected the resurrection and renovation for all creation.
>
> And in his *Son, the Only-Begotten who was born* from him, *that is, from the essence* (*ituta*) *of* his *Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; he was born and was not made; who is of the same* nature (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ, *bar kyana*) *as his Father*; *who for the sake of us human beings* who were created (ܐܬܒܪܝܢ) through him, *and for the sake of our salvation*, *descended* and put on a body and became (ܗܘܐ) man, *and suffered and rose* on the third *day, and ascended to heaven* and took his seat at the right hand of his Father; *and he is coming* in order to *judge* the *dead* and the *living*.
>
> *And* we confess the living and *holy Spirit*, the living Paraclete who (is) from the Father and the Son;
>
> [And] in one Trinity [and] in one Essence (*ituta*) [and] in one will.[275]

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[272] English translation by Brock (who also added the transcriptions), ‘Christology in the Synods’, p. 133; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, ed. pp. 22-23, (cf. trans. p. 262).
ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܒܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܒܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ܆ ܥܒܘܕܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܘܕܐܪܥܐ ܘܕ̈ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܘܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ.
ܘܒܚܕ ܡܪܝܐ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܡܢ ܐܒܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ: ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܕܐܒܐ.
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ: ܘܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܢܘܗܪܐ: ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ:
ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܘܠܐ ܐܬܥܒܕ: ܒܪ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܕܐܒܐ: ܕܒܐܝܕܗ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܗܘܐ܆ ܕܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܐܪܥܐ.
ܗܘ ܕܡܛܠܬܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܘܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܩܢܢ ܢܚܬ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ: ܘܐܬܓܫܡ ܘܐܬܒܪܢܫ:
ܘܚܫ ܘܩܡ ܠܬܠܬܐ ܝܘܡܝܢ: ܘܣܠܩ ܠܫܡܝܐ: ܘܐܬܐ ܠܡܕܢ ܚܝ̈ܐ ܘܡܝ̈ܬܐ. ܘܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ.
ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ: ܕܐܝܬ ܐܝܡܬ، ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ: ܘܩܕܡ ܕܢܬܝܠܕ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ: ܐܘ ܡܢ ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܗܘܐ: ܐܘ ܡܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ܆ ܐܘ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܐ ܘܡܫܬܓܢܝܢܐ ܣܒܪܝܢ ܠܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܠܗܠܝܢ ܡܚܪܡܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܩܬܘܠܝܩܝ ܘܫܠܝܚܝܬܐ܀

[273] Brock, ‘Christology in the Synods’, p. 126.

[274] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 56.

[275] Translation by Sebastian Brock, ‘Christology in the Synods’, p. 133, with small adjustments. Square brackets and Syriac are mine. As in Brock’s translation, the verbal agreements with the East Syrian version are italicized; see also his description on p. 126. Arthur Vööbus, ‘New Sources for the Symbol in Early Syrian Christianity’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972), pp. 293-95.
ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܒܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܒܐ [ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ]ܗܘ ܕܒܒܪܗ ܥܒܕ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܪܥܐ ܘܒܗ ܐܬܬܩܢܘ ܥ̈ܠܡܐ ܕܠܥܠ ܘܕܠܬܚܬ ܘܒܗ ܥܒܕ ܢܘܚܡܐ ܘܚܘܕܬܐ ܠܟܠܗ ܒܪܝܬܐ. ܘܒܗ ܒܪܗ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܡܢܗ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܕܐܒܘܗܝ.ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ. ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܢܘܗܪܐ. ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ.ܐܬܝܠܕ ܘܠܐ ܐܬܥܒܕ. ܗܘ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܒܘܗܝ، ܕܒܐܝܕܗ، ܐܬܒܪܝܢ ܘܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܩܢ

Both Syrian creeds offer examples of the confusing use of several technical terms, which would dominate later Christological controversies, while several phrases were abandoned later in the West.[276]

A comparison of the content of the Syriac reconstruction of the creeds Theodore and Nestorius might have used shows that Theodore used a more extended version with elements from the Constantinople Creed and Antiochene Tomus. It is remarkable that the Antiochene addition 'First-Born of every creature' after 'Only-Begotten' (Syr. ܝܚܝܕܝܐ), which was used by Theodore to emphasize the difference of two natures of Christ and remained important within Antiochene tradition, has not been incorporated.[277] Nestorius' version was very close to the version preserved in the *Synodicon Orientale*, apart from the insertion 'from the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin'.[278] The reconstructed Syriac creeds of Theodore and Nestorius contain some neologisms that may have been introduced later by Philoxenus of Mabbug, such as ܐܬܓܫܡ– ܐܬܒܣܪ- ܐܬܒܪܢܫ- ܐܬܦܓܪ-ܚܕܢܘܬܐ - ܐܬܚܫ and ܬܪܝܢܘܬܐ.[279] Both versions render 'of the same essence' with the older *bar kyana* (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ), and 'was embodied and inhominated' is rendered in the Theodorian version with ܐܬܓܫܡ ܘܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ that was current in the days of Philoxenus of Mabbug. The Nestorian version renders it with ܐܬܒܪܢܫ [...] ܐܬܒܣܪ that was also used in the later works of Philoxenus and in Syriac versions of the letters of Cyril that must have been translated before 484. In the fifth century several translations could be used and Daniel King sees this as an example of experimental translations trying to deal with Chalcedonian vocabulary.[280]

The choice of words was very important in Christological issues: already Theodore, for instance, discussed the right interpretation of the expression 'became (ἐγένετο) flesh' (John 1:14) or 'inhominated' (which was rendered 'became man' [ܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ] in both the West Syrian version of the Nicene Creed and in the Syriac version of Theodore' *Commentary*), because the verb 'become' should not imply a change.[281] Another factor that led to an increase of pro-

ܢܚܬ ܘܠܒܫ ܦܓܪܐ ܘܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܘܚܫ ܘܩܡ ܠܝܘܡܐ ܬܠܝܬܝܐ ܘܣܠܩ ܠܫܡܝܐ ܘܝܬܒ ܡܢ ܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܐܬܐ ܕܢܕܘܢ ܡܝܬܐ ܘܚܝܐ.
ܘܡܘܕܝܢܢ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܚܝܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ ܦܪܩܠܛܐ ܚܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܒܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ.
See also R.H. Connolly, 'Nestorius's version of the Nicene Creed', *JThS* 16 (1915), p. 401.
[276] Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', pp. 165-69.
[277] See above, section 1.4.2.
[278] Connolly, 'Nestorius's version of the Nicene Creed', pp. 397-402; Bedjan, *Le Livre d'Héraclide*, pp. 208 and 212-13.
[279] King suggests, however, that ܐܬܒܪܢܫ may have been used before Philoxenus' revision. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 15-16 and 135.
[280] King, 'The Philoxenian versions of the New Testament and Nicene Creed', pp. 17-20.
[281] Abramowski, 'Der Protest des Ḥabib', pp. 635-39; see also above, section 1.4.2.

gressively more accurate translations and to the collection of many *florilegia* with quotations from the Fathers, was the gradual shift in theological debate from a focus on biblical authority towards patristic texts that were claimed and cited by the diverse parties.[282]

1.7. The Byzantine councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon I (451)

In 431, Cyril played a major role in the condemnation of Nestorius at the council of Ephesus. Outside the Church of the East he became the norm for the judgment of patristic writings.[283] The council decided which writings were according to the Nicene Creed and which were not, as this was considered the really authoritative Christological formula. The bishops present accepted the second letter of Cyril to Nestorius written the year before, and condemned Nestorius' reply. This second letter of Cyril was to enjoy the highest canonical authority, especially with regard to questions on the Incarnation and the unity of the subject in Christ. The third letter with the twelve anathemas was considered to be in line with Nicaea, and though it did not receive a similar status at this time, it became ever more important.[284]

The anathemas condemned anyone who: did not acknowledge that Mary is *theotokos* (Syr. ܝܳܠܕܰܬ ܐܠܗܐ) (1) and that the Word from God the Father had been united according to *hypostasis* (2); divided (Syr. ܡܦܰܪܶܫ) the *prosopa* or *hypostaseis* after the union and connected them only by a conjunction (*synapheia*) of dignity, but did not acknowledge that they were united by a physical union (καθ' ἕνωσιν φυσικήν) (3); distributed (Syr. ܡܦܠܓ) between two *prosopa* or *hypostaseis* the expressions used either in the gospels or in the apostolic writings (4); said that Christ is a God-bearing (θεοφόρον, Syr. ܕܡܫܪ ܒܗ ܐܠܗܐ) man and denied that Christ is God in truth even if he is made partaker of blood and flesh like humans (5); denied that the Word became (Syr. ܗܘܐ) flesh (6) which is life-giving and belongs to the Word (11); denied that God the Word suffered in the flesh (12). From this already abbreviated version, special attention could be drawn to the second, third and fourth anathema as they contain statements on the number of natures, *hypostaseis* and *prosopa*.[285]

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[282] King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 4-11; idem, 'The Philoxenian versions of the New Testament and Nicene Creed', pp. 9-11
[283] Jansen, *De Incarnatione*, p. 132.
[284] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 687-91.
[285] Schwartz, *ACO* 1.1, pp. 40-44. The Syriac insertions and the following Syriac fragments (Anathemas 2-5) are given as East Syrian theologians might have used them. They are taken from the most important Syriac version of Cyril's anathemas, as preserved in Brit. Mus. Add. 14,557, which is dated by Wright to the seventh century. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 37-38 and 319-27.

Nestorius defended his position in his *Liber Heraclidis*. Other Antiochenes rejected the anathemas but also sought different degrees of compromise. Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, and Andreas of Samosata seem to have gone far in finding a conciliatory formulation of Christology that avoided a separation in two persons as well as a mixing of the natures. Theodoret even acknowledged that Cyril's less extreme formulations of 433 expressed his own view and started to underpin his Christology with quotations from Cyril. In 433 the Antiochenes and Cyril came to a Union, but this did not annul the anathemas.[286]

The conflicts went on and in 451 the Byzantine Emperor tried to end the discussions at the Council of Chalcedon. This reaffirmed the second letter of Cyril[287] and expressed the formula of Christ being 'two natures in one Person (*prosopon*) and one *Hypostasis*'. This became known as the Chalcedonian Orthodoxy, which tried to avoid any unwanted conclusion. The following English translation of the Chalcedonian Definition offers some of the original Greek expressions, as well as corresponding Syriac expressions from a West Syrian version.[288]

> Following, then, the holy Fathers, we all with one voice teach that it should be confessed that our Lord Jesus Christ is one and the same Son, the same perfect (ܓܡܝܪܐ) in Divinity, the same perfect in humanity, truly God and truly man, the same (consisting) of a rational (ܡܠܝܠܬܐ) soul and body;
> *homoousios* (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ) with the Father as to his Divinity, and the same *homoousios* with us as to his humanity;
> in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; begotten of the Father before ages as to his Divinity, and in the last days, the Same, for us and for our salvation, born of Mary the Virgin *Theotokos* (ܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ) as to his humanity;
> One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten (μονογενῆ), (ܚܕ ܘܗܘ ܒܪ ܗܘ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܒܪܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ),
> made known in two natures (which exist) without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; (ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσύγχυτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως)
> (ܒܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ. ܕܕܠܐ ܒܘܠܒܠܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܦܘܠܓܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܦܘܪܫܐ ܡܬܝܕܥ)

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(2) ܡܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܘܕܐ ܕܐܬܝܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐܝܬ ܠܒܣܪܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܒܐ: ܘܚܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܡ ܒܣܪܗ: ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܒܪ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ ܐܟܚܕ ܚܪܡܐ ܢܗܘܐ
(3) ܡܢ ܕܦܠܓ ܩܢ̈ܘܡܐ ܒܚܕ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܚܘܝܕܐ: ܒܕ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܒܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܩܪܐ ܐܘ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܐܘ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܢܩܦ ܠܗܘܢ: ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܬܪܐܝܬ ܒܟܘܢܫܐ ܕܚܘܝܕܐ ܟܝܢܝܐ ܚܪܡܐ ܢܗܘܐ
(4) ܡܢ ܕܠܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܐܘ ܩܢ̈ܘܡܐ ܢܦܠܓ ܒܢ̈ܬ ܩܠܐ ܕܐܝܬܝܢ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܘܕܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܘܕܫܠܝܚܐ: [...] ܚܪܡܐ ܢܗܘܐ܀
(5) ܡܢ ܕ ܡܡܪܚ ܕܢܐܡܪ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܠܒܫ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ: ܘܠܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܫܪܪܐ: ܐܝܟ ܒܪܐ ܚܕ. ܐܦ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܒܣܪܐ ܘܐܫܬܘܬܦ ܡܛܠ ܕܗܘܐ ܦܓܪܐ ܗܘ ܡܠܬܐ ܘܐܫܬܘܬܦ ܠܢ: ܒܗ ܒܕܡܘܬܢ ܒܕܡܐ ܘܒܣܪܐ. ܚܪܡܐ ܢܗܘܐ.
Some other Syriac versions translate 'God-Bearing' in anathema 5 with forms of the verb ܠܒܫ. They all denote that God dwelt in Christ or had put him on. Idem, pp. 325-26.

[286] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 692-93 and 700-706.

[287] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 690.

[288] English translation with some alterations after Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1, p. 544 and Theresia Hainthaler, 'A short analysis of the Definition of Chalcedon and some reflections', *The Harp* 20 (2006), pp. 328-31, with references. Syriac text of West Syrian Version in British Museum Add. 12,156, fol. 41rc-41va; François Nau (ed. and trans.), 'Documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'Église nestorienne 2. Textes monophysites', (PO 13; Paris, 1919), pp. 229-30.

> at no point was the difference between the natures taken away by reason of the union (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ),
> but rather the property (ܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ) of both natures is preserved, and (both) concurring into one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis* (ܘܠܚܕ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܘܠܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܪܗܛܝܢ),
> not parted or divided into two *prosopa* (ܟܕ ܠܐ ܡܬܦܠܓ ܠܬܪܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܐܘ ܡܬܦܪܫ),
> but one and the same Son and Only-Begotten, (ܐܠܐ ܚܕ ܘܗܘ ܗܘ ܒܪܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ)
> God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ; (ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ. ܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ)
> as the prophets from the beginning (have declared) concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

Two of the added four qualities of this union ('without confusion' and 'without change') were added against those Miaphysites who were thought to allow a change of the divinity as a consequence of their interpretation of 'the Word became flesh'. 'Without confusion' was especially meant against the strict Monophysitism of Eutyches, who recognized only one nature in Christ. The other two ('without division' and 'without separation') were included against the doctrine ascribed to Nestorius (the teaching of two sons), who was condemned here again.[289]

Within the Byzantine Empire, Chalcedon was rejected by Miaphysites because of its two-nature formula. This threatened to split the Byzantine Church. Between 475 and 518, several Emperors tried to regain theological unity by promoting new decrees, but these efforts were often subordinate to their politics. These decrees tended to be silent on Chalcedon and referred mainly to the Nicaenum (325), Constantinopolitanum (381) and Ephesinum (431). In 482, Emperor Zeno issued his edict, the *Henotikon*, which reaffirmed the faith of Nicaea and Constantinople, approved of Cyril's twelve anathemas, and condemned Nestorius, Eutyches, and 'anyone who has thought, or thinks, any other opinion, either now or at any time, whether at Chalcedon or at any synod whatsoever'. In its attempt at reconciliation, it was silent on 'the two natures in one *hypostasis*'. The *Henotikon* was, however, not uncontested by both pro- and anti-Chalcedonians.[290]

Chalcedon began to play a decisive role in Byzantium after the new Emperor Justin I (518-27) restored it at the beginning of his reign.[291] Deviant formulas and interpretations were no longer allowed in the Byzantine Empire and dissenting Christians were persecuted. Some were exiled and many others fled to Persia, thus strengthening Miaphysitism there.

Grillmeier holds that the reception history of Chalcedon was dominated by a confrontation between the formula of Chalcedon and Cyril's presentation of the incarnation, as found in his

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[289] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 773-74.
[290] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 2.1, pp. 267, 272, 285-304: Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, p. 100.
[291] Richard Price, 'The Development of a Chalcedonian Identity in Byzantium (451-553)', in Ter Haar Romeny, *Religious Origins of Nations?*, pp. 308-12.

anathemas.[292] Abramowski indicates similarly that Chalcedon was not the main reference point in the disputes, but rather the Cyrillian Christology with its accentuation of one nature, Cyril's introduction of the one *hypostasis*, and his anathemas that condemned Nestorius and Antiochene Christology for teaching two *hypostaseis*. It is remarkable that many of the theologians involved in the conflicts after 451 had studied in Edessa. For instance, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug were followers of Cyril, while Habib, Barsauma of Nisibis, Narsai and the Catholicos Aqaq adhered to the Antiochene school of thought.[293]

The immediate reception of Chalcedon within the Church of the East is difficult to interpret.[294] Initially, it does not seem to have been known well in remote areas. The bishops in Mesopotamia would only have known that the condemnation of some heretics was withdrawn and that the Trinitarian faith was confirmed.[295] However, there are some indications that it might have become known on a wider scale. Chalcedon took place during the life time of the Persian Narsai (c. 415-502), who was to influence the School of Nisibis profoundly. He wrote a *memra* to defend Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius while criticizing Cyril and an unjust Synod that had caused schisms and uncertainty. Although this description also could apply to Ephesus, Abramowski holds that it referred especially to Chalcedon.[296] Moreover, as we have seen above, the bishop of Edessa, Ibas, signed the decrees of Chalcedon in order to be rehabilitated. This probably had the effect that the Theodorian part of the School of Edessa had to be careful using the word *parsopa* when this might be interpreted as implying the teaching of two *parsope*. Such a restriction in terminology might have started here already shortly after 431.[297]

It was not long before this time that the Church of the East gained a relatively protected status in the Sasanian Empire. Although it developed outside of Byzantium, it was influenced by the Theodorian ideas spread by the School of Edessa. The *Synodicon Orientale* does not

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[292] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, p. 682.
[293] Abramowski, 'Der Protest des Ḥabib', pp. 641-42; eadem, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie', pp. 1-2. On Narsai and Habib, see also below section 1.8.
[294] Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', pp. 163-64.
[295] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 2.1, p. 257.
[296] Abramowski, 'Narsai, Homilie XI', pp. 338-41. On Narsai and this *memra*, see also the next section.
[297] Sullivan, *The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, pp. 80-82; Abramowski, 'Der Protest des Ḥabib', pp. 641-42. The exact position of Ibas is not clear. Claudia Rammelt holds that only in later times Ibas was to be perceived as the main advocate of the Antiochene case. She recognizes, however, that he was influenced by Theodore and supported Antiochene views although he distanced himself from Nestorius. Ibas could adhere to Chalcedon because it allowed a distinction of the two natures after the Union. Claudia Rammelt, *Ibas von Edessa: Rekonstruktion einer Biographie und dogmatischen Position* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 55-56, 138-39 and 295. Adam Becker questions Ibas's position more profoundly, and points out that although most of the secondary literature says that Ibas was a major figure at the School, the only source contemporary with Ibas 'would lead us to believe that Ibas was not associated with the School of the Persians and that the School was not generally known for its dyophysite learnings'. Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, p. 64.

show an explicit acceptation of Chalcedon as is the case for Nicaea and Constantinople, and some expressions—like the title '*Theotokos*' for Mary—were not used in the Creeds. But the account of the Synod in 544 mentioned the canons of Chalcedon (which dealt only with practical issues) among a list of canons of other Synods accepted by the Church. This seems to imply at least some recognition.[298] The Synod of 554 showed in tenor similarities to the Chalcedonian definition, but did not mention *qnoma* or *parsopa* in a Christological context.[299]

Brock provides an overview of several linguistic problems that complicated the acceptability of Chalcedon. Especially the words *mia hypostasis* proved to be a stumbling block to both Miaphysites and the Church of the East as they held the view that *hypostasis/qnoma* and 'nature' implied each other. The formula 'two natures in one *hypostasis/qnoma*' was therefore illogical to both parties. The East Syrian Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II wrote in the seventh century that he considered the somewhat Dyophysite position of Chalcedon a step in the right direction, but still illogical. He rejected the one *qnoma*, as two natures should imply two *qnome* as well. The Miaphysites (or 'Anti-Chalcedonians') rejected the two natures, because they emphasized the one nature according to their starting point 'the one incarnated nature of God the Word' and considered the combination of one *hypostasis/qnoma* and two natures illogical.

The difference in meaning of Christological concepts contributing to the conflicts had developed over the centuries. It became more complicated when the discussion was also conducted in Syriac rather than Greek. In the fourth and early fifth century the Greek *ousia* and *physis* could both be rendered with the Syriac *kyana,* as for instance in the early translation of *homoousios* with *bar kyana* or *bar ituta*. The Church of the East maintained this practice in the later fifth and sixth century and associated *kyana* more closely with *ousia/ituta* than with *parsopa,* whereas the Miaphysites associated *kyana* rather with *parsopa* while distinguishing it sharply from *ousia/ituta.* The East Syrians understood therefore Cyril's 'one physis' as being the same as 'one *ousia*'.[300]

All parties continued to develop their own language and there are indications that several terms were sometimes used with more restriction. Some expressions that formerly could have been used on both sides were disqualified by Cyril after the Nestorian controversy. The term *naqiputa* (συνάφεια, conjunction) and metaphors to describe the incarnation were therefore no

298 Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 545 (cf. trans. pp. 555-56).
299 Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', p. 127. See also below, section 1.13.1.
300 Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 130-31. Brock translates *ituta* (οὐσία, *ousia*) as '(divine) essence' and *itya* as '(divine) Being'.

longer used outside the Church of the East.[301] The Church of the East continued to use the term 'union', but only concerning the union into one *parsopa* and never into one nature (or *qnoma*). Abramowski also notes that where Theodore could easily use the words *hypostasis* and *prosopon* in several ways, while using *prosopon* to describe the Christological unity, this was not acceptable anymore because of the way Nestorius had defined it. Consequently, Chalcedon also used the term *hypostasis* for the Christological unity.[302] Moreover, although Cyril's introduction of the one *hypostasis* had provoked Nestorius to speak of 'the double *hypostaseis* of the natures', the contemporary Antiochenes in Edessa reacted differently. As we have seen, one reason was that his *Liber Heraclidis* was unknown to them; another was that after Cyril's anathemas they had to avoid any impression of teaching two *hypostaseis* (*qnome*).[303]

Thus, as a result of the conflicting interpretations, three main Christian streams were known at the end of the fifth century in the Persian-Syrian world: the 'Antiochene' Dyophysites and the Miaphysites, who fought each other bitterly, particularly in Mesopotamia, but both rejecting for various reasons the third group, the Chalcedonians in the Byzantine Empire, who rejected them in turn. Despite attempts to reconcile and find theological solutions, it was never possible to please all requirements at once. The differences between the diverse parties were, however, not always sharp and Brock offers therefore a less demarcated model which acknowledges a broader spectrum of the diverse Christological doctrines.[304]

1.8. Narsai (c.415-502/503) and the Schools of Edessa and Nisibis until 540

Narsai played a major role in both the School of Edessa and that of Nisibis. As we have seen, the 'Persian School' in Edessa was probably founded after many Christians had fled the Nisibis area in 363/64. Ephrem belonged to them and influenced the school profoundly. This school in Edessa was closed in 489 because of its Dyophysite theology. Most of the students and teachers fled thereupon to Nisibis where they were received by Barsauma, its powerful bishop. Here they had less direct contact to the western theology than they had had in Edessa.

[301] De Halleux, 'Nestorius. Histoire et Doctrine', pp. 166-67; Abramowski, 'Histoire de la recherche sur Nestorius', pp. 52-53.
[302] Abramowski, 'Zur Theologie des Theodors von Mopsuestia', p. 264.
[303] Abramowski, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie', pp. 1-2; eadem, 'Der Protest des Ḥabib', pp. 641-42; eadem, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 20-22. See also section 1.5.2. and 1.8.
[304] Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 131-33; idem, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire', pp. 79-84; idem, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', pp. 163-64.

Narsai, who had already fled earlier from Edessa to Nisibis (probably after 471), was the most important teacher.

Narsai belonged to the first students in Edessa who studied the works of Theodore in Syriac translation. He could compare the looser school structure of Edessa with the more institutionalized and formalized school in Nisibis where he promoted the study of Theodore. Narsai's *Memra* 11, '*On the three Fathers-Teachers: Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius*',[305] was written in Nisibis and was probably a speech held at the opening of the School. This *memra* describes Narsai's scholarly background, the history and present situation of the Church and the theological direction. Its criticism of Cyril and Chalcedon may have influenced many students. Narsai considered Theodore the most learned in sacred scriptures of all. According to the Synod of 605, this fundamental role of Theodore in exegesis would already have been confirmed in the Synod of Metropolitan Barsauma (484).[306]

The teachings of Ephrem were not completely abandoned. Around roughly 600, *The Cause of the Foundation of Schools,* which is an insider's history of the School of Nisibis, distinguished between the orally transmitted 'traditions' (ܡܫܠ̈ܡܢܘܬܐ, *mashlmanwata*) of the school stemming from Ephrem and ultimately from Addai the Apostle, the 'founder' of the School in Edessa on the one hand, and the 'interpretation' (ܦܘܫܩܐ, *pushshaqa*) of the 'Interpreter' (ܡܦܫܩܢܐ, *mpashqana*), Theodore, on the other hand. Narsai is said to have incorporated the unwritten traditions of Ephrem into his works and Narsai's predecessor Qiyora to have used them previously for his commentaries.[307] However, as the *Cause* had already falsely aligned Evagrius Ponticus with Diodore in order to legitimate Evagrius' works,[308] it is not certain what value can be attributed to such oral traditions when they are difficult to verify.

It was probably the affinity between the exegesis of Ephrem and Theodore that had facilitated a quick reception of Theodore's works in the School of Edessa. Narsai's *memre* adapted in content mainly Theodore's basic concepts, but in their poetic form they remained closer to the genre of Ephrem. Narsai followed Theodore in attaching great historical value to the Old

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[305] ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܐܒܗܘܬܐ ܡܠܦ̈ܢܐ: F. Martin (ed.), 'Homélie de Narsés sur les trois Docteurs nestoriens', *Journal Asiatique* 9.14 (1899), pp. 446-92; trans. idem, *Journal Asiatique* 9.15 (1900), pp. 469-525.

[306] Abramowski, 'Narsai, Homilie XI', pp. 341-48. On Barsauma's synod, see section 1.9.

[307] The *Cause* informs us that when Theodore's interpretations were not yet translated into Syriac, Qiyora made use of the *mashlmanwata* of Ephrem which would have been transmitted from Addai the Apostle. The Cause continues: 'For also what we call the *mashlmanuta* of the school, we do not mean the interpretation of the Interpreter, but rather these other things that were transmitted from mouth to ear from the beginning'. Addai Scher (ed. and trans.), 'Mar Barḥadbšabba ʿArbaya, évêque de Ḥalwan (VIe siècle). Cause de la Fondation des Écoles', (PO 4; Paris, 1908), pp. 382-83, pp. 382-83: ܐܦ ܓܝܪ ܗܿ ܕܩܪܝܢ ܡܫܠ̈ܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܣܟܘܠܐ: ܠܐ ܠܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ: ܐܠܐ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܦܘܡܐ ܠܐܕܢܐ ܡܫܬܠܡ̈ܢ ܗ̄ܘܝ، ܡܢ ܩܕܝܡ. Cf. also Becker, *Sources*, pp. 149-50; Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', pp. 632-33.

[308] Scher, 'Cause', pp. 377-78; Becker, *Sources*, p. 145.

Testament and many of Narsai's *memre* deal with its themes and characters, which are used as examples to show God's guidance by means of revelations, prophecies and types. Where Narsai followed both in their historical approach according to which each generation made mistakes, he was, however, foremost influenced by Ephrem's rather negative scheme of righteous punishment that was countered by God's grace and not by Theodore's more positive interpretation of sin as providing opportunities to learn through experience and discrimination and thus come to maturity.[309]

Narsai not only adopted Theodore's pedagogical schematization of history, but also enriched his idea of divine *paideia* with concrete scholastic metaphors. This tendency to project 'mundane practice into heaven' would later become more pronounced within the School.[310]

> And he taught them a new book which they did not know,
> As if (they were) children he wrote a sound instead of letters,
> And he made them read the writings on the origin of the light
> In the form of a verse he directed the sound before their eyes,
> And they began to shout, 'Blessed is the creator who created the light.'[311]
> As if with a finger he was showing them the power of his essence,
> 'See, Angels, that I am the power over every power,'
> As if with a pen he was writing for them a book in the mind,
> And he made them read the writings on the creation of the universe.
> In the form of a Master his gesture was raised over the head of their rows,
> And he was repeating to them the power of the meaning of his secrets.[312]

Learning was not just an intellectual activity, but was also a religious activity aimed to imitate the ceaseless worship of the angels.[313] In the above example from Narsai's *Homilies on Creation*, the instructional aspect dominates clearly and permeates the exegesis of many stories

[309] Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', pp. 623-26 and 635-36; Judith Frishman, ܒܟܠ ܦܘ̈ܪܣܝܢ ܘܒܟܠ ܦܘ̈ܪܣܝܢ *The Ways and Means of Divine Economy. An Edition, Translation and Study of Six Biblical Homilies by Narsai* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 40, 186 and 189-90.

[310] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 123-25.

[311] Philippe Gignoux (ed. and trans.), *Homélies de Narsai sur la Création* (PO 34.3-4; Turnhout, 1968), 2:250-54, pp. 152-53; cf. English translation by Adam Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, p. 124.
ܘܐܠܦ ܐܢܘܢ ܣܦܪܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܐܝܟ ܕܠܫܒܪ̈ܐ ܟܬܒ ܒܪܬ ܩܠܐ ܚܠܦ ܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ. ܘܐܩܪܝ ܐܢܘܢ ܟܬܝ̈ܒܬܐ ܕܪܫܝܬܗ، ܢܘܗܪܐ.
ܒܕܡܘܬ ܦܣܘܩܐ ܬܪܨܗ ܠܩܠܐ ܩܕܡ ܚܝ̈ܣܘܗܝ. ܘܫܪܝܘ ܩܥܝܢ ܒܪܝܟ ܒܪܘܝܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܢܘܗܪܐ.

[312] Gignoux, *Homélies de Narsai sur la Création* (ed. and trans.), 2:352-57, pp. 158-61; cf. English translation by Adam Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, p. 124.
ܐܝܟ ܕܒܨܒܥܐ ܡܚܘܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܝܠ ܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܕܚܙܘ ܡܠܐܟ̈ܐ ܕܚܝܠ ܥܠ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܚܝ̈ܠܝܢ ܐܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܚܝܠܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܒܩܢܝܐ ܟܬܒ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܣܦܪܐ ܒܡܕܥܐ ܘܡܩܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܝ̈ܒܬܐ ܕܒܘܪܝܗ ܕܟܠ. ܒܕܡܘܬ ܪܒܐ ܩܡ ܗܘܐ ܪܡܙܗ ܒܪܫ ܣܕܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܘܬܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܝܠ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܙܘܗܝ.

[313] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 205-207.

from the Old Testament. God had prepared man's salvation from the beginning through Christ.[314]

Abramowski reconstructs a specific Edessene-Theodorian Christology from Narsai's works and from quotations from Habib, who had been educated in Edessa and is mainly known from quotations preserved in the work of his opponent Philoxenus. The Edessene-Theodorian tradition was marked by a terminology that reserved *qnoma* for the Word as a divine Trinitarian *qnoma*, and *parsopa* only for the one person of Christ. Because Philoxenus and others who followed Cyril's condemnation attacked anyone teaching two *qnome*, Abramowski suggests that Habib and Narsai made this distinction in order to avoid the impression that they taught two *qnome*. Narsai saw the difference between the two natures of Christ as a difference between two completely different orders that could only be connected by the activity of the Word. The concept 'Word' played an important role in the debates with the Cyrillians. Narsai differentiated between the divine nature of the Word and its activities such as love, will and power, and he referred to this activity with the word *mdabbranuta*, that was also used by Theodore. Because the Word is divine and transcendent, the Theodorians rejected expressions like 'the Word became flesh in its *qnoma*'.[315]

Abramowski further points out the usual typical Dyophysite interlacing ('die übliche dyophysitische Verschränkung') considering the contrast between unity and distinction in both Trinity and Christology: the fact that there are three *qnome** in one Divinity and two natures in one Christ does not mean that there are three Gods or two Sons. This also occurs in the work of Habib, who held that Christ's name referred to both the human nature and the *mdabbranuta* of the Word. Habib demanded a theologically correct terminology with regard to the properties of these two natures during the major events in Christ's life. So, when Christ died, God died in *mdabbranuta* and not in nature, but for the actual dying, the human nature was necessary. Although the soteriological goal demanded a union of the natures, it could only be expressed according to the properties of each nature. Therefore, considering Christ's life on earth, 'naturally' could only be said of the human nature of Christ.[316] This reminds one of Ephrem's distinction between 'true names' and 'borrowed' names that could be applied to

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[314] The other examples (such as the creation, Enoch and Elijah, the flood, the Tower of Babel, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, the tabernacle, David and Soul, Jonah) are taken from Judith Frishman's analysis of some of Narsai's *memre*. The Mosaic revelation is explained as a summary of the six days of creation. Moses was a pupil who had to learn that God is the creator, which lesson Moses in turn should teach others. The disobedient act of eating of the fruit showed that man's free will requires training of his discernment. The death of Cain taught Adam that he was mortal, but here as in many other stories (such as the tabernacle and the brazen snake), God's wise design gave hope for immortality. Frishman, *The Ways and Means of Divine Economy*, pp. 18-24.

[315] Abramowski, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie', pp. 1-8; eadem, 'Der Protest des Ḥabib', pp. 641-42.

[316] Abramowski, 'Der Protest des Ḥabib', pp. 622-23 and 646, quotation esp. p. 646.

both human beings and God.[317] Narsai further emphasized the revelation of the Unseen in what is seen. For our salvation the Word made an image of himself that was endowed with reason and dwelt in it. He thus assumed 'one of us', the second Adam in whom the despicable nature of mankind is renewed.[318]

The main Christological terms in Narsai's *memra* on Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius are 'Word' (God) and 'body'. Both are important and together they are called one *parsopa.* Narsai rejected the accusations of Cyril against Nestorius, but rather considered the followers of Cyril heretics who denied the 'body', because they claimed that the human did not suffer and was not tempted. Narsai further emphasized that the Word does not diminish, increase or suffer, but that this only applies to the human nature.[319]

Due to his polemical context, Narsai felt compelled to emphasize the distinction of the two natures, as is seen in *Memra* 56.[320] Here, Narsai pointed out that he acknowledged two natures, but only one *parsopa* in Christ. The two natures are united in a single love and a single will in the union. In *Memra* 81 he explained that the perfect humanity and perfect divinity in Christ are called 'one *parsopa'*, just as soul and body together are called a *parsopa.* Similarly, just as 'the soul is (ܗ̣ܘ) the nature of life and the body the nature of death, the Word (is) the nature of the (divine) essence (*ituta*) and the body the nature of mankind. One creature and one creator. They are one in the union'.[321] In the same *Memra* 81 Narsai reformulated 'the Word became flesh and lived in us',[322] into 'there came into being flesh, and he dwelt (ܫܪܐ) in us'. Narsai explained that this did not mean that the Word was lowered to a state of coming into being, 'but that he made (ܥܒ̣ܕ) for himself flesh, and dwelt (ܫܪܐ) in his good will'. Babai would later follow the same interpretation in his *Liber de Unione*. This distinction of the two natures in which the divine Word was not liable to change, was important for salvation. Narsai further asked what it would help our human nature if the Word became flesh and did not take flesh

[317] See above section 1.2.2.
[318] Abramowski, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie', pp. 5-7.
[319] Abramowski, 'Narsai, Homilie XI', pp. 341-48; Martin (ed.), 'Homélie de Narsés sur les trois Docteurs nestoriens, p. 471.
[320] Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. **1**69, Patriarchal Press (ed.), *Homilies of Mar Narsai* 1 (San Francisco, 1970), Homily 56, p. 594.
[321] Patriarchal Press (ed.), *Homilies of Mar Narsai* 2 (San Francisco, 1970), Homily 81, p. 215; Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 64.ܢܦܫܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܗ̣ܘ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ: ܘܦܓܪܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܘܬܐ܀ ܘܚܕ ܦܪ̈ܨܘ ܘܦܐ ܡܬܟܢܫܝܢ: ܬܪܝܢ ܕܦܪܫܝܢ ܚܕ ܗ̣ܘ ܚܕ. ܡܠܬܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܬܐ. ܘܦܓܪܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ܀ ܚܕ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܘܚܕ ܒܪܘܝܐ: ܚܕ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ.
[322] As we have seen in section 1.5.4, the wording of John 1:14 (see for the Syriac, section 1.6) was favoured by the Alexandrian School and already played an important role in the discussions between Nestorius and Cyril.

from Mary, since salvation is only possible through the assumed human nature of the incarnate Christ.[323]

Memra 17, which intriguingly mentions ‘two *qnome*’, is not authentic according to Brock, who still considers it ‘very possible that the homily belongs to the sixth century’.[324] Abramowski had interpreted it first as a reaction to Cyril, but in more recent work she also denies its authenticity and even explains that in contrast to Nestorius, Narsai did not speak of one or more *qnoma* in Christology, unless he cited opponents.[325] Although its authenticity is denied by such eminent scholars, it is added in this overview as it might be an illustration of a sixth century school of thought that wanted to prove that the two *qnome* formula stood in the tradition of the Fathers of the Church, namely Narsai, Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius, and even of the Apostles.

> The Creator, adorable in his honour, assumed (ܢܣܒ) a body which is from us, that by it he might renew the image of Adam which was worn out and effaced. A rational (ܡܠܝܠܐ) temple the Holy Spirit built in the bosom of Mary, (and) through (its) good-pleasure the whole Trinity concurred. The natures are distinct in their *qnome*, without confusion: with one will, with one *parsopa* of the one Sonship. He is then one in his Divinity and in his humanity; for the humanity and the Divinity are one *parsopa*.
> ‘Two natures’, it is said, ‘and two *qnome* is our Lord in one *parsopa* of the Divinity and the humanity.’
> Thus does all the Church of the orthodox confess; thus also have the approved doctors of the Church taught, Diodore, and Theodore, and Mar Nestorius.[326]

In an anonymous text with excerpts from an apology for Narsai that was probably written after 530, one finds a statement ascribed to him. It is not clear whether it is authentic. In 1972, Abramowski could not find it in the already published texts of Narsai.[327] The fragment explains the difficulty in understanding the one *parsopa* of the Word and the temple, and the Son in two natures, whereby the Son took a man and covered his splendour with him. So here too, *parsopa* signifies ‘splendour’.

[323] Patriarchal Press (ed.), *Homilies of Mar Narsai* 2, Homily 81, p. 209; Brock, ‘The Christology of the Church of the East’, pp. 171-72. On Babai, see also section 2.2.2.
[324] Brock, ‘The Christology of the Church of the East’, p. 174.
[325] Abramowski, ‘Histoire de la recherche sur Nestorius’, p. 45 and 55; eadem, ‘Narsai, Homilie XI’, p. 335; eadem, ‘Die nachephesinische Christologie’, p. 4.
[326] Alphonse Mingana (ed.), *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina* 1 (Mosul, 1905), p. 282. Mingana omits the statements on the two *qnome* in this quotation and in the reproduced Nicene Creed, but gives them in his introduction, idem, pp. 10 and 274. Translation after R.H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 13-14, see also idem, p. 16.
[327] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, p. xxxv-xxxvii.

Of Mar Narsai: I say, one *parsopa* of the Word and the temple that was chosen by him; and I confess one Son, and I proclaim two natures, the glorious and hidden nature of the (eternal) Word, substance (ܐܝܬܘܬܐ) from his father, and our own nature, which he took (ܢܣܒ) […];
complete (ܡܫܡܠܝܐ) in the Divinity of him (is he) who was equal with him who begat him, and perfect (ܓܡܝܪܐ) moreover in his humanity in soul and body of the mortals; two which are in union (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ), one love and one will; the only begotten Word from the Father (ܚܕ ܚܘܒܐ ܘܚܕ ܨܒܝܢܐ. ܡܠܬܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܒܐ) and the form of a servant which he assumed (ܘܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܕܢܣܒ). Now in the mind, (130) the glorious (things) are distinguished from the humble things, and are understood as relating to (ܠܚܕ [...] ܡܬܝܚܣܢ) the one Lord. Of the two natures which became one, although I have distinguished between the glorious and humble (things) of the natures in my confession, I make no rent, for I confess that one is the Son. It was not possible for mortals to contemplate his nature, and for this reason he took (ܢܣܒ) a man so that he might cover his splendour with the man.[328]

1.9. The Synod of 486

The first account of a synod of the Church of the East after the preceding one (424), as preserved in the *Synodicon Orientale*, shows a gap of about sixty years. This corresponds with a gap of more than thirty years after the conflicts caused by Chalcedon (451). In the years preceding this synod, the Church of the East had to deal with internal disruptions, growing Miaphysitism, famine and nomadic raids. In 484 many bishops revolted successfully against the catholicos under the leadership of Barsauma, the bishop of Nisibis who also acted as protector of the troops at the front and had supported Narsai.[329]

The first canon dealt with people falsely dressed like monks who travelled around and spread heretical thoughts. They were accused of blaspheming the *mdabbranuta* of 'our Lord' and the gospel of the apostles, and of refusing to marry or to eat from food that God had created for thanksgiving.[330] Oscar Braun comments that from now on, the synods treated the Miaphysite monks and the Messalian vagabonds as one of a kind.[331] Similar descriptions of such monks can be found in the Synods of 585 and 596. Theopaschism was rejected in the anathema.

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[328] Translations with some alterations and additions after Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection, 5,* p. 74 (cf. ed. eidem, pp. 129-30).
[329] Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse,* pp. 142-47. The *Synodicon Orientale* explains that the acts of Barsauma's synod (484) have not been included because Barsauma would have repented his opposition to Catholicos Aqaq and therefore retracted the outcome of his synod. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 61 (cf. trans. pp. 308-309).
[330] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 54. As we have seen above in section 1.1.3, the Synods of 484 and 486 forbade celibacy.
[331] Braun, *Synhados*, p. 62.

Against the threats encountered, the twelve bishops present and Catholicos Aqaq expressed again the correct confession (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬܐ). They accepted the Trinitarian dogma and formulated it in their own words (one divine *kyana* in three complete *qnome*). The union of the two natures of Christ was expressed as an inseparable conjunction (*naqiputa*) in a single Lordship and a single worship, while both natures keep what belongs to it. It was now for the first time that the term *mdabbranuta* appears in the *Synodicon Orientale*.[332] As we have seen above, Theodore had already aligned this term closely to God's salvation plan. The contemporary Narsai used the term *mdabbranuta* to indicate the activities of the Word effecting the Incarnation, which were to be discerned from his nature or *qnoma*. This 486 council may have been influenced by Narsai's use of this term.

> Let the faith of us all be in the single confession of the one divine nature (*kyana*) which exists in the three complete *qnome* of the single true and eternal Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (a confession) by which paganism is vanquished and Judaism judged.
>
> Further, let our faith in the *mdabbranuta* of Christ be in the confession of the two natures (*kyane*), of the divinity and of the humanity, while none of us shall dare to introduce mixture, mingling or confusion (ܡܘܙܓܐ ܐܘ ܚܘܠܛܢܐ ܐܘ ܒܘܠܒܠܐ) into the differences (ܫܘܚ̈ܠܦܐ) of these two natures; rather, while the divinity remains preserved in what belongs to it (ܒܕܝܠܗ̇), and the humanity in what belongs to it, it is to a single Lordship and to a single (object of) worship that we gather together the exemplars (*parshagne*) of the two natures, because of the perfect and inseparable (ܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܢܝܬܐ *la- metparshanita*) conjunction (*naqiputa*) that has occurred for the divinity with respect to the humanity.
>
> And if someone considers, or teaches others, that suffering and change (*hasha w-shuhlapa*) have conjoined (*nqep*) the divinity of our Lord, and (if) he does not preserve, with respect to the union (*hdayuta*) of the *parsopa* of our Saviour, a confession of perfect God and perfect Man, let him be anathema.[333]

The interpretation of a union in one *parsopa* as a single object of worship is in line with Diodore and Theodore. This was also the first synod to use the term *parsopa* in a Christological context, and this remained an exception until 585. The expression of 'exemplars (or copies, *parshagne*) of the two natures' seems to imply the notion of individual instances of general

[332] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 301. Chabot translates *mdabbranuta* here as 'incarnation' because it is used in a theological sense for the earthly life of Christ. In order to distinguish this from literal terms for 'incarnation', this example is not being followed here.

[333] Translation with small adjustments after Sebastian Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 133-134; Syriac in Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 54-55.
ܬܗܘܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܠܢ ܒܚܕܐ ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܬܠܬܐ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܡܫܡ̈ܠܝܐ ܕܚܕ ܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ
ܘܡܬܘܡܝܬܐ ܕܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ. ܬܗܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܢ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ
ܘܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ. ܟܕ ܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܢܢ ܢܡܪܚ ܕܢܥܠ ܡܘܙܓܐ ܐܘ ܚܘܠܛܢܐ ܐܘ ܒܘܠܒܠܐ ܒܟܠ ܟܠ ܫܘܚ̈ܠܦܝܗܘܢ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܟܕ ܡܩܘܝܐ
ܘܢܛܝܪܐ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܒܕܝܠܗ̇ ܘܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܒܕܝܠܗ̇: ܠܚܕܐ ܡܪܘܬܐ ܘܠܚܕܐ ܣܓܕܬܐ ܡܟܢܫܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܫܓܢܝܗܘܢ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ
ܓܡܝܪܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܢܝܬܐ ܕܗܘܬ̤ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ. ܘܐܢ ܐܢܫ ܡܣܬܒܪܐ ܐܘ ܡܠܦ ܠܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ: ܕܚܫܐ ܘܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܢܩܦ
ܠܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ܆ ܘܠܐ ܢܛܪ ܠܘܬ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܗ ܕܦܪܘܩܢ ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܐ: ܗܢܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܚܪܡ ❖

natures. Is this an indication of what later was officially called the *qnoma* of each nature? This does not seem to be improbable, as *parshagna* indicates an individual copy (of the law).[334]

The bishops condemned any mixture of the natures or change in the divinity of Christ and stated that the specific property of both divinity and humanity remained preserved. This seems to be an echo of Chalcedon. Jérôme Labourt interprets it solely as an opposition to Miaphysitism.[335]

In the definition of 486 a focus might be seen on liturgy and worship. Several phrases are in the tradition of the Dyophysite language of Theodore.[336] Macomber gives several examples, for instance ‘one Lordship’, ‘one adoration’ and ‘inseparable conjunction’ and he interprets these as signs of ‘Nestorianism’.[337] Opponents often called the Church of the East ‘Nestorian’, claiming that it taught two sons, two persons and two subjects while splitting the two natures of Christ. This position remained dominant up to the twentieth century.[338]

In 497, Babai, the next Catholicos (497-502), who was the former secretary to the *marzban* (governor) in Bet Aramaye, convoked a Synod which confirmed those reforms of Barsauma’s synod (484) that allowed monks to marry. After his death a period of anarchy started that led to two rival catholicoi ordaining their own bishops.[339] A section of the monks rejecting the decrees of 484 and 486 that forbade celibacy and restricted their influence is thought to have left the Church of the East and to have joined Miaphysite circles.[340] Celibacy seems to have been so imperative in Miaphysite monasticism that these reforms might have been introduced against ‘the dangerous popularity of Monophysite doctrine in monastic circles’.[341] In any case,

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[334] In the Bible, the term *parshagne* only appears in Deut. 17:18; Jos. 8:32 and Ezra 5:6; the other references do not point to a Christological context, Robert Payne Smith (ed.), *Thesaurus Syriacus* 2 (Oxford, 1901), col. 3310. Sebastian Brock also states that this term does not seem to be used elsewhere in a Christological context and that ‘in translations from Greek the word usually represents ἀντίγραφον’, Brock, ‘Christology in the Synods’, p. 133.

[335] Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l’empire perse*, pp. 147-48. It may be noted that the terms mixture (ܡܘܙܓܐ), confusion (ܒܘܠܒܠܐ) and change (ܫܘܚܠܦܐ) are also found in the Syriac version of Nestorius’ *Liber Heraclidis*, see above, section 1.5.3.

[336] Brock, ‘The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire’, p. 76.

[337] Macomber, ‘The Christology of the Synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, A.D. 486’, pp. 151-52.

[338] Sebastian Brock considers Macomber’s interpretation unnecessarily hostile, idem, ‘Christology in the Synods’, p. 126; idem, ‘The “Nestorian” Church: a Lamentable Misnomer’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78 (1996), also in idem, *Fire From Heaven*, Chapter 1; Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 12 and 68-69.

[339] Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l’empire perse*, pp. 139-42 and 154-62; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 62-68 (cf. trans. pp. 310-17).

[340] Bertold Spuler, *Die Morgenländischen Kirchen* (Leiden, 1964), pp. 11-12.

[341] Stephen Gero, *Barṣauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century* (CSCO 426, subs. 63; Leuven, 1981), p. 87.

Miaphysite chroniclers of the sixth century interpreted the loss of celibacy as a sign that the Church of the East had defected to 'Nestorianism'.[342]

1.10. The Synod of 544 with the letters of Catholicos Aba I

During the period of internal disruptions, the Miaphysites were able to gain widespread influence while challenging the exclusive position of the Church of the East in Persia.[343] This period of schisms was ended by Catholicos (Mar) Aba I (540-52), a former high ranking Zoroastrian who had converted to Christianity. He had been secretary to the governors of Bet Garmai, paralleling the career of Catholicos Babai. Mar Aba had studied in the School of Nisibis, where he also taught after having travelled abroad. As catholicos, Mar Aba reorganized the Church and visited the bishoprics throughout the Persian Empire in order to personally solve the conflicts. He also founded a theological school in Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[344] Aba had brought works by Nestorius back from his travels in the Roman Empire. Nestorius' apologetic *Liber Heraclidis* (see above), written at the end of his life, was translated into Syriac in 539/40. From now on, the older form of Antiochene Christology had to be harmonized with this book.[345]

The Synod of 544 seems to have given some acknowledgement of the Byzantine Council in Chalcedon (451) when it stated that it accepted one of its canons.[346] It contained no Christological statements and the letter concerning the 'orthodoxy of faith' (ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܝܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ) by Aba remained traditional and seems to have avoided controversial technical terms. The letter explained that the name of Christ teaches his divinity (which exists in three *qnome*) and his humanity (that he put on, or dwelt in). The humanity was anointed with the divinity anointing him. It is useful here to remember that in Syriac (as well as in Hebrew and Greek) the name 'Christ' means 'the anointed':

> he is Christ God and Man, that is, the humanity which has been anointed with the divinity which anointed it […]. Thus from the name of Christ we have learnt concerning the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit;

[342] Peter Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis und die Aufhebung der Klerikerenthaltsamkeit im Gefolge der Synode von Beth-Lapat (484), *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 37.1 (2005), pp. 13-14, with references.
[343] Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, p. 169.
[344] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 36.
[345] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 221-22.
[346] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 545 (cf. trans. pp. 555-56).

and from this same (name) we have understood concerning his humanity. In it is the seal of the entire confession of Christianity.[347]

The accompanying anathemas rejected Theopaschism and a doctrine of two Sons, which for some might imply a quaternity. The Trinity as well as the humanity and divinity of the Son have to be acknowledged in every prayer.[348] In the last canon, the bishops of the East declared that concerning the faith expressed by the Nicene Fathers they completely adhere to the thoughts of the blessed interpreter (ܡܦܫܩܢܐ) Theodore.[349] Although the possibility of a later addition should not be excluded, one might assume that this remark especially referred to his commentary on the Nicene Creed.

1.11. Justinian and the Byzantine council of Constantinople II (553)

The discussion on Theodore was given new impetus in the sixth century when the Miaphysites Severus and Philoxenus increasingly opposed anyone teaching two natures, especially after Severus had become patriarch of Antioch in 512. This indirectly affected the Church of the East. In 507, Philoxenus already influenced a synod which anathematized Diodore and Theodore among others, but also those who accepted Chalcedon. Severus and Philoxenus explicitly identified Chalcedon with ‘Nestorianism’. Finally, they both demanded that the *Henotikon* would replace Chalcedon.[350] This opposition seems to have been a factor leading to the Chalcedonian restoration in the Byzantine Church started in 518 by Justin with the introduction of the yearly celebration of Chalcedon. The restoration included the rejection of non-Chalcedonians such as ‘Nestorians’, ‘Eutychians’ and ‘Severians’. Under Justinian (527-65) Chalcedon even became the norm according to which he could either condemn Miaphysites (536) or seek reconciliation (532 and 553) while making concessions.[351]

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[347] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 542-43 (cf. trans. p. 553). English after Brock, ‘Christology in the Synods’, p. 135.
ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܕܐܬܡܫܚܬ. [ܒܐܠܗܘܬܐ] ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܗ[...] ܗܘ ܡܢ ܫܡܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ: ܥܠ ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܠܟܠܢ. ܘܥܠ ܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܡܢܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܐܬܝܠܦܢ. ܘܒܗ ܗܘ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܚܬܡܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ.
[348] Brock, ‘Christology in the Synods’, pp. 126-27; The second letter of Mar Aba I is an appendix in Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 540-43 and 550-53; Braun, *Synhados*, pp. 134-37.
[349] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 550 (cf. trans. p. 561).
ܢܚܫܘܒ ܕܝܢ ܕܥܠ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܒܟܠܗ ܡܕܢܚܐ: ܕܥܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܬܠܬܡܐܐ ܘܬܡܢܬܥܣܪ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܚܣܝܐ: ܕܠܗ ܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܒܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܟܠܢ ܘܡܫܪܪܝܢ: ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܗܘ ܕܒܗܕܐ ܠܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܘܢܘܗܪ ܐܠܗܐ: ܠܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܬܐܘܕܘܪܘܣ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܘܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ܀
[350] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 2.1, pp. 304-23; Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 100-105. On the *Henotikon,* see also section 1.7.
[351] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 2.1, pp. 360-63.

Although Richard Price concludes that ‘it was the age of Justinian that saw the attainment, in both east and west, of a truly Chalcedonian identity in the imperial Church’, he holds that this mainly applied to the patriarchate of Constantinople, because Justinian ‘had to be the patron of the non-Chalcedonians as well’. This situation might have lasted until ‘the loss of the non-Chalcedonian regions in the seventh century’.[352]

In 532, Justinian and Severians unsuccessfully tried to clarify concepts in a dialogue.[353] The attempt was made to decide how the views of Cyril were in line with Chalcedon. The Severians offered a compilation of texts intended either to prove their own position, or prove that opponents like Theodore were heretics. This compilation did not indicate which excerpts of Theodore’s work were used, but it is highly probable that it consisted of a further selection from Cyril’s work against Theodore.[354] The Severians indicated that they were very grieved by the gentle reception of Ibas and Theodoret at the Council of Chalcedon. They did not accept Justinian’s compromises, however, and in 536 their main leaders were anathematized which meant the end of the Severian hierarchie.

Justinian restarted his efforts to find a compromise after the Persians had ransacked Antioch in 540, and his Empire was weakened by other disasters around 542/43. The Miaphysites thereupon consecrated their first bishop (Jacob Baradeus) in response to the great need for pastoral care in Edessa.[355] Justinian attempted to win the loyalty of the Miaphysites in the eastern part of his empire. The support his wife Theodora (d.548) publicly gave to Miaphysite interests may sometimes have served this aim.[356]

In 553, Justinian also issued the Theopaschite formula *unus ex trinitate crucifixus*, which asserted that Jesus who suffered is the same as the *Logos*. Peter the Fuller (d.488) had introduced the addition ‘immortal, who was crucified for us’ to the *Trisagion*, and Severus of Antioch had made it standard in the Miaphysite liturgy. In Fuller’s time, Antiochenes could understand this as the Logos who had become man and suffered in the human flesh, but in 553 the Byzantines applied it to the immanent Trinity and concluded that God the Word was crucified. Most Byzantines considered this new interpretation to be in line with orthodoxy, but the Church of the East read it in a heretical sense as it attributed suffering to God.[357] Sebastian Brock comments that ever since 533, this formula had been the ‘prize bone of contention be-

[352] Price, ‘The Development of a Chalcedonian Identity in Byzantium’, pp. 308-312 and 323-25.
[353] Hainthaler, ‘A short analysis of the Definition of Chalcedon’, p. 326; Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, pp. 260-61.
[354] Jansen, *De Incarnatione*, pp. 45-47 and 131-32.
[355] Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 105-108; Grillmeier, *JdChr* 2.1, p. 372.
[356] Price, ‘The Development of a Chalcedonian Identity in Byzantium’, pp. 315-18.
[357] Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, pp. 206, 333-34 and 355-59.

tween the Persian and Byzantine churches'.[358] However, the conflict was older as a similar formulation had already appeared in Cyril's twelfth anathema.

In 553, Justinian convoked a council in Constantinople. It defended the Chalcedonian formula of two natures in one *hypostasis* or *prosopon* by stating that the unity of the natures was according to *hypostasis* and that one should therefore acknowledge one *hypostasis* or *prosopon* in Christ. It reconfirmed the condemnation of the works and person of Nestorius and of any 'Nestorianism' which was accused of teaching two *hypostaseis* or two persons, or even of two Sons and of rejecting the one composite *hypostasis* and the title '*Theotokos*' for Mary. Canon 4 rejected not only interpretations that asserted that the union of the God-*Logos* with the human is according to grace, energy (*energeia*), honour, authority, relation, power (*dynamis*), pleasure (*kata eudokian*), but also interpretations that gave different names to the God-*Logos* and the human in the belief that each has their own *prosopon*. All these interpretations were seen as proof that Antiochene Christology understood the unity as accidental and not substantial, whereby the man Jesus was assumed and the unity remained on the basis of behaviour.[359]

Canon 10 somehow confirmed the Theopaschite formula, although it was expressed in a rather unconspicious way.[360] Canons 12-14 further successively anathematized the 'three chapters': first, the person and works of Theodore; second, the writings of Theodoret of Cyrus against Cyril and his letter with the anathemas; third, the letter of Ibas of Edessa to Mari that defended Theodore and Nestorius. Those who might attempt to explain and defend the condemned and shared their objections against Cyril and the Council of Ephesus were to be anathematized as well.[361] This all implied a condemnation of the theology of the Church of the East.

In 551, Justinian had already ordered consistent use of terminology: it should be the same in the *Theologia* (Doctrine of Trinity) as in the *Oikonomia* (Doctrine of Incarnation; in Syriac it was rendered as ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ, *mdabbranuta*). It was declared that *physis* and *hypostasis* are not the same.

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[358] Sebastian Brock, 'North Mesopotamia in the late seventh century: Book XV of John Bar Penkaye's "Rīš Mellē"', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987), p. 59, also in idem, *Studies in Syriac Christianity*, Chapter 2.

[359] Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, pp. 464-70.

[360] The English translation of this canon is: 'If anyone does not confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified in the flesh, is true God and Lord of glory and one of the holy Trinity, let him be anathema'. Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, p. 356; Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 2.2. *From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590-604). The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century* (English trans.; London, 1995), p. 341, with references. Here and subsequently I have used the English edition when I give full quotations.

[361] Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, pp. 473-74.

> Thus after we have shown that it is impious to speak of one nature (*physis*) or essence (*ousia*) of the divinity and flesh of Christ, we shall also say this: it is not possible to speak of the one nature of Christ in a similar way to how we talk of the one *hypostasis* of the divinity and humanity of Christ, because nature (*physis*) and *hypostasis* are not the same.[362]

Similarly, the Council of 553 further held that *hypostasis* is the same as *prosopon* and that these concepts had to be distinguished from *physis-ousia*. But no definitions were given.[363] However, the Church of the East stuck more to the vocabulary of the Nicene Trinitarianism,[364] and as the Chalcedonian council was already problematic for them, more discrepancies arose and both parties drifted further apart in their terminology.

After being propagated by Justinian, the formula of the (Neo-Chalcedonian) one *hypostasis synthetos* was also ratified by the council of 553, whose decisions seem to have affected the Church of the East. Abramowski and Reinink hold that the doctrine of two *qnome** was a reaction to this one *hypostasis synthetos.* The fact that the Church of the East now could use the Syriac translation of the *Liber Heraclidis,* in which the formula of two natures, two *qnome* and one *parsopa* was expressed, formed an important contributing factor. Meanwhile, the older Antiochene Christology of the two natures and the one *prosopon* was not abandoned immediately, as can be seen in the acts of the synods. This might have led to conflicting positions within the School of Nisibis on the use of *qnoma* in their Christological formula.[365]

The first explicit and official expressions by the Church of the East of the doctrine of two *qnome* appear in accounts of a discussion between its representatives and Justinian in 562-63.[366] A reconstruction of these accounts suggests that Justinian first had asked Abraham of Bet Rabban, the director of the School of Nisibis, to visit him and defend his faith. Abraham refused to go because of his age, and also refused to erase the names of Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius from the Diptychs as had been asked in name of the unity of the Church. But

[362] Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, p. 477; English translation (without several synonyms for Christological terms) after Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 2.2. p. 456.
[363] Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, pp. 467-68 and 484.
[364] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition. A history of the Development of Doctrine* 2: *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-700)* (Chicago, 1974; repr. 1977), p. 43.
[365] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 221-22; Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 222 and 230. See also below, section 1.12.
[366] Leontius of Jerusalem's *Contra Nestorianos* (written some time between 536-44) is the first extant document on the controversy between defenders of two *qnome* versus those of one composite *qnoma.* It contains several quotations ascribed to 'Nestorians'. This Leontius of Jerusalem has also been identified with Leontius of Byzantium, but this remains arguable. Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 226-27; Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, pp. 286-89; cf. also Behr, *The Case against Diodore and Theodore*, pp. 272-75.

then a delegation headed by Paul, the Bishop of Nisibis,[367] was sent with Khosrau's consent. According to the (Arabic) *Chronicle of Seert*, the bishops tried to explain to Justinian 'that neither could the nature exist without *qnoma* (قنوما) nor the *qnoma* without nature, and that therefore logically the two natures could not be one single *qnoma*.'[368] But according to Justinian, the concept of two *hypostaseis* in Christ would either lead to two Sons or to a Quaternity. Thus the attempts for better understanding failed. Justinian is said to have sent them back with honour, although anathematizing Diodore and his followers.[369]

Relations did not improve. In the seventh century, Babai described Justinian as an impious and heretical tyrant.[370] However, there seem meanwhile to have been some alliances between Justinian and some representatives of the Church of the East. A.D. Lee discusses contacts between Paul of Nisibis and Justinian within the context of Justinian's attacks on Persia starting 572. He concludes that the reports that Paul had allied with Justinian and given him strategic information might have been true. Paul might have preferred Justinian above Khosrau, who is said to have treated the East Syrian Christians badly. Lee does not consider this improbable, as Khosrau had imprisoned Paul's teacher Mar Aba for nearly a decade and recently might have exiled the Christians from Nisibis in 572-73 when Byzantines and Persians fought for this important frontier city.[371]

A Syriac account of the conversation with Justinian is preserved in a (hostile) Miaphysite text. Here, several expressions clearly indicate the formula of two *kyane* and two *qnome* in one *parsopa.* For instance: 'The mystery of the *mdabbranuta* stays and is as it is, in one union of the *parsopa* of the two *kyane* and two *qnome*.'[372] Paul also would have stated that 'any *qnoma* is known by its nature, and any nature there is, is by its proper (ܕܝܠܗ) *qnoma* known and manifest to perception, vision and the contemplation of the intellect'.[373] Abramowski argues that it must have been the *Liber Heraclidis* that caused the change in the traditional

[367] Adam Becker suggests that the Paul mentioned in this delegation could not have been a bishop, but that he was a teacher of the School of Nisibis who had contacts with the Justinian court. Becker, *Sources*, p. 84.
[368] Addai Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert) 2.1', (PO 7; Paris, 1911), Chapter 32, pp. 187-88 (Arabic- French), quotation esp. 188.
[369] Antoine Guillaumont (trans.), 'Justinien et l'Église de Perse', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/24 (1969/1970), pp. 51-53, with references and with translation and photocopy of the Syriac manuscript of London, British Museum, Add. 14,535 (folios 16v-20r); idem:'Un colloque entre orthodoxes et théologiens nestoriens de Perse sous Justinien', *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 114.2 (1970), pp. 201-207.
[370] A. Vaschalde (trans.), *Babai Magni. Liber de Unione* (CSCO 80, Scriptores Syri 35; Leuven, 1915), 3.9, pp. 70-71 and 79 (cf. ed. idem, pp. 98 and 101).
[371] A.D. Lee, 'Evagrius, Paul of Nisibis and the Problem of Loyalties in the Mid-Sixth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44.4 (1993), pp. 569-85.
[372] Guillaumont, 'Justinien et l'Église de Perse', pp. 62-66. This fragment on folio 19r: ܘܐܪܙܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܩܐܡ ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ.. ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܚܕ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝܢ̈ܐ ܘܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ
[373] Guillaumont, 'Justinien et l'Église de Perse', p. 64. This fragment on folio 18r-v: ܐܠܐ ܟܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܟܝܢܗ ܡܬܝܕܥ ܘܟܠ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܬ. ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܬܝܕܥ ܘܡܬܚܙܐ ܠܪܓܫܐ ܘܠܚܙܝܬܐ: ܘܠܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ.

Edessene-Nisibene terminology, because the records of the synods did not mention *qnoma** or *parsopa** in a Christological context before 585 (except *parsopa* in 486). Moreover, after 431 the Theodorians at the School of the Persians at Edessa and Nisibis restricted the use of *qnoma* to the Trinity. This would have made it impossible that the Dyophysite doctrine could have been taught in terms of one *qnoma* or two *qnome.*[374]

1.12. Polemics in and around the School of Nisibis after 540

When Paul, the Bishop of Nisibis (officiated 551-73) and disciple of Mar Aba, defended the two-*qnome* doctrine in 562-63, he did not speak for the whole Church. Already within the School of Nisibis two parties could be discerned that tried to give the concept of *qnoma* a place while using the *Liber Heraclides*. To the party differing from Paul belonged Henana of Adiabene, who once had been removed from the School by Paul due to his deviant Christology, but who became its director after Paul's death.[375] During Paul's reign as Metropolitan, Ishoʿyahb of Arzun had been director of the School of Nisibis for two years (between 565-71), before he accepted the position of bishop of Arzun. The reasons for this transition are not clear. The *Cause* reports only that 'he worked in it vigorously for two years. Then he became weary (ܐܫܬܡܠ) from it and went and became bishop in Arzun. Afterwards he was chosen for the patriarchal duty'.[376]

Henana was director of the Nisibis School and responsible for biblical exegesis from 573 until circa 610. Without naming Henana, the Synods of 585, 596 and 605 are thought to have rebuked him. Simon, the new Metropolitan of Nisibis, supported Henana and allowed him to issue new statutes for the School in 590, even after he had been suspended himself on boycotting the Synod of 585. Henana's teaching seems to have influenced several monastic circles, which already showed many elements dissenting from the ecclesiastical teaching, such as the rejection of the Sacraments.[377]

In 596 Henana found a powerful opponent in the person of Gregory of Kashkar, the new Metropolitan of Nisibis. Gregory did not accept Henana's criticism of Theodore, tried to change the habits of several clerics and drove the Messalians out of the adjacent Shigar (Sinjar) Mountains. But Gregory seems to have been too fanatical and he encountered heavy re-

[374] Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 18-19; eadem, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie', pp. 1-2.
[375] Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', p. 19.
[376] Arthur Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis* (CSCO 266, subs. 26; Leuven, 1965), pp. 221-22; Scher, 'Cause', pp. 389-390; Becker, *Sources*, p. 155. See also above section 1.8.
[377] Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ I (596-604) und das Mönchtum* (Frankfurt, 1988), pp. 33-34.

sistance in Nisibis. The same year he had lost the support of the catholicos and Khosrau ordered Gregory to leave Nisibis. This indicates that Henana was probably being protected by circles at the court, especially by court physicians whom Gregory is said to have excommunicated because they lived in bigamy.[378] The generally trustworthy *Chronicon Anonymum* (also known as *Khuzistan Chronicle*) reports that Gregory's dismissal was against the wish of the bishops and that Nisibis now revolted against Khosrau. After Catholicos Sabrishoʿ had persuaded its inhabitants to surrender to Khosrau, the latter took the city forcefully despite more peaceful promises.[379]

The exact reasons for the conflict with Henana are not clear. Unfortunately, most of what is known of Henana's teaching consists of biased accusations by his enemies, such as Babai the Great who wrote in the beginning of the seventh century. One document must have been written under the auspices of Henana. This is the introduction (written in 602) to the *Canons of the School of Nisibis*, which confirmed the older canons while adding new canons in reaction to the crisis around Henana. Ute Possekel points out that the authors intended to connect the recent crisis with another that allegedly took place in the 490s, in order to claim their right to issue the new canons.[380] The introduction refers to recent enemies, who unfortunately cannot be identified. They are described as envious and haughty people who act like wild animals, although these 'haughty ones in the mind of their hearts see our Saviour manifestly'.[381] The introduction contains hardly any Christological remarks, but briefly explains the importance of study for the Christian life: mortal human nature needs study and instruction in order to gain knowledge about the immortal life. It should thereby train the free will, 'so that we (see) ourselves in the mirror of the distinguishing mind'.[382]

Another contemporary friendly source might also give some information. This was the *Cause of the Foundation of Schools* mentioned above, and was put in the form of a speech, possibly meant for incoming students. It was written probably at the end of the sixth century by Henana's pupil Barhadbeshabba when Henana was director of the School and he most

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[378] Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 231-32, 245-47; Jean Maurice Fiey, *Nisibe. Métropole syriaque orientale et ses suffragants des origines à nos jours* (CSCO 388, subs. 54; Leuven, 1977), pp. 58-59.

[379] Ignatius Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1 (CSCO Scriptores Syri 3.4; Leipzig 1903; repr. CSCO 1, Scriptores Syri 1; Leuven, 1960), pp. 18-19; Theodor Nöldeke, 'Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik', *Sitzungsberichte der Phil.-Hist. Classe der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 128 (Vienna, 1893), pp. 11-12.

[380] Arthur Vööbus (ed. and trans.), *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis. Edited, Translated and Furnished with a Commentary* (Stockholm, 1961), pp. 51-72; Ute Possekel, 'Selbstverständnis und Bildungsauftrag der Schule von Nisibis', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 19 (2015), pp. 121-24.

[381] Vööbus, *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis*, pp. 65-66, quotation esp. p. 65.
ܚܐܝܗܘ، ܠܦܪܘܩܢ ܒܓܠܝܐܝܬ ܗܢܘܢ ܪ̈ܡܝ، ܒܪܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܒܗܘܢ.

[382] Vööbus, *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis*. pp. 61-64, quotation esp. p. 64. Here and in the following, English translation after Vööbus. ܚܢ ܢܦܫܢ ܒܡܚܙܝܬܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܦܪܘܫܐ

likely had authorized it.[383] Although the *Cause* does not contain clear Christological statements either, it sheds more light on the pedagogical understanding of the School of Nisibis. The *Cause* is a continuation and elaboration of the pedagogical ideas of Theodore and Narsai and focuses on free will and the imitation of Christ. Meanwhile, more Aristotelian and Neoplatonic concepts are incorporated and it is also influenced by the Origenist literature of Evagrius which had a deep impact on East-Syrian monasticism and also seems to have played a role in the conflicts between the School of Nisibis and its opponents concerning the correct epistemology.[384]

The content of the *Cause* can be summarized as follows: after an introduction of God's epistemological inaccessibility, the text dwells on the divine illumination and the human soul with its cognitive faculties. Both intelligence and actions have to be perfected. Where God himself taught the angels in heaven the alphabet in order to praise him, he created for human beings the visible world to enable the rationality of the mind to 'read' from the diversity of creation the name of God, the creator of all. The human soul and reason are thus able to gain some knowledge of the ineffable, transcendent God by means of distinctions that exist in nature and that form a chain of being. The human mind even has the power to ascend to heaven and converse with angels, or to command the luminaries. The history of this world is further reduced to long series of schools starting with Adam, renewed by Jesus the great teacher, and necessarily ending with the School of Nisibis under the directorate of the present and highly praised director Henana. Finally, the new students are encouraged to diligently continue this scholastic tradition that emphasizes learning and knowledge.[385]

> let us labour diligently, according to the aim of our learning, while we adjust our way of life to the reading of our learning [...]. Strip off the old man with all of his ways. Put on the new man who through knowledge is renewed in the form of his creator.[386]

One of the heresies Babai ascribed to Henana's school was Origenism. The *Cause* might have given some reason for these accusations.[387] It is further remarkable that it describes how God's teaching has been transmitted by 'schools' and does not use the term 'Church' in this

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[383] Hainthaler, 'Die "antiochenische Schule"', p 260; Becker, *Sources*, pp. 86-87.
[384] Becker, *Sources*, pp. 91-93. See for further discussion on Evagrius section 2.1.3.3.
[385] Scher, 'Cause', pp. 341-50; Becker, *Sources*, pp. 86-91 and 106-118, with references. See for a discussion on author and date of *The Cause*, Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 232-33.
[386] Scher, 'Cause', pp. 396-97, translation after Becker, *Sources*, pp. 159-60.
ܒܥܢܝܐܬ ܢܠܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܢܝܫܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢ: ܟܕ ܡܠܒܟܝܢ ܕܘܒܪܝܢ ܠܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢ: [...] ܘܫܠܚܘܗܝ، ܠܒܪܢܫܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ ܥܡ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܗܘܦܟܘܗܝ.، ܘܠܒܫܘ ܚܕܬܐ ܕܡܬܚܕܬ ܒܝܕܥܬܐ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܘܝܗ:
[387] This will be discussed in more detail in section 2.1.3.

context. Moreover, it does not mention the Sacraments either. Is this an indication that the institution of the Church and the Sacraments were not important to this school?

As the controversies around Henana and the School of Nisibis were intertwined with various problems within the Church of the East and lasted for a long time, this section will further focus on the Christology, while other conflicting factors will be discussed in Chapter 2 where Babai's reactions are described.

Concerning Henana's Christology, the polemics seem to indicate that he taught a composite *qnoma* in Christ. Abramowski holds indeed that when he started to apply the Neo-Chalcedonian concept of the one composite *hypostasis* to the Christology of two natures, the formula 'two natures-one *parsopa** and the formula 'two natures-two *qnome**-one *parsopa**' could not exist side by side anymore in the School.[388] Although Reinink agrees that the discussions started with the decisions of the Fifth Council in 553, he does not attribute much influence to presumptions that Henana accepted this Neo-Chalcedonian formula or sought for other compromises with Chalcedonians and Miaphysites. He argues that the two streams came to conflicting conclusions, because they interpreted the term *qnoma* differently. One stream followed Nestorian lines and opted for the 'two natures - two *qnome*' formula of Nestorius as they associated nature (*kyana*) with *qnoma.* The other stream, to which Henana might have belonged, used certain explanations from the Syriac translation of Theodore's *On the Incarnation*, and accepted therefore a close connection between *parsopa* and *qnoma*.[389] Both parties might have focused on the fragments from Theodore's *On the Incarnation* that were preserved in Add. 14,669, which was the authoritative version in the School.[390] As seen, elements from fragment 12,156 might also allow such interpretations.[391]

Abramowski points at another source of confusion, caused by some probably inauthentic glosses to the one *parsopa* of Christ in the introduction to the *Liber Heraclidis.* One gloss is 'one *qnoma*', which was interpolated before 'one *parsopa'.* The other gloss, 'natural and *qnomatic*' (ܟܝܢܝܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܝܐ),[392] seems to indicate that the one *parsopa* implies one nature and one *qnoma*. Abramowski speculates that this formula was known in the Henana School, because Sahdona used this formula somewhat later as an expression for the unity in Christ.[393]

388 Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais des Grossen', pp. 221-22.
389 Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 228-31.
390 Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 221-22; Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 222, 228-230.
391 See also dicussion above, section 1.7.4.
392 The adjective of *qnoma* (ܩܢܘܡܝܐ, *qnomaya*) could in English be *qnomatic* or 'according to *qnoma*'. The latter form sounds better, but in this case it would lose its relation with the adjective of 'nature' (*kyana*) which is 'natural'. Therefore, the term *qnomatic* will be used in this study.
393 Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 20-27; Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide,* pp. 81 and 125. Sahdona will be discussed in section 4.2.

Reinink also argues that the Nestorian stream interpreted the phrase ‘assuming one *parsopa-qnoma*’ as an expression of the Miaphysite position of one nature of Christ, while the other stream could not but interpret the formula ‘two natures = two *qnome*’ as leading to two *parsopa*, which was rejected. During the catholicate of Sabrishoʿ the conflict culminated in the departure of a significant group of teachers and students. This might have taken place not long after 596,[394] or around 600.[395] It might have been the ‘Nestorian’ group in rejection of the solutions of the other party that opted for the ‘one *parsopa* = one *qnoma*’ formula. After Metropolitan Gregory of Kashkar was sent away, their position might have become untenable. Among those leaving were Ishoʿyahb II of Gdala and Michael the Doctor (Michael Malpana), who wrote a treatise against the Miaphysites refuting the *qnomatic* and natural union of God and man in Christ.[396] Ishoʿyahb III, Hadbeshabba ʿArabaya (the later metropolitan of Hulwan) and Paul the Exegete are furthermore mentioned as belonging to this group.[397] The identity of Hadbeshabba ʿArabaya is unclear; some have identified him with the Barhadbeshabba who wrote an ecclesiastical history and even the *Cause* that had praised Henana. Both claims remain contested.[398]

The identification of *parsopa* with *qnoma* might also have been in compliance with the terminology ordered by Justinian in 553. In the seventh century Babai and Ishoʿyahb III rejected such terminology and tried to persuade opponents within their Church that *parsopa* and *qnoma* were not the same, as was claimed by those who advocated the one *qnoma* of Christ while referring to Greek usage.[399] This might be another indication that at least the phraseology of Henana’s followers was very close to that of Justinian and that the accusations that he taught a composite *hypostasis* were therefore not completely unfounded.

Henana seems to have questioned the authority of Theodore in exegesis. This resulted in negative reactions in some of the following synods.

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[394] For instance: Reinink, ‘Tradition and Formation’, p. 244.

[395] For instance: Alberto Camplani, ‘The Revival of Persian Monasticism (Sixth to Seventh Centuries): Church Structures, Theological Academy, and Reformed Monks’, in Camplani and Filoramo (eds.), *Foundations of Power and Conflicts of Authority in Late-Antique Monasticism*, p. 286; Jullien, *Le monachisme en Perse*, p. 186; Geevarghese Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai* (Kottayam, 1982), p. 52.

[396] Reinink, ‘Tradition and Formation’, pp. 229-35 and 246; Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, pp. 105-113 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 62-65).

[397] Addai Scher (ed. and trans.), ‘Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert) 2.2’, (PO 13; Paris, 1919), Chapter 74, pp. 510-11.

[398] Adam H. Becker and Jeff W. Childers, ‘Barḥadbshabba ʿArbaya (late 6th/ early 7th cent)’, *GEDSH*, pp. 57-58.

[399] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, trans. p. 626; R. Duval (ed.), *Išōʿyahb Patriarchae III, Liber Epistularum* (CSCO 11, Scriptores Syri 11; Paris, 1904; repr. Leuven, 1962), pp. 128-29 and 134-35, cf. trans. idem, *Išōʿyahb Patriarchae III, Liber Epistularum* (CSCO 12, Scriptores Syri 12; Paris, 1905; repr. Leuven, 1962), pp. 97 and 100-101.

1.13. The Synods of the Church of the East between 553 and 604

1.13.1. The Synod of 554 held under Catholicos Joseph

The Synod of 554 felt compelled to restate the orthodox confession that was forgotten due to internal problems and schisms.[400] It mentioned the two natures in Christ (which keep their properties without confusion, disturbance, alteration and change) and the Trinity after one another. This seems to reflect some definitions of the recent Byzantine council in which the Trinitarian and Christological formula were linked as well. But *parsopa* is not mentioned and *qnoma* is used only in a Trinitarian context.

> Before everything else we preserve the upright confession of two natures in Christ, that is, his divinity and his humanity. And we preserve the properties (ܕܝܠܝܬܐ *dilayate*) of the natures, by which we get rid of confusion and disturbance (ܒܘܠܒܠܐ ܘܕܘܘܕܐ), alteration and change (ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܘܫܘܢܝܐ).
> We also preserve the number of the *qnome* of the Trinity as threefold, and we confess the single true and ineffable union (*hdayuta*) in the single true Son of the one God, the Father of truth. Anyone who considers or speaks of two Christs, or two Sons, or who for one reason or another, and by some device or other, arouses (thought of) a quaternity, [this one] have we anathematized and we do anathematize him.[401]

1.13.2. The Synod of 576

The next synod started with a description of God's transcendence, who by various indications...

> manifests concerning the glorious *qnome* of his threefold being (*tlitayuteh*, Trinity). [...] and spoke with us in his Son Christ our Lord; in him the glorious *qnome* of his Father and of himself and of the Holy Spirit became known in a new way. [...] It is he who lowered himself of his own will for the salvation of our nature that had grown old and worn out through sin; and he assumed (ܢܣܒ) for himself a perfect temple for the dwelling of his divinity, in an inseparable way, from Mary the holy virgin; and he was conceived and born from her by the power of the Most High; Christ who is in the flesh, who is recognized and confessed (as being) in two natures, God and Man, one Son. In him the oldness of our nature was renewed, and in the robe of his humanity the debt of our race was repaid […].[402]

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[400] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 97-98 (cf. trans. p. 355).
[401] Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 135-36; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale,* pp. 97-98.
[402] Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 135-36; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale,* pp. 113.

The *qnome* remained reserved for the Trinity, whereby the East Syrians acknowledged that these became known in a new way in Christ. The metaphor of Christ dwelling in a temple is used.

This synod had to deal with all kind of problems within the Church: simony, irregular ordinations, forced prostitution, conflicts on the ownership of treasuries in churches and monasteries, and so on. The whole list of canons addressing these, started with 'Messalians' (ܡܨܠܝ̈ܢܐ), who were described as people clothed in the deceitful attire of monks and ascetics (ܐܢܫ̈ܝܢ ܕܠܒܝܫܝܢ ܐܣܟܡܐ ܕܓܠܐ ܕܐܒ̈ܝܠܐ ܘܡܣܪ̈ܘܐ) perverting the conscience of the believers. They were accused of despising the sacraments, fasting, prayer and everything that reconciles God with the sinners; denying the reward for the good and the torture of the impious; opposing the Holy Spirit and also of seducing women. Priests and monks were among these Messalians, as separate measures were mentioned for them.[403]

1.13.3. The Synod under Ishoʿyahb I in 585 and his confession of faith

Ishoʿyahb of Arzun was Catholicos from 581/82 until 595. As we have seen above, he had studied at the School of Nisibis which he left somewhere between 567 and 571 after having been its director for only two years. His Synod was the first since 486 that used *parsopa* in a Christological context. The statements of the Fathers who wrote the Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creed were commented on similarly to the way Theodore had done. Following each fragment is indicated to which nature(s) of Jesus Christ it belongs. This is added here in italics, as are some of the (abbreviated) comments:[404]

> We believe in one God, Father Almighty, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and in one Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father. (*Originally the Holy Spirit was mentioned later in the Creed, but is added here in order to emphasize the unity of the Trinity*).
> The Only-Begotten and the First-Born of all created things (ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ). (*That is, Only-Begotten without brothers, with regard to the divinity, and Firstborn of many brothers, that is, Firstborn of all created things, as is written*).[405]
> Through whom the worlds were established and everything was created. He was born from his Father before all worlds, and he was not made (ܐܬܥܒܕ): Light from Light, true God from true God. (*Jesus Christ in his divinity*).

[403] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 115-16 (cf. trans. pp. 374-75).
[404] This is a reduced version of the Creed of 585: some extensive comments are given here in a brief form. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 133-36; translation after Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 135-36.
[405] Col. 1:15.

The Word who is homoousios (ܡܠܬܐ ܕܗܘܡܘܣܝܘܢ *melta d-homusion*) (*against Arius, it means that he is of the same nature and of the same essence [ܒܪ ܟܝܢܗ ܘܒܪ ܐܝܬܘܬܗ]*) as the Father, through whom everything came into being. (*Jesus Christ in his divinity*).

He who for the sake of us human beings and for the sake of our salvation came down from heaven, and was embodied (*etgashsham*) of the Holy Spirit and of Mary the Virgin and became (ܗܘܐ) man. (*Jesus Christ in the unification (ܡܚܝܕܘܬ) of his natures and in his manifestation in the flesh and in his embodiment. This sentence is against Simonians, Mani and Arius who deny the carnal humanity*).

And he was crucified for us in the days of Pontius Pilate, and he suffered and died and was buried and rose after three days as the holy Scriptures say. (*Jesus Christ in his carnal humanity*).

And he ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of his Father. (*Jesus Christ in his humanity*).

And he will come in glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom has no end. (*Jesus Christ in his divinity and in his humanity*).

And in one Holy Spirit, Lord, life-giving, who proceeds from the Father and is worshipped with the Father and the Son; who spoke in the prophets and apostles. (*Against 'Macedonians' who blasphemed against the Holy Spirit*).[406]

This is the faith without corruption. [...] By it the parsopa of Christ and the natures of his divinity and his humanity are fully proclaimed, in opposition to those who confess his divinity but deny his humanity,[407]*and in opposition to those who confess his humanity but deny his divinity and in opposition to those who deny his divinity and confess he is an ordinary man, or who liken him to one of the just.*

And in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins; and in the resurrection of the dead and in the new life, and in the world to come.

Those who say 'There is a time when he was not' and 'Before he was begotten he was not', or 'He came into being out of nothing', or who say that he is from (another) *qnoma* and another essence, or who consider the Son of God to be subject to change and alteration: (all) these the catholic and apostolic Church anathematizes. (*Against Arius and his followers*).

The first comments on the Trinity referred to some expressions of the Fathers that would have been made in defence against Arius, the Jews and pagans:

Our Fathers did well to utter the confession of the Trinity briefly; by it they taught wisely and fully the equality of nature and the equality of essence (ܐܝܬܘܬܐ) and the difference (ܫܘܚܠܦ) of the *qnome* and the singleness (*hdanayut*) of the Divinity. They proclaimed equality of essence and equality of nature (ܫܘܝܘܬ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܗܟܢ ܘܫܘܝܘܬ ܟܝܢܐ), as thought to stop the crazy mouth of Arius who wickedly devised to split up the equality of essence of the Trinity. And our Fathers proclaimed the difference of the *qnome* of the Trinity to nullify the supposition of the obstinate Jews who suppose that God is one *qnoma*. […] Having thus overthrown the wickedness of Arius by the proclamation of the equality of essence, and silenced the childishness of the Jews

[406] The 'Macedonians' were named after Macedonius and were accused of denying the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

[407] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 136 ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܘܕܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܘܕܝܢ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܘܟܦܪܝܢ ܒܐܢܫܘܬܗ.

> with the difference of the *qnome* (ܒܫܘܚܠܦ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ), and muzzled the error of paganism too by the single Lordship.[408]

Likewise, the Simonians, Manichaeans, Anomoeans and Eutychians were meant to be refuted.[409] Finally it is concluded that the heretics must have been confused in allocating human properties to the nature and *qnoma* of the divine essence of the Word, just because of the perfect union between the humanity and divinity of Christ. The divinity was involved according to *mdabbranuta* and not to nature.

> […] heretics who in their stubbornness have dared to ascribe to the *kyana* (nature) and *qnoma* of the divinity and (divine) essence of the Word the properties and sufferings of the nature of Christ's humanity, things which sometimes, because of the perfect union that took place for the humanity of Christ with his divinity, are allocated to God according to *mdabbranuta*, but not according to nature.[410]

According to Jérôme Labourt and Antoine Guillaumont, this statement is the first allusion in the synods of the Church of the East to the decisions of Constantinople II (553).[411] The influence of Habib's and Narsai's terminology for the major events in Christ's life might be seen.[412]

The second canon, which confirmed the authority of Theodore and condemned anyone criticizing him, seems to indicate a close connection between Theodore's condemnation in 553, anti-Miaphysite polemic, and the controversy around Henana. According to Reinink, this synod and the following Synods of 596 and 605 emphasized the importance of tradition (*mashlmanuta*) which would only be right if Theodorian doctrines were followed. Although Henana was not named, the critical remarks seem to have been addressed to him and his followers. Reinink further points out that it is remarkable that the synod condemned new inventions and thoughts not in line with Theodore's doctrines, but did not discuss Henana's Chris-

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408 Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 136-37. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale,* pp. 133-34.

409 Simonians were followers of Simon Magus, considered the founder of Gnosticism, Jürgen Zangenberg, 'Simon Magus/Simonianer', *RGG*4 7, col. 1327; Anoemoeans (from Greek ἀν-ὅμοιος, 'not similar'), denied that there was any similarity between Christ's *ousia* and that of God. Richard P. Vaggione, 'Anhomöer', *RGG*4 1, col. 501-502.

410 Translation with several adjustments after Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 137-38. See also the translation made by M.J. Birnie in his paper written with Bawai Soro, 'Is the Theology of the Church of the East Nestorian?', in Stirnemann and Wilflinger (eds.), *Syriac Dialogue* 1. *First Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue with the Syriac Tradition* (Pro Oriente; Vienna, 1994), p. 124. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 136. ܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܕܒܬ ܒܥܠܕܒܒܘܬܗܘܢ: ܒܟܝܢܐ ܘܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܘܕܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܐܡܪܘܗܝ ܠܕܝ̈ܠܝܬܐ ܘܚ̈ܫܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܗܢܝܢ ܕܒܙܒܢ̈ܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܚܝܘܬܐ ܓܡܝܪܬܐ ܕܗܘܬ ܠܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܡܬܬܦܪܫܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܕܒܪܢܐܝܬ ܘܠܐ ܟܝܢܐܝܬ܀

411 Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse*, pp. 276-77; Antoine Guillaumont, 'Justinien et l'Église de Perse', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23/24 (1969/1970), pp. 55-56.

412 See above, section 1.8.

tological views. This seems to imply that these did not deviate too much from the perspectives of this Synod.[413] The second canon thematized especially the opposition against Theodore's judgment that the *Book of Job* was not written by Moses. The 'blessed' Chrysostom was even brought in to Theodore's support.[414]

Many other canons deal with practical problems, such as wandering monks, who do not obey the hierarchy or live with women in mixed congregations, the plundering of the possessions of the Church and failures to maintain its buildings; financial issues such as usury, interest, inheritance and fees. Moreover, Canon 30 shows that Gregory, the Metropolitan of Fars and his bishops, including those on the coast of the Arabian Peninsula, questioned the authority of Seleucia-Ctesiphon as they refused to attend Ishoʿyahb I's synod. They were not the only ones: Simon, the Metropolitan of Nisibis, who supported Henana, also refused to attend this synod.[415]

Ishoʿyahb I composed a *Confession of faith* in 585 which is similar to the confession of faith of the Synod of that year, though its language is more Chalcedonian than Theodorian. He used it for a diplomatic mission to the Byzantine Emperor Maurice and allegedly it was accepted as orthodox by the patriarch of Constantinople.[416] The transcendent, unchanging God is known and confessed in the three distinct *qnome*, but is of one nature. Different interpretations are explicitly rejected. Jesus Christ, God the Word, Son of God, Light from Light, our Lord God, came to the world and was revealed in the flesh, without change and addition in his essence.

> He [the Word] became (ܗܘܳܐ), but was not changed – he who in 'the form of God emptied himself and assumed the form of a servant' (Phil. 2:7); 'he assumed', but he did not add (to himself), for both in his 'becoming' (ܒܗܘܝܗ) and his 'assuming' (ܒܡܣܒܢܘܬܗ) his Essence (ܐܝܬܘܬܗ) remained without change or addition.[417]

The paradox of Christ suffering in the flesh, but as Son of God being above suffering, is explained by the much loved comparison of Christ's body to a temple (John 2:19-21). The union of both natures is emphasized, e.g. by the phrase '*parsopic union*'.

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[413] Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 234-40.
[414] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 136-38 (cf. trans. pp. 398-400).
[415] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, Canon 30, pp. 162-63 (cf. trans. pp. 421-22).
[416] Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', pp. 127, 138-39; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 193-95 (cf. trans. pp. 451-55). On Maurice, see also the next section.
[417] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 194. English translation by Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', p. 138.

> God the Word receives the abuse of sufferings in the temple of his body according to the *mdabbranuta* in the supreme inseparable union, while in the nature of his divinity he does not suffer, as our Saviour himself said: 'Undo this temple and after three days I will raise it.' [...] Our Lord himself indicates the sublimity of the *parsopic* union unitedly and unconfusedly.[418]

1.13.4. Sabrishoʿ and his Synod in 596

In 596 the former monk Sabrishoʿ was chosen as catholicos according to the wish of the new King Khosrau II. The Synod in 596 confirmed the 'orthodox' Theodore again as the accurate interpreter of the Nicene Creed that taught the nature of the Trinity correctly and that rejected many deviant interpretations. This gives the impression that the 'orthodox faith' was still under widespread attack. The role of Sabrishoʿ in the conflict around Henana is unclear. As bishop he had signed the Synod of 585 and because this had not solved the intertwined problems with Henana and the monks, his Synod of 596 tried to address these again. The opponents were referred to as people 'wearing the attire of monks' (ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܠܒܝܫܝܢ ܐܣܟܝܡܐ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܐ), as Canon 8 of 585 had done, similarly to the description of Messalians given in 576.[419]

The opponents were not only accused of rejecting the teachers of the Church, especially Theodore of Mopsuestia, but also of rejecting liturgical proclamations that emphasized the two natures of Christ and moreover of stating that Adam's nature initially was immortal and that sin belongs to nature. Tamcke sees in the latter accusation an old East Syrian tradition—as found in the *Liber Graduum*—that was revived by Henana, transferred to the Messalians, and possibly held as acceptable to Miaphysites.[420] Although the *Liber Graduum* has been associated in secondary literature with Messalianism,[421] Henana's supposed relation with Messalians and Miaphysites is here entirely based on polemical comments by his enemy Babai. These will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

All the different groups, who seem to have formed a front against the clergy, are reflected in the condemnations by this synod. It was forbidden to deny the two natures of Christ; to speak in terms of mixture and mingling (ܡܘܙܓܐ ܘܚܘܠܛܢܐ) and of composition or confusion (ܪܘܟܒܐ ܐܘ ܒܘܠܒܠܐ); to ascribe suffering or death to the divine nature; to consider the temple of God a mere human; to introduce a Quaternity in the Trinity and to speak of two sons or two

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[418] Translations after Brock with small adjustments, 'Christology in the Synods', p. 139; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 195.
ܡܩܒܠ ܕܝܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܨܥܪܐ ܕܚ̈ܫܐ ܒܗܝܟܠܐ ܕܦܓܪܗ ܡܕܒܪܢܐܝܬ܆ ܒܚܝܘܬܐ ܪܡܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܢܐ: ܟܕ ܗܘ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܠܐ ܚܐܫ܆ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܗܘ ܡܚܝܢ: ܕܫܪܘ ܗܝܟܠܐ ܗܢܐ܆ ܘܠܬܠܬܐ ܝܘܡܝܢ ܐܢܐ ܡܩܝܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܗ. [...] ܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܠܡܥܠܝܘܬܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܝܬܐ ܡܚܘܐ ܠܗ ܡܚܝܕܐܝܬ ܘܠܐ ܡܒܠܒܠܐܝܬ ܗܘ ܡܪܢ.
[419] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 144 and 196 (cf. trans. pp. 406 and 456).
[420] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 196-97 (cf. trans. pp. 456-57); Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, p. 35.
[421] Robert A. Kitchen, 'Book of Steps. Liber Graduum, Ktābā d-massqātā', *GEDSH*, pp. 85-86.

Christs.[422] Tamcke comments that this only formed a return to the theology of the fifth century, but that newer challenges such as the soteriological need that was so important to monasticism remained unaddressed.[423] This soteriological aspect of monasticism seems to have played an important role in the conflicts indeed as will be discussed later.[424]

The relation of Christ to the Trinity is defined thus:

> […] confession of the glorious nature of the Holy Trinity, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; which reveals and manifests to us the glorious mysteries of the *mdabbranuta* of God the Word which he perfected and fulfilled at the end times in the nature of our humanity.

Christ is further described as the dominical temple, which is a mystery that cannot be explained. This synod seems therefore to emphasize a mystical point of view.

> [...] we anathematize […] anyone who introduces into the union of the Son of God any mixture, mingling, or composition or confusion; or anyone who (introduces) suffering or any of the base things of humanity in any way to the glorious nature of his divinity; or anyone who considers the dominical temple of God the Word to be ordinary man—(that temple) which, in an inexplicable mystery and in a union that cannot be understood, he united to himself from the womb of the holy virgin in a union which is forever, indissoluble and inseparable.[425]

As this synod is getting close to the debate in 612, more should be said about Sabrishoʿ and several events at the end of the sixth century. Only a small work by Sabrishoʿ is left, but there are several rather hagiographic biographies starting from the seventh and eighth century.[426] According to the *Chronicle of Seert*, Sabrishoʿ lived from c.523/24 until 604.[427] He was a shepherd from the region of Bet Garmai. He went to the school of Nisibis where he stayed nine years. He left this school before 569, probably because its discipline had suffered from the increasing number of students.[428] He continued to live as a solitary and ascetic monk in the mountains near Nisibis. After several years he moved again to Bet Garmai where pupils

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[422] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 197-98 (cf. trans. p. 458).
[423] Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, p. 36.
[424] See section 2.1.3.
[425] Translation with small adjustments after Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', p. 139; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale* p. 198 (cf. trans. p. 457). The anathemas in Syriac:
ܗܕ ܡܚܪܡܝܢ [...] ܠܟܠ ܡܢ [...] ܡܙܘܓܐ ܐܘ ܚܘܠܛܢܐ ܐܘ ܪܘܟܒܐ ܐܘ ܒܘܠܒܠܐ. ܡܟܠ ܥܠ ܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܐܘ ܡܢ ܕ ܚܫܐ ܐܘ ܙܡܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܡܟܝܟܬܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܒܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܕܫܝܢ. ܠܟܝܢܐ ܡܫܒܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܫܚܝܡܐ ܢܚܫܘܒ ܠܗ ܠܗܝܟܠܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ: ܗܘ ܕܒܐܪܙܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܦܫܩ ܘܒܚܝܕܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܒܕܩܢܐ: ܚܝܕܗ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܡܪܒܥܐ ܕܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܒܚܝܕܘܬܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܢܐ.
[426] Martin Tamcke offers an overview of the sources in his *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, pp. 9-16.
[427] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 71, p. 503.
[428] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 65, p. 476.

gathered around him. Sabrishoʿ started to evangelize and fought the Zoroastric religion, which caused him to flee to the metropolitan city of Bet Garmai, Karka de-Bet Slok.

Between 576 and 585,[429] Metropolitan Boktishoʿ forced Sabrishoʿ to become Bishop of Lashom. The combination of Antiochene theology which Sabrishoʿ had acquired in Nisibis and his monastic asceticism seems to have been decisive for this choice. Lashom was a rest stop for pilgrims to Jerusalem and could therefore play an evangelizing role. Sabrishoʿ himself travelled to the Arabian Kingdom Hira, which was a vassal state of the Persian Empire and defended its border. He got in contact with the Arab King Nuʿman III. The Persian King Hormizd IV (579-90) seems to have been involved. Eventually Nuʿman was Christianized, possibly by Sabrishoʿ.[430] Nuʿman also respected Catholicos Ishoʿyahb I (582-95) and the Christian influence could therefore extend to the already partly Christian Arab tribes, where new centres of cultic and ascetic life were established.[431]

The relations between the leaders of the Church of the East and the Persian Kings were of importance. Ishoʿyahb I sided with King Hormizd and refused to support the revolt of his son Khosrau II against him. After Khosrau II gained power in 590, Ishoʿyahb I fled to Nuʿman in Hira where he died in 595. His body was interred in the monastery founded by Hind, the sister of this Arab King. Sabrishoʿ, conversely, supported Khosrau and was involved in negotiations between Khosrau and the Byzantine Emperor Maurice. Khosrau ordered the bishops of the Synod of 596 that Sabrishoʿ should be the new catholicos, which was against their wish, reportedly due to his ascetic life style and old age. As Catholicos, Sabrishoʿ continued to negotiate for Khosrau with Maurice.[432]

Before Khosrau definitely could seize the throne, this was taken in 590-91 by the usurper Bahram Chobin causing Khosrau to flee to Maurice. Alexander Schilling gives an overview of the various—often biased and contradictory—sources commenting on this event and he offers several conclusions. Maurice is said to have adopted Khosrau and to have given him his daughter Maria as wife. This *adoptio per arma* has been perceived in Persia and in Byzantium as a Christian conversion and baptism. For Byzantium it was part of their intention to convert Persia to Chalcedonian Christianity. Khosrau needed support to gain power in Persia and later

[429] After 576 in which Saba signed the synodicon as bishop of Lashom and before 585, in which Sabrishoʿ did the same. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale,* pp. 110 and 165 (cf. trans. pp. 368 and 424).
[430] Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ,* pp. 17-22. It is contested who converted Nuʿman, see section 1.14.5.
[431] Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis,* p. 228, with references.
[432] Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, pp. 29-30.

this adoption served him also to claim that he was heir to the Byzantine throne and had to defend it against usurpers or other rivals.[433]

In 602 Maurice and his sons were killed by the usurper Phokas who was to reign until 610. When someone appeared in Seleucia-Ctesiphon claiming to be Theodosius, the son of Maurice, Khosrau seems to have used this situation as pretext to attack the Byzantines and he ordained therefore Sabrishoʿ to crown this Theodosius as emperor. In 604, Sabrishoʿ accompanied Khosrau personally to Nisibis and blessed his campaign. Meanwhile, the so-called Theodosius unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Christians in Byzantium to acknowledge him as their real emperor and support him. Khosrau thereupon deposed this false Theodosius and conquered Dara, while Sabrishoʿ remained in Nisibis due to illness. Khosrau also wanted Sabrishoʿ to release his court-physician Gabriel of Shigar from the ban imposed on him because of his bigamy, but the sick Sabrishoʿ refused and died shortly after in 604. The influential Gabriel of Shigar returned to Miaphysite circles after he was banned from the Church of the East and he attacked it in many ways.[434]

In the conflict between Henana and Gregory of Kashkar (the Metropolitan of Nisibis), Sabrishoʿ did not support Gregory. Various reasons have been given. Probably he realized that Gregory's uncompromising behaviour caused too many problems in this frontier area.[435] The conflicts between Gregory and Sabrishoʿ became notorious.[436] Sabrishoʿ is said to have hated Gregory so much that he transferred Gregory's jurisdiction over monasteries in Shigar to his own, intended to depose him, and even supported the Henanians.[437] Sabrishoʿ also had a strong affinity to the mystical teachings of Henana.[438] It is not clear whether this influenced his decisions.

1.13.5. Gregory I (605-608) and his Synod in 605.

When Khosrau came back from Dara in 604, Gregory of Perat was chosen as Catholicos by the bishops instead of Gregory of Kashkar as Khosrau had ordained. The Miaphysite Queen Shirin and her doctors had supported his election against Gregory of Kashkar, who had made many enemies while defending the Antiochene theology. Gregory of Perat was educated in

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433 Alexander Markus Schilling, *Die Anbetung der Magier und die Taufe der Sāsāniden. Zur Geistesgeschichte des iranischen Christentums in der Spätantike* (CSCO 621, subs. 120; Leuven, 2008), pp. 241-44, 279-81 and 303-304.
434 Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, pp. 59-60; Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 16-19; Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 79, pp. 519-20.
435 Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', p. 246.
436 Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 10-11; Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 92, p. 553.
437 Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, p. 38; Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse*, p. 216.
438 Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, p. 57.

Seleucia-Ctesiphon. He became known for his greed. Khosrau compelled him to buy the books he had taken from Dara and confiscated Gregory's fortune after his death.[439]

At the Synod of 605 the participants confirmed again the Synods of 325 and 381. God's transcendence was emphasized and *qnoma* was only used in a Trinitarian context ('the Trinity of his *qnome*'). The difference between the natures is described in the phrase of 'form of God and of servant' (Phil. 2:6-7), which was especially dear to the Antiochenes, but was also used by others. It stated that the natures preserved their properties in the union (*hdayuta*) of the *parsopa*, but it did not use the term *naqiputa* (conjunction) for the union of the natures. In order to guard the distinction of the natures and to avoid Theopaschism, they added: that 'neither suffering, nor change and alteration entered his divinity'.

> One and the same (sc. with the creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople) is our opinion and faith in the holy Trinity and the mysteries of the *mdabbranuta* of our Lord in the body. (It is the faith) which our Fathers have taught us and shown to us; it consists for us in the confession of the one divine nature (*kyana*), the eternal Being (*itya*), Creator of all created things (ܒܪ̈ܝܢ), cause of all, having no beginning and possessing no end, […] and revealed […] by means of his beloved Son, whom he had made heir of everything and in whom he had made known concerning the Trinity of his *qnome*, which are without beginning and without change, a single Divinity, unattainable, a single eternal nature who is known in three *qnome*, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Who, through the Firstfruits (ܪܫܝܬܐ) from us (1 Cor. 15:23), effected the liberation and renovation of our race, for 'the form of God assumed the form (*demuta*) of a servant' (Phil. 2:7), according to the apostolic utterance, and in him he perfected and completed his exalted *mdabbranuta* for the sake of our salvation: the form of God in the form of a servant, one Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom everything was made, perfect God and perfect man, perfect God in the nature of his divinity, perfect man in the nature of his humanity. Two natures, of divinity and of humanity, the divinity being preserved in what belongs to it (ܒܕܝܠܗ), and the humanity in what belongs to it; and they are united in a true union (*hdayuta*) of the one *parsopa* of the Son, Christ. And the divinity perfected the humanity through the suffering, as it is written, while suffering, change and alteration of any sort did not enter into his divinity.[440]

The participants knew that there were dissenting ideas. Following this creed they added that many people were confused and loved new heretical ideas. Therefore, referring to the 484 Synod, they stated that only Theodore's works were normative. No one was allowed to study or write anything which was not in line with Theodore's works, but Brock comments that the credal statement is not distinctively Theodorian.[441]

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[439] Henricus Gismondi (trans.), *Maris Amri et Slibae. De Patriarchis Nestorianorum commentaria ex codicibus Vaticanis* 2. *Amri et Slibae* (Rome, 1897), p. 30; Braun, *Synhados*, p. 297.
[440] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 209-210 (cf. trans. pp. 473-74); Braun, *Synhados*, p. 300. English translation with some alterations after Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', p. 140.
[441] Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', p. 127.

The next problem dealt with monks, priests and others who did not belong to a specific church, monastery or school but followed their own ways. Monks especially would have rejected some canons and liturgical proclamations that resembled those which were described in the 596 Synod as signifying the two natures of the Son. In the meantime, some bishops seem to have allowed this.[442] The monasteries also dealt with financial malpractices, whereby heirs of the founder of a monastery could 'rob' at least a part of the possessions that had been entrusted to these places.[443]

Finally, the participants agreed that bishops were not allowed to issue canons for the whole church, but only for their own district. This suggests again that unity in the Church was lacking in many ways. The fact that the bishops from Bet ʿArabaye (including Nisibis) and from Fars, who had refused to attend the 585 Synod, still did not sign the acts strengthens this impression. Whereas the bishop of the Arab kingdom of Hira had attended the former synod, for reasons unknown his subscription is absent in 605. It may have had to do with the political upheaval after Khosrau replaced Hira's leading dynasty by his own governors. The role of Hira—which incorporated a varied Arab population and had acquired a special position within the Church of the East—in the developments in the Arab world forms the main part of the following sections.

1.14. The Arabs and the Church of the East

1.14.1. Introduction

From early times, the Church of the East had been in contact with Arab tribes. Although the term 'Arab' cannot be defined by geography, linguistics, economy or sociology, because there are too many different usages, it generally refers to members of tribes stemming from Arabia who had spread to the north. In the north-west of the Arabian Peninsula up to Palestine and in the North-East towards the Euphrates lived Christian Arab tribes, who formed their own vassal states in the shifting buffer zone between the Byzantine and Persian Empire.

Already in Roman times several Arab regions were known. In 106 the Romans made the recently annexed Nabatean kingdom a new Roman province and called it 'Arabia', but later this was reduced to the area reaching from the eastern border of the Jordan valley in the Golan

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[442] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 211-12 and 199. The rejected proclamations ('we all in fear [and in praise]', 'the confession to the good' and 'light of the appearance of Christ' are very short and general and probably referred to longer texts.

[443] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 212-13.

Heights down to the most southern part of the Dead Sea, including Bostra. Another area with a significant Arab presence was located roughly in the area in Mesopotamia extending to the Sinjar (Shigar) Mountains.[444] Here Nisibis was a centre on an ancient trade route between southern Mesopotamia on the one side and Syria and Egypt on the other.[445] During early Sasanid times, the fertile region around Nisibis was marked to such an extent by the Arab presence that it was called Bet ʿArabaye. However, the situation was not stable. In 485 new invasions by plundering tribes from southern Mesopotamia destroyed this region. The contested borders between Byzantium and Persia in particular formed the scene of fights between several tribes.[446] There was moreover a rough distinction between the partly sedentary Arabs who may have become familiar with the Aramaic language and the Arabic speaking nomads (*Bedouins* or *Tayyaye*). This distinction was not rigid, as there were often forms of cooperation. The Arab nomads were partly migratory herders, or were engaged in trade. They could exact tribute from travellers passing by and also might serve in the military.[447]

The Arabs adapted various elements from the cultures they encountered, such as writing and religion. According to Islamic sources, most Arabs in South Iraq belonged at the advent of the Islam to the Church of the East.[448] Others adhered to a form of Miaphysitism.

Two Arab kingdoms that had developed as vassal states in the desert area between the Persian and Roman Empires, namely that of the Lakhmids in the East and of their enemies the Ghassanids in the West, were strongly influenced by the form of Christianity current in the region. Each was led by a single clan, the Nasrids and Jafnids respectively.[449] Robert Hoyland holds that these clans could only exert authority over the other tribal groups because of the prestige they had gained by success in war and ability to find resources. These resources

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[444] Theresia Hainthaler offers an extensive overview of the secondary literature on the Arabs before Islam and discusses the terms ‘Arabs’ and ‘Arabia’. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 5-28. See also Michael C.A. Macdonald et al., ‘*Arabs and Empires before the Sixth Century’*, in Greg Fisher (ed.), *Arabs and Empires before Islam* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 12-14

[445] Amir Harrak, ‘Beth ʿArbaye’, *GEDSH*, p. 71.

[446] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, p. 81

[447] Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs. From the Bronze Age to the coming of Islam* (London, 2003), pp. 96-103.

[448] Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, p. 163.

[449]The terms ‘Lakhmids’ and ‘Ghassanids’ are broad designations for unknown numbers of allied or subject peoples. In order to distinguish the ruling dynasties from their allied tribes, Greg Fisher prefers to use the names of the dynasties, which derived their name from a putative ancestor. Therefore, instead of ‘Lakhmids’ and ‘Ghassanids’, he speaks of ‘Nasrids’ and ‘Jafnids’ respectively. Greg Fisher, *Between Empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2011). pp. 3-5 and 91-92. Hainthaler similarly holds that strictly speaking the leading dynasty of the Lakhmids should be called ‘al Nasr’ after its founder. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 86-87. See also Irfan Shahid, ‘Lakhmids’, *EI*[2] 5 (1986), pp. 632-34; Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, pp. 78-81. The present study acknowledges Fisher’s considerations, but continues to use the older designations.

could be generated not only by pastoralism and trade, but also by exacting tribute and protection money, and further by obtaining substantial subsidies from the empires.[450]

1.14.2. The Ghassanid kingdom centred in the Golan Heights

The Ghassanid kingdom was located south-east of Damascus, North of the main trade route and on the Golan Heights, which overlook the upper Jordan River. In the sixth century its leading dynasty, the Jafnids, was supported by the Byzantines.[451] They received annual subsidies for their assistance to the Byzantine army and protection of the Byzantine commercial and political interests along the spice-route. In 570, they captured Hira and burnt it.

The relations between the Byzantines and Ghassanids varied over time. In 529 the Byzantines proclaimed them rulers of all Arab tribes, but reduced this authority again around 580, arresting the Ghassanid king and his son. This weakened the position of the Ghassanids and resulted in anarchy. When the Sasanians took Jerusalem and Damascus in 613-14, Ghassanid rule came to an end. Possibly they were rehabilitated by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-41) and fought for him against the invading Arabs at the decisive battle of Yarmuk in 636, but this is contested.[452]

The Ghassanids were strong adherents of Miaphysitism and played an important role in its history. With the help of the Empress Theodora, King Harith b. Djabala secured around 540 the ordination of two bishops, Theodore and the famous Jacob Baradeus, who strengthened the Miaphysite Church in Syria and the Persian Empire. After this, the Ghassanid kings fostered the mission into the Arabian Peninsula.[453] The oases of the south, Najran, Maʾrib and the Hadramawt became familiar with (Miaphysite) Christianity after the Byzantine-Ethiopian invasion of the sixth century.[454]

Most of the Ghassanids mastered several languages: Greek was used for their correspondence with the imperial administration; Syriac for the liturgy; and the early standard Arabic of the Hijazi merchants for internal correspondence and building inscriptions.[455]

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[450] Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, pp. 102 and 240-41.
[451] Fisher, *Between Empires*, pp. 80-81.
[452] Irfan Shahid, ‘G̱hassān’, *EI*^{2} 2 (1965), pp 1020-22; Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (1937; revised 10th edn, New York, 2002), pp. 78-81.
[453] Shahid, ‘G̱hassān’, pp. 1020-22. On Jacob Baradeus and the Miaphysites in the Persian Empire, see also section 1.1.3.
[454] Fiey, ‘Naṣārā’, pp. 970-73.
[455] Ernst Axel Knauf, ‘Arabo-Aramaic and ʿArabiyya: From Ancient Arabic to early standard Arabic, 200 CE–600 CE’, in Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai and Michael Marx (eds.), *The Qur’ān in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur’ānic Milieu* (Leiden, 2010), p. 245.

1.14.3. The Lakhmid kingdom centred on Hira

Hira[456] was a kingdom located on the western bank of the Euphrates towards the south. It was on the border between fertile grounds and deserts, controlling the tribes in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It had become an important trade centre where several cultural currents came together: the pagan Arab and Persian currents and that of the Church of the East. The Jewish presence may also have had some impact.

Not much is really known concerning the early history of Hira. It was probably founded in the third century by a confederation of Arab tribes called the Tanukh coming from the Bahrain region, where they are said to have been joined by the Azd and the Lakhmids. At the end of this century Hira became the capital of the 'Lakhmids', a broad designation that could refer to a single tribe as well as to a whole confederation of tribes. The Nasrids became its leading dynasty, acting as semi-independent kings and vassals of the Sasanians. Together with their allies they dominated other tribes.[457] One of their first kings, Imru al-Qays (d.328) was called 'King of all the Arabs'.[458]

Tabari reports that three heterogeneous groupings lived in Hira: alongside the just mentioned Tanukh, he names the ʿIbad and 'the confederates' (*al-ahlaf*).[459]

The ʿIbad probably stemmed from both the autochthonous Aramaic peasants and from various Arab tribes. They had settled in Hira and seem to have belonged to its elite.[460] The name ʿIbad probably derives from the word *ʿabd* (servant, slave) which could have been extended to 'servant of God' or 'servant of Christ'. The ʿIbad may have used it to distinguish themselves from their pagan surroundings, and it presumably signified their adherence to the Church of the East.[461] Isabel Toral-Niehoff moreover infers from this term an awareness of being the 'only genuine worshipers of God'. Referring to Brock, who discusses the extent to which the awareness of being a specific people or nation (*'amma*) can be based on a specific religion,[462]

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456 From Hirta (ܚܝܪܬܐ), which means 'camp'. It is generally known as Hira or al-Hira.

457 As we have seen above, some confusion may arise because the leading dynasty of the Lakhmids, the Nasrids, was often called after this whole confederation of tribes to which they belonged. Philip Wood and Geoffry Greatrex suggest that several stories are to be treated sceptically, because Nuʿman III's baptism towards the end of the sixth century led to an adaptation of Nasrid history which would project the new situation into earlier periods. Philip Wood with Geoffry Greatrex, 'The Naṣrids and Christianity in al-Ḥira', in Greg Fisher (ed.), *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, pp. 360-61.

458 Irfan Shahid, 'Tanū<u>kh</u>', *EI*^{2} 10 (2000), pp. 190-92.

459 According to Tabari, this division is based on a report of Hisham b. al-Kalbi. C.E. Bosworth (trans.), *The History of al-Ṭabari* 5. *The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakmids, and Yemen* (New York, 1999), pp. 21-22.

460 Some of these tribes belonged to the Tamim, Azd, Tayyaye, Lihyan, Rabʿia, Mudar and Iyad. Isabel Toral-Niehoff, 'The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra: an Arab Christian Community in Late Antique Iraq', in Neuwirth, Sinai and Marx, *The Qur'ān in Context*, pp. 325-28 and 343-44.

461 Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, p. 84.

462 Brock states that 'religion and "national" identity can be said to have coincided, in that the nation concerned was the "Nation, or People, of God"'. He further holds that this concept of nation would have been similar to that

Toral-Niehoff points to the connection between the ethnic and the religious identity of the Christians in Persia, who called themselves ‘People of God’.[463] She further describes how the trans-tribal unity of the various tribes of the ʿIbad ‘relied on their awareness of constituting an elected people whose basic loyalty was to the Christian God’, while being conscious of their Arab origins. The Arabs visiting Hira would have spread information about Hira and its Christian ʿIbad all over the Arabian Peninsula, ‘thus shaping the image of what a Christian Arab identity might look like’. Several biblical and Christian notions may thus have reached Mecca as well and the transtribal unity of the ʿIbad may have stood model for the notion of a ‘transtribal Muslim *umma*’.[464]

The third group described by Tabari consisted of ‘the confederates’ (*al-ahlaf,* a name which was similarly being used in Mecca). They had a covenant (*hilf*) with the ʿIbad and the Tanukh in order to gain protection. Some of its families are said to have come from tribes of the Iyad and the closely connected Rabiʿa (ربيعة) and Mudar.[465]

Since 528 several other clans from the Rabiʿa, Mudar and Bakr migrated to Hira and from there most of them eventually reached Mesopotamia, occupying the lands which later bore their names: Diyar Rabiʿa, Diyar Bakr and Diyar Mudar. The Taghlib was an important—mostly nomadic—tribe of a Rabiʿa group, which were mostly hostile to the Bakr. Many Taghlib had to leave Hira after one of them had assassinated its king in 569/70.[466] Already acquainted with Christianity, they now may have turned to Miaphysitism.[467]

After the Sasanians had imprisoned and murdered Hira’s last king al-Nuʿman b. al-Mundir in 602, the Lakhmid rule ended. Thereafter Hira was governed until 611 by Iyas b. Kabisa al-Tayyaye, a Christian Arab from the Tayyaye or Taghlib who himself was controlled by a Persian *marzban* called al-Nahiragan.[468] After 611 Hira became a Persian province. The last

of the Jewish religious community, another *ethnos* which ‘consisted of individuals of very diverse racial and geographic origins’. Both communities ‘would call themselves a “People” or “Nation” (Syriac ʿ*amma,* corresponding to both *ethnos* (singular) and *laos*)’; idem, ‘Christians in the Sasanian Empire’, pp. 12-19, quotations esp. pp. 12 and 15.

[463] Toral-Niehoff, ‘The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra’, p. 334.

[464] Toral-Niehoff, ‘The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra’, pp. 343-44.

[465] Toral-Niehoff, ‘The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra’, p. 328. W. Caskel points out that the Rabiʿa and Mudar were the two largest and most powerful combinations of tribes in ancient northern Arabia. There is often confusion: Rabiʿa usually means the Bakr and/or Taghlib and sometimes they are included in the Mudar. W. Caskel, ‘Bakr b. Wāʾil’, *EI*[2] 1 (1960), pp. 962-64. In fact, the names of the Rabiʿa and Mudar stood only for a few clans and not for a whole confederation of tribes as later genealogists claim. These Arab genealogies of tribes should be read with caution as they could have been constructed later, probably serving the political interests of the day. W. Montgomery Watt, ‘Ḳays ʿAylān’, *EI*[2] 4 (1978), pp. 833-34.

[466] H. Kindermann, ‘Rabīʿa and Muḍar’, *EI*[2] 8 (1995), pp. 352-54; M. Lecker, ‘Taghlib b. Wāʾil’, *EI*[2] 10 (2000), pp. 89-93.

[467] Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs,* p. 174.

[468] Bosworth comments that Iyas belonged to the *Tayyaye* and was a son of Khosrau’s adviser. Bosworth, *Ṭabari. The Sasanids,* p. 359. L. Veccia Vaglieri, however, holds that Iyas belonged to the Taghlib. L. Veccia Vaglieri,

Lakhmid prince appearing in the reports on this period is Mundir b. al-Nuʿman who was involved in the so-called *ridda* wars in Bahrain against the supremacy of Medina, while some even proclaimed him king. He was defeated in 633.[469]

1.14.4. Hira's connections with the Arabian Peninsula

Already when the Church of the East was officially recognized in 410, it had representatives in the Arabian Peninsula.[470] Christianity spread among important tribes in Bahrain, especially among the Taghlib and to a less degree among the ʿAbd al-Qays. Of the other tribes living here, the Bakr were partly Christian and the Tamim were only superficially Christianized.[471] The ʿAbd al-Qays, later called 'Rabiʿa', lived in the inland and coast of Bahrain. Their capital was Hagar with its citadel al-Mushakkar.[472] Hagar was moreover the capital of Bahrain and residence of the Persian *marzban*.[473]

Around Bahrain flourished the pearl trade in which many East Syrian Christians were engaged. Catholicos Ishoʿyahb I discussed several practical problems in a letter to Jacob, the Bishop of the Darin Island. He also sent him a creed and several canons with educationally intended proofs from nature and scripture. Ishoʿyahb I seems to have chosen his words carefully, explaining the right procedures but also permitting some local deviations in their liturgy, which unfortunately is difficult to reconstruct.[474]

Hira had not only strong ties with Bahrain, but also had close commercial and political ties with the other side of the Peninsula. In the more northern part we find the Hijaz region with the cities Medina and Mecca. The important Incense Road, which connected Yemen in South Arabia with Syria, went through the Hijaz region.[475] It was mainly through Hira that influ-

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'D̲h̲ū Ḳār', *EI*[2] 2 (1965), p. 241; Gustav Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Hira. Ein Versuch zur arabisch-persischen Geschichte zur Zeit der Sasaniden*. (Berlin, 1899; repr. Hildesheim, 1968), pp. 119-20.

[469] Shahid, 'Lak̲h̲mids', pp. 632-34. On this last Nuʿman, see also Fred M. Donner (trans.), *The History of al-Ṭabari* 10. *The Conquest of Arabia. The Riddah Wars A.D. 632 – 633 / A.H. 11* (New York, 1993), p. 137. See on the *ridda* war also below, section 2.5.

[470] See also above, section 1.1.4.

[471] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, p. 97.

[472] Caskel, 'ʿAbd al-Ḳays', pp. 72-74.

[473] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 672.

[474] It is not sure whether it was written before or after the 585 Synod which bishops of the Gulf area had refused to attend. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 165-96 (cf. trans. pp. 424-55); Ovidiu Ioan, *Muslime und Araber bei Īšōʿjahb III. (649-659)* (Wiesbaden, 2009), pp. 59-61; Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 98-99.

[475] Claims by Patricia Crone, that pre-Islamic Mecca had been rather isolated because it was not connected to the important Incense Road, are opposed by Mikhail Bukharin. He holds that several sources confirm that the caravan trade actually did closely connect this region with south Arabia, east Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean. The Meccans used it for trade and they transported mainly perfumes and spices. The southern Hijaz also was connected by sea routes to the other areas and could therefore have been influenced by 'external linguistic and religious influences'. Mikhail D. Bukharin, 'Mecca on the caravan routes in pre-Islamic Antiquity', in Neuwirth, Sinai and Marx, *The Qur'ān in Context*, pp. 115 and 131.

ences from the Church of the East and Persia reached the Hijaz, while the Ghassanids had similarly brought it in contact with Byzantium and Miaphysitism.[476]

The Quraysh was the most important tribe in Mecca. As its members took the highest positions during the conquests and thereafter, they will be discussed here briefly, keeping in mind that in 'all the stories of the pre-Islamic period there is admittedly a legendary element, but (that) the main outline of events appears to be roughly correct, even if most of the dating is uncertain'.[477] The Quraysh had gained control over Mecca's sanctuary, the *Kaʿba*, and the city itself. Although they had split into two rival groups, the Umayyads and the Hashim, by 600 the Quraysh became prosperous merchants dominating some of the trade routes across the Peninsula. By 624 the Umayyads became the leading Meccan family and initially they opposed Muhammad who belonged to the Hashim. In 629 Muhammad and his followers received the submission of the leading Meccans. After the death of Muhammad in June 632, the Quraysh managed to become leaders of all the Muslims. This was not uncontested. Moreover, the internal conflicts between the Quraysh concerning the question who would be the legitimate heir of Muhammad gave rise to civil wars in nascent Islam until 750.[478]

Before that time the Quraysh seem to have competed with Hira over the control over the trade routes and the tribes involved. Mecca allied with tribes seeking independence from Hira after the Lakhmids had attempted to control the Hijaz area by dominating many tribes.[479] In this rivalry, it does not seem impossible that Mecca's position became stronger when that of Hira weakened. Meanwhile, the Quraysh were also engaged in the trade to Syria and some of them already owned property near Damascus and in southern Palestine which may have facilitated expansions also in this direction.[480]

Some of the attractions of Hira were its surrounding fertile areas which were sought after by many tribes. They held varying degrees of dominance over these grounds and possibly also over the trade routes leading to Hira. Conflicts could regularly arise on the use of land and wells. One such conflict was over the use of the oasis Dhu Qar close to Hira. What would usually have been a normal skirmish now resulted in a battle in which even Sasanian troops were involved. The fact that the Bakr here for the first time proved that they could overwhelm

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[476] Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 104-105. See also Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 137-40.
[477] Montgomery Watt, 'Ḳuraysh', *EI*[2] 5 (1986), pp. 434-35.
[478] Watt, 'Ḳuraysh', pp. 434-35; G.R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam. The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-650* (2nd edn, New York, 2000), pp. 21-23. The term 'Muslims' is probably anachronistic here as most Arab conquerors only started to use this as self-description after 692. Before that time, during the diffuse period of nascent Islam, most would have called themselves 'believers'. However, for sake of convenience, this study sometimes uses this term also for adherents of the early movement. See also below, section 5.1.
[479] Toral-Niehoff, 'The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra', p. 323.
[480] Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge MA, 2010), pp. 96-97.

these Sasanian forces may have enticed them to make further attacks, and may as well have paved the way for Islam.

The battle of Dhu Qar probably took place somewhere between 604 and 611 after the Sasanians had made an end to Lakhmid rule. Without the Lakhmid control of the frontiers, it must have become easier for other tribes to plunder Persia.[481] The Sasanians may have been involved not only because their borders were being threatened, but also because they had treaties with some tribes allowing them to pasture their flocks in the fertile regions of the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf.[482]

Some of the groupings involved belonged to the Bakr (and Rabʿia), most noticeably the Shayban and Qays b. Thaʿlaba, who lived in the region around Hira from 569-70. They had taken the place of their enemies, the Taghlib, many of whom had been expelled by the Persians.[483] Several subdivisions of the Shayban had accepted Christianity.[484] Because Nuʿman III had equipped the Shayban with arms during his conflict with Khosrau, the Bakr had become strong. After 602, the tribes of Bakr living close to Hira crossed the border and fought the Persian troops.[485]

Another important party consisted of the Tamim, who after 605 started to invade the territory of the Bakr close to Hira.[486] They were a large, military strong northern tribe with a territory similar to that of the Bakr. The Sasanians had given the Tamim privileges for defending the Sasanian and Hiran trade routes and had made one of their tribesmen, al-Mundir b. Sawa, governor of Bahrain commanding the Arabs.[487]

Various wars may have been prosecuted simultaneously at the battle of Dhu Qar. In general one can hold that Sasanian forces and the Christian Taghlib aided by other Arab tribes fought branches of the Bakr. Meanwhile, the Bakr also fought against the Tamim, who seem to have tried to gain supremacy over (parts of) Hira and presumably also over parts of the adjacent Sasanian Empire. This situation may have become more complicated, because the Tamim allied with the Quraysh from Mecca,[488] who may have aspired to take over the (for-

[481] Veccia Vaglieri, ‘D̲h̲ū Ḳār’, p. 241.
[482] Aloys Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad nach bisher grösstentheils unbenutzten Quellen* 3 (2nd edn, Berlin, 1869), p. 376.
[483] Caskel, ‘Bakr b. Wāʾil’, pp. 962-64; Fred M. Donner, ‘al-Mut̲h̲annā b. Ḥārit̲h̲a’, *EI*^{2} 7 (1993), pp. 796-97; Kindermann, ‘Rabīʿa and Muḍar’, pp. 352-54.
[484] Caskel, ‘Bakr b. Wāʾil’, pp. 962-64.
[485] Abd Al-Husain Zarrinkub, ‘The Arab Conquest of Iran and its Aftermath’, in R.N. Frye (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran* 4. *The Period from the Arab invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 3-4.
[486] Kindermann, ‘Rabīʿa and Muḍar’, pp. 352-54.
[487] M. Lecker, ‘Tamīm b. Murr’, *EI*^{2} 10 (2000), pp. 172-76.
[488] M.J. Kister, ‘Mecca and Tamīm. (Aspects of their Relations)’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8.2. (1965), pp. 113 and 160.

mer) role of Hira among the tribes. These internal rivalries probably continued during the subsequent wars and conquests.

1.14.5. Examples of involvement with Christian culture in Hira

The early affiliation to Christianity is already noticeable in the presence of the Christian ʿIbad. Hira had already been represented by its own bishop at the first Synod of the Church of the East in 410 and belonged to the patriarchal see of Bet Aramaye in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The close association with the *Tayyaye* is visible in the description of its bishop in 424 as ‘of Hirta of the *Tayyaye*’ (ܕܚܝܪܬܐ ܕܛܝܝܐ). This synod even took place in ‘Markabta of the *Tayyaye*’.[489] The term *Tayyaye* (or *Tayyi*) had become a generic Syriac name for Arabs, but originally it referred to a distinct tribe.[490]

In the early days, the Arabs around Hira had also been influenced by the teachings of Mani who acknowledged Zoroaster, the Buddhist Gautama, and Christ as divine messengers.[491] King Imru al-Qays (d.328) may have adopted Christianity. The Sasanians did not allow this, which may have been a reason for his defection to the Romans, especially after the Romans officially had become Christians. This defection resulted in an interregnum during which the Ghassanids played an important role in Hira until the Lakhmids resumed power.

Towards the end of the sixth century, the last Lakhmid King, al-Nuʿman III, is said to have adopted Christianity in its East Syrian form.[492] By now, the Sasanians may have tolerated this as it opposed the Chalcedonian teaching of Byzantium.[493] Nuʿman III would have valued Catholicos Ishoʿyahb I and his Christian faith, which therefore could expand here.[494] After his conflict with Khosrau II, Ishoʿyahb I found shelter in Hira until his death. The Lakhmid princess Hind, described as ‘the sister of Nuʿman’, interred his body in a monastery she had founded.[495] Later, the influential Persian Christian Shamta, who had assisted Prince Sheroy in the murder of his father Khosrau II, also fled to Hira when Sheroy turned against him. He was,

[489] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 43. The description ‘Hirta of the *Tayyaye*’ also appears in the *Chronicon Anonymum*: Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 29.

[490] This tribe had important relations with both the Lakhmids in Persia and the Ghassanids in Byzantium. Irfan Shahid, ‘Ṭayyiʾ or Ṭayy’, *EI*^{2} 10 (2000), pp. 402-403.

[491] Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, p. 143.

[492] Although most scholars accept the claim that Nuʿman III was Christianized, the conflicting sources lead to various answers on the question of who converted him, on what time and even to which denomination. Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, pp. 17-22; Toral-Niehoff, ‘The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra’, p. 340; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 52-53; Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 66 and 92.

[493] Shahid, ‘Lakhmids’, pp. 632-34.

[494] Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, p. 228, with references.

[495] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 17; Nöldeke, ‘Die syrische Chronik’, pp. 9-10; Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, pp. 17-22 and 29. Nöldeke comments that though other sources call her Hind ‘the younger’ (a daughter of Nuʿman III), he prefers the version given here.

however, arrested and imprisoned.[496] It is not sure why Hira was the place to which both Sheroy and Ishoʿyahb I fled.

There must have been many churches and monasteries in Hira. Six Catholicoi were buried here. A pupil of Catholicos Mar Aba (d.552) also founded here a monastery and a (theological) school.[497] Abraham of Kashkar, the founder of the Great Monastery, had successfully evangelized in Hira.[498]

One of those who is said to have converted Nuʿman III was the poet ʿAdi ibn Zayd al-ʿIbadi. ʿAdi belonged to the Tamim and his work forms a combination of Arab culture and the Christian culture of the ʿIbad. His father was a descendant of an influential Christian family of the ʿIbad who had acted as interim governor of Hira until Mundir IV was appointed king in 576. ʿAdi was as influential as his father, functioning as secretary and adviser on Arab affairs for Khosrau. He was moreover closely connected to Nuʿman III. After Mundir's death in 580, ʿAdi would have been instrumental in the election of Nuʿman III. He had raised him in his own Christian family and later he would marry Nuʿman's daughter Hind. ʿAdi's good fortune came to an end when his rivals discredited him before Nuʿman. He landed in prison and was killed around 600. A son of ʿAdi, in turn, would have engineered the fall of Nuʿman III which led to the end of the Lakhmid dynasty.[499]

Christianity in Hira was not only represented by the Church of the East. We have seen that some time around 520, Miaphysite influence increased due to missionary Miaphysite monks converting Arabs in the rural areas. A letter to the Church of Hira written after 519 by Severus is another proof of the presence of Miaphysite Christians in Hira. Julianists may have formed another Miaphysite grouping in this region.[500] During the late sixth century, however, the influence of the Church of the East seems to have increased significantly, as it also sent missionary monks and had its capital see close by. Toral-Niehoff holds therefore that the kingdom of Hira, due to its position between the two empires with their different Christian strong-

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[496] Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 30-31.

[497] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 84-85. The foundation of the theological school in Hira has been aligned with the suspension of the School of Nisibis around 540. Michael G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, 1984; repr. Piscataway, 2005), p. 360.

[498] Winkler, 'Zeitalter der Sassaniden', p. 38. Cf. Jullien, *Le Monachisme en Perse*, pp. 14-15.

[499] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 90-93; Bosworth, *Ṭabari. The Sasanids*, pp. 37 and 340-41; Kirill Dmitriev, 'An Early Christian Arabic Account of the Creation of the World', in Neuwirth, Sinai and Marx, *The Qur'ān in Context*, p. 377.

[500] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 104-106. The Julianists were followers of Julian of Halicarnassus, who opposed his former ally Severus.

holds, was 'in a missionary crossfire, but at the same time could function as a neutral meeting ground'.[501]

The examples given above show that Hira had become an important centre of Arab Christianity. For three centuries it transmitted its culture and religion including the Syrian, Christian and Persian influences to the Arabs of the Peninsula.[502] Hira's role in the development of the Arabic script stands out especially. It is generally acknowledged that Hira contributed much to the famous Kufic version of this script.[503] The script probably had reached Hira and Mecca via the trade routes, but it is debated where it developed first.[504]

At least two of the defenders of the Church of the East in the 612 debate, which will be discussed in the next chapter, had connections with Hira. Babai, the new (unofficial) leader of the Church of the East, associated himself closely with them. One was Henanishoʿ, who came from an Arab family in Hira and is reported to have served King Nuʿman III,[505] or even to have belonged to his family.[506] Henanishoʿ and his uncle Elia also appeared in the Christological letter of the later Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II and may have assisted Babai in the supervision of the northern monasteries.[507] The other participant was the Persian martyr George who was baptized in 596 by Bishop Simon of Hira and killed in the aftermath of the 612 debate. Babai wrote his hagiography and possibly also a history of John the *Tayyaya*, from 'Hira of the *Tayyaye*, who lived in a cave near this holy monastery'.[508]

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[501] Toral-Niehoff, 'The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra', pp. 338-40. In this article, Isabel Toral-Niehoff speaks only of 'Monophysite' and does not differentiate this term from 'Miaphysite', which is not used at all. In order to maintain a consistent terminology, however, we render this term in her article as 'Miaphysite'.

[502] Shahid, 'La<u>kh</u>mids', pp. 632-34. The role of the Kinda in this transmission is contested. Irfan Shahid states that the Kinda adopted Christianity and spread it to central and northern Arabia. Theresia Hainthaler, however, holds that the Kinda were probably not Christian and that—even if there were some Christians among the Kinda—there is nothing known about their denomination or organization. Irfan Shahid, 'Kinda', *EI*^{2} 5 (1986), pp. 118-20; Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber,* pp. 66-67 and 140-42.

[503] Many scholars see a relation with the Nabatean script on the coffin of the Lakhmid King Imru al-Qays (d.328) in Namara. Knauf, 'Arabo-Aramaic and ʿArabiyya', pp. 236-38; Toral-Niehoff, 'The ʿIbād of Al-Ḥīra', p. 342.

[504] See for further discussion: Irfan Shahid. 'al-Ḥīra', *EI*^{2} 3 (1971), pp. 462-63; ʿAli ibn Ibrahim Ghabban and Robert Hoyland (trans. and concluding remarks), 'The inscription of Zuhayr, the oldest Islamic inscription (24 AH/AD 644-45), the rise of the Arabic script and the nature of the early Islamic state', *Arabian archaeology and epigraphy* 19 (2008), pp. 221-22 and 232; Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber,* pp. 28-30 and 146.

[505] Gerrit Jan Reinink, 'Babai the Great's "Life of George" and the propagation of doctrine in the late Sasanian empire', in Jan Willem Drijvers and John W. Watt (eds.), *Portraits of Spiritual Authority. Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium and the Christian Orient* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 180-85, with references, also in Reinink, *Syriac Christianity under Late Sasanian and Early Islamic Rule* (VCSS 831; Aldershot, 2005), Chapter 2.

[506] J.-B. Chabot (ed. and trans.), *Le livre de la Chasteté composé par Jésusdenah, Évêque de Baçrah,* (Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire 16; Rome, 1896), No. 21, p. 12.

[507] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 141-43.

[508] Paul Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha. De trois autres patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques, Nestoriens* (Leipzig, 1895), p. 427; Joel Walker, 'A Saint and his Biographer in Late Antique Iraq: The History of St. George of Izla († 614) by Babai the Great', in Arietta Papaconstantinou, Muriel Debié and Hugh Kennedy (eds.), *Writing 'True Stories'* (Turnhout, 2010), p. 37. The hagiography of John is not preserved and Babai most probably referred to the Great Monastery.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CATHOLICOI OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST FROM 612 UP TO THE END OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

2.1. Babai the Great

2.1.1. Life and works

Babai can be considered an unofficial leader of the Church of the East during the time the Persian emperor Khosrau forbade the installation of a new catholicos (608-628). When Khosrau was murdered in 628, Babai was immediately offered the position, which he however refused, dying not long after. Babai's great impact on the Christology of the Church of East is seen especially in the first official acknowledgment of the Christological doctrine of two natures, two *qnome* and one *parsopa*, which was to remain the norm for the following centuries. The Church of the East officially defended this doctrine in the presence of Khosrau at the debate in 612 with the Miaphysites, mentioned in the introduction.[1]

Babai was born in Bet ʿAinata in Bet Zabdai.[2] He studied medicine in Nisibis and attended the famous theological school there when Abraham of Bet Rabban was its leader (527-69). He left it and first may have become a teacher in the *xenodocheion* of Nisibis.[3] Later, he joined Abraham of Kashkar's Great Monastery which had been founded in 570/71. Both events might have had to do with the contested appointment of Henana of Adiabene between 571 and 573 as new director of the School of Nisibis.[4]

The new monastery defended and fostered the Antiochene tradition of the Church of the East and its formula 'two natures in one *parsopa*'. This strong adherence to the East Syrian orthodoxy followed the point of view of the clergy who in the synods of 554 and 576 had

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[1] The conflict with the Miaphysites will be discussed in section 2.1.3.1 and the debate in section 2.3.

[2] Geevarghese Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai the Great* (Kottayam, 1982), pp. 1-16 offers an extended survey of the sources, and its biography is followed here in general. Of the sources describing Babai's life, the *Book of Governors* offers the most information. E.A.W. Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors. The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840* 1 (London, 1893; repr. Piscataway, 2003), Chapter 1.26, pp. 51-56; cf. trans. idem, *The Book of Governors. The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840* 2 (London, 1893; repr. Piscataway, 2003), pp. 90-100; Chabot, *Livre de la Chasteté*, No. 39, pp. 22-23; Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 84, pp. 530-34. See also for a short overview: Till Engelmann, 'Babai der Große', in *BBKL* 28 (2007), col. 64-67; Sebastian Brock, 'Babai the Great (ca. 551-628)', *GEDSH*, pp. 49-50.

[3] A *xenodocheion* was in general a church institution that offered free refuge and hospital care for strangers and the poor. Johannes Hahn, 'Xenodocheion', in Hubert Cancik, Helmuth Schneider and Manfred Landfester (eds.), *Brill's New Pauly* (Brill Online, accessed 10 Oct. 2014).

[4] Henana probably could only be officially installed as director in 573, after the death of Paul the metropolitan of Nisibis. Jean Maurice Fiey, *Nisibe. Métropole syriaque orientale et ses suffragants des origines à nos jours* (CSCO 388, subs. 54; Leuven, 1977), pp. 54-55; Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', p. 19.

tried to bind a varied range of monastic circles more to the hierarchy of the Church. The monastery became a famous model for a reformed monasticism which was characterized by a very strict solitary, ascetic and prayerful life. The reform movement probably included celibacy as well, but this was neglected when monks could live together with wives and children. In 604, when Babai became the third abbot of the Great Monastery of Izla,[5] he was eager to restore the strict discipline, and therefore cleared the monastery of the married monks and their quarters. It was especially his uncompromising actions against these monks and their families that prompted many other monks also to leave the monastery. From 608/609 Babai was also entrusted with the oversight of the northern monasteries at the request of the three metropolitans involved: Cyriacus of Nisibis, Jonadab of Adiabene and Gabriel of Karka d-Bet Slok. The latter two participated in the 612 debate. Babai had to investigate the orthodoxy of the monks, and worked together with the archdeacon Mar Aba, already an important clerical authority.[6]

Babai is said to have written about 83 treatises, but only a small number have survived. Apart from treatises against various opponents, they include Christological, ascetic-mystical, hagiographical and liturgical works. Three entirely Christological works are still extant: the *Liber de Unione* (LU),[7] the short *Tractatus Vaticanus* 178 (TV) that is added as an appendix in Vaschalde's edition of the LU,[8] and an untitled text that forms the tenth text in the *Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts* and is therefore referred to as X.[9]

The *Liber de Unione* ('Book of the Union') is the most extensive Christological work. It is addressed to the brothers of the Great Monastery and has as its subtitle 'About the divinity and humanity and the *parsopa* of the union'.[10] It systematically discusses the union (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ) of the two natures of Christ and formulates the Christology of the two *kyane* and two *qnome* in one *parsopa* of Christ. Originally, it may have comprised 21 chapters, divided over six *memre*,[11] but in its available form consists of seven *memre* (treatises), as follows:

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[5] Interestingly, it was also in 604 that Miaphysites at the court frustrated the election of Gregory of Kashkar, who was Khosrau's candidate for the vacant position of catholicos after Sabrishoʿ died. This Gregory had briefly been metropolitan of Nisibis in 596 and had fought Henana in vain until he was dismissed by the same Khosrau.

[6] Budge (trans.), *The Book of Governors*, Chapter 1.27, pp. 90-93; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 10.

[7] See the already mentioned edition and translation by A. Vaschalde.

[8] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV*, pp. 291-307 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 235-47). *Tractatus Vaticanus* is preserved in only one manuscript of the eighth century (Codex Vat. Syr. 178, fol. 229-234b. 228,236).

[9] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 10, pp. 207-209, (cf. trans. eidem, pp. 123-25).

[10] The Syriac title is: ܥܠ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܘܥܠ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܘܥܠ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܕܚܕܝܘܬܐ܀

[11] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 227-28 and 235; eadem, 'Babai der Grosse: Christologische Probleme und ihre Lösungen' (*OCP* 41, 1975), p. 328.

1. The first *memra* (1-5) is called *On Faith* (ܥܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ). It starts with the Trinity and explicates the infinite transcendence of God, who cannot be known by human senses and mind.[12] God's transcendence is indicated by his names, which are his properties.[13]
2. The second *memra* (6-11) discusses the union of the infinite *qnoma* of the Word with the finite human *qnoma* in one *parsopa.*
3. The third *memra* (9-11) explains the nature of this union, with comments on several heresies.
4. The fourth *memra* (12-17) examines the two natures of Christ. The title of Chapter 17 is: 'What is the difference between *qnoma* and *parsopa*, and how is the *parsopa* assumed and permanent, and the *qnoma* not assumed?'[14] Here, Babai offers definitions of *qnoma* and *parsopa*. Unfortunately, one page of the Syriac text is missing, but a shorter version of this chapter is found in TV.[15]
5. The fifth *memra* (18-19) focuses on the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.
6. To the sixth *memra* belong Chapter 20 on the names of Christ, and Chapter 21 which analyses traditional Antiochene descriptions for the Christological union and is considered the most important part of the LU.[16]
7. *Memra* 7 of the LU seems to be a later addition made by Babai. It was probably written between 612-20 and summarizes many discussions of the LU while refuting adversaries' arguments.[17]

The short TV opposes the teaching of one *qnoma* in Christ and accepts the union according to *parsopa*. It is written after the LU but before the additional seventh *memra.*[18] Text X presents Babai's Christology in short. It includes definitions of *kyana*, *qnoma* and *parsopa* and explains that two *qnome* are needed for the union of both natures in one *parsopa*, because otherwise the whole divine nature and entire humanity would be united in this *parsopa*.[19]

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[12] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 1/2, p. 8.
[13] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 1/2, pp. 17-19.
[14] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 4/17, p. 159.
ܥܠ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܡܢ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܒܝܬ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ. ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܡܬܢܣܒ ܘܩܝܘܡܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܢܣܒ܀
[15] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV,* pp. 299-302; Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', p. 302.
[16] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 227-28; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai,* pp. 22-26.
[17] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 7, pp. 252-89; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai,* pp. 24-29.
[18] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai,* pp. 25-27; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV,* pp. 291-307; see also pp. v-vi and trans. pp. 235-47.
[19] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection,* 10, pp. 207-209 (cf. trans. eidem, pp. 123-25).

The hagiographic *Life of George*,[20] the monk from Izla who was martyred in 615 in the aftermath of the 612 debate to which he had contributed, was written between 621-28 and contains some Christological statements. Babai described the 612 debate and the events surrounding it, while making George his mouthpiece.[21] According to Babai, George rejected the teachings of Henana so firmly that he said that anyone mentioning Henana's name should be excluded from the Holy Communion.[22] Joel Walker sees this specific hagiography also as an attempt to secure the support of a Christian Persian family with powerful relations to the Sasanian court, and all hagiographies by Babai as means to bind the diverse regions and peoples to the doctrine of the Church of the East.[23]

Babai described the ascetic way to a higher knowledge in his *Commentary on the Centuries of Evagrius Ponticus* (CE).[24] Other ascetic works preserved are *Canons for Monks*, a commentary on the *Spiritual Law* of Mark the Monk, and the probably inauthentic *Ascetic Counsels*.[25]

2.1.2. Intellectual background. Theology and Philosophy

All aspects of the Antiochene tradition are present in Babai's work. In addition to the fundamental safeguarding of God's transcendence and the humanity of Christ the following elements can also be recognized: the 'liturgical' *prosopon* of Christ that shares in the honour, power and adoration of the Lord; the Theodorian Christology and soteriology of participation and the thought that the humanity of Christ hides his divinity.[26] The influence from Theodore is great.[27] Presumably, Babai had many more books at his disposal, especially of Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius, than those that have survived. There are no indications that he could read Greek. Babai used the Nicene Creed as accepted by the Synod in 410 and seems to have been influenced by Theodore's commentary on it. Other earlier influences may have come

[20] Babai's 'Life of George' appears in Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, pp. 416-571; Hoffmann, *Akten Persischer Märtyrer*, pp. 91-115; Oskar Braun (trans.), *Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer. Mit einem Anhang: Ostsyrisches Mönchsleben* (Kempten, 1915), pp. 221-77.
[21] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 219.
[22] Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, p. 505.
[23] Walker, 'The History of St. George of Izla († 614) by Babai the Great', pp. 33-34 and 40-41.
[24] Wilhelm Frankenberg (ed. and trans.), *Euagrius Ponticus* (Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse, Neue Folge 13.2; Berlin, 1912). The Christological statements are in line with those of the *Synodicon Orientale*, but the two-*qnome* Christology is not explicitly expressed here. This work was therefore most probably written before 612.
[25] Brock, 'Babai the Great', p. 49, with references. Till Engelmann rather convincingly concludes that Babai did not write *Ascetic Counsels*, among other reasons because the statements are addressed to independent monks, lack the mystical character of his CE, and do not contain the two-*qnome* concept. Till Engelmann, '"Einige hilfreiche Ratschläge zum asketischen Leben": Ein Werk Babais des Großen?', in Martin Tamcke (ed.), *Gotteserlebnis und Gotteslehre. Christliche und islamische Mystik im Orient* (Wiesbaden, 2010), pp. 101-107.
[26] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 236.
[27] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 184-88.

from the Cappadocians and the Fathers who were famous in the School of Nisibis, for instance Ephrem and Narsai. Chediath holds therefore that Babai's work forms a synthesis of different traditions.[28] The ascetic-mystical works of John of Apamea, Evagrius Ponticus and probably Marcus Eremita (Mark the Monk) further influenced Babai's epistemology.[29]

Concerning the influence of Nestorius, Abramowski comments that Babai considered the whole Syriac translation of the *Liber Heraclidis* authentic, but that he did not explicitly refer to this book.[30] She points to the difference in focus between Babai and (Ps.-) Nestorius. Where Nestorius did acknowledge that each nature has a *qnoma** but did not elaborate this concept because he focussed on the two *parsope** becoming one and Ps.-Nestorius even omitted the word *qnoma*, Babai made the two *qnome* the centre of his Christology and focussed on how they were united into one *parsopa.* He defended these two *qnome* as sign of orthodoxy both against Philoxenus' emphasis on the one nature and against the reception of the Neo-Chalcedonian composite *qnoma* within the Church of the East.[31]

It is not clear which philosophical works Babai was acquainted with, and to what extent he might have been influenced by them. It is even more obscure which translations he possibly had at his disposal.[32] Although Babai had left the School of Nisibis before Henana was its director, one might expect that he had some knowledge of the *Cause,* which shows influence of Greek philosophical thought as mediated through translations of works by Evagrius, Aristotle and Neoplatonic commentaries. These Aristotelian studies were disseminated in Persia by pupils founding new schools.[33] It should be noted in this connection that the discussions on the basic Aristotelian concepts such as accidents, substance, genus and species were mainly confined to issues of theological and devotional concern.[34] We may moreover suggest that the group of students and teachers that had left the School under protest against Henana and had gone to the Great Monastery would have increased its familiarity with philosophical concepts.[35]

D.S. Wallace-Hadrill recognizes Aristotelian influence in the structure and content of the LU, as the first *memra* discusses 'the logical and metaphysical foundations of the enquiry into

[28] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai,* pp. 107, 122-26 and 184-85.
[29] See below, section 2.2.7.
[30] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 220.
[31] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 224-25.
[32] As we have seen above in section 1.1.2, quite a number of sometimes inaccurate Syriac translations were available during his time, while gradually more accurate translations appeared.
[33] Becker, *Sources*, p. 91.
[34] Becker, *Sources*, pp. 172-80. See for an extended discussion of these influences, idem, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 126-54.
[35] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 74, pp. 511-12.

the christological question'.[36] Here, Babai might also have been influenced by the *Cause*, which similarly started with an introductory discussion on God's epistemological inaccessibility.[37] Moreover, the LU shows in vocabulary and choice of themes influence from Syriac translations of Aristotle's *Categories*, possibly also via Syriac translations of later introductions and commentaries.[38]

Becker further finds both philosophical and Evagrian notions in Babai's CE he also had identified in the *Cause*.[39] Where the Cause divided learning into intelligence (ܝܕ̈ܥܬܐ) and action (ܣܘܥܪܢܘܬܐ), Babai made a similar division between spiritual knowledge and training of virtue (or asceticism). The *Cause* further held that the perfection (ܓܘܡܠܐ) of intelligence was the exact comprehension (ܡܕ̈ܪܟܢܘܬܐ)[40] of the knowledge of all beings, while the perfection of action was the excellence of virtues (ܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܥ̈ܠܬܐ). This division clearly stood in the Aristotelian tradition, as was the connected basic assumption that the rational mind was necessary for discriminating between good and bad,[41] which was also familiar to Theodore.

In any case, Babai had at least enough familiarity to encourage scorn for Aristotle's teachings and basic concepts, since these would lead the 'Arians' to wrong conclusions concerning the Trinity, when they denied its unity and considered the Son a creature (ܒܪܝܬܐ) second to God in position and time.[42]

2.1.3. Main challenges

2.1.3.1. Advocates of the one nature and/or one qnoma

Babai had to defend the new Christology of two natures, two *qnome* and one *parsopa* against external and internal opponents who supported the doctrine of one *qnoma* or possibly even one nature. The defence against Miaphysite propaganda seems to have become of vital importance to the Church of the East.[43]

Officially, the Church of the East was still the only recognized Christian group in the Persian Empire. As long as the Miaphysites did not form an officially distinct group, one could

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36 D.S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch. A study of early Christian thought in the East* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 109-110.

37 Scher, 'Cause', pp. 327-37; Becker, *Sources*, pp. 94-111. See for a detailed analysis of this text: Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 130-44.

38 See for instance: Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/17, p. 159, as discussed below in section 2.2.6.

39 Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, p. 183.

40 ܡܬܕ̈ܪܟܢܘܬܐ in another manuscript, Scher, 'Cause', p. 343 (see also pp. 319-20).

41 Scher, 'Cause', pp. 342-43; Becker, *Sources*, p. 111. Babai's view will be discussed in section 2.1.3.3-4.

42 Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 4:19, pp. 272-73.

43 See for further descriptions of the challenges met by Babai, Marijke Metselaar, 'The Mirror, the Qnoma, and the Soul: Another Perspective on the Christological Formula of Babai the Great', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 19.2 (2015), pp. 334-52.

easily switch sides without being indicted for apostasy, while opportunistic interests could play a major role.[44] The Miaphysites had won the favour of the Persian Emperor Khosrau and increasingly attacked the position of the Church. They took advantage of the highly influential position of the Miaphysite court physician Gabriel of Shigar, who was fervently motivated to harm the Church of the East after it had excommunicated him. He instigated the 612 debate where the Church of the East also pleaded with the Emperor to allow them a new catholicos.

The rivalry had been given new momentum after Khosrau II had started to conquer Byzantine provinces around 603. He now tactically favoured the Miaphysites living there and subsequently those close by. Miaphysite influence had further increased because Khosrau deported to Persia large numbers of Christians from the countries he had conquered.[45] As noted above, Khosrau started moreover to paralyse the leadership of the Church of the East by denying it a new catholicos, exiling several bishops and allowing Miaphysites to confiscate its churches. This way the Church of the East's contacts with the court were broken and bishops or metropolitans could not be consecrated officially.[46] Khosrau would have exiled for instance Shubhalmaran, the Metropolitan of Karka d-Bet Slok, because of problems with the people of Shigar. The bishop of Balad, Ishoʿyahb of Gdala, is said to have undergone the same fate, because he was accused of refusing to allow Miaphysites into his church. This might concur with Morony's statement that Khosrau's politics implied that Miaphysites could confiscate churches and monasteries in and around the capital.[47] In 620/21, Khosrau also would have crucified believers in Arbela.[48]

Tensions between the Christian minorities in Khosrau's empire seem to have sharpened. Where they could still have shared communion before, this was no longer allowed. This is seen in the example of the learned Maruta, who became the first official Miaphysite catholicos in 628/29. Around 615 he had left the Mar Mattai monastery and moved to the monastery of Queen Shirin in Seleucia-Ctesiphon that had been founded for the Church of the East, but had been handed over to Miaphysites after the Queen became a follower of Gabriel of Shigar and sided with the Miaphysites. When Maruta noted that the Miaphysite Metropolitan Samuel (614-24) had tacitly allowed members of the Church of the East to receive communion here

[44] Wigram, *History of Assyrian Church*, p. 76.
[45] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai the Great*, p. 43; L. Duchesne*, L'Église au VIe Siècle* (Paris, 1925), pp. 320 and 373-74; Fiey, *Jalons*, p. 63.
[46] Reinink, 'Life of George', pp. 180-81; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 350-51.
[47] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 350-51; Chabot, *Livre de la Chasteté*, No. 58, p. 31; Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 86 and 93, pp. 538-39 and 554-55.
[48] Chabot, *Livre de la Chasteté*, No. 60, p. 32. One of these martyrs was Ishoʿsabran. His hagiography was most probably written by the later Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III. See also below, section 4.3.4.

and in the church of Gabriel of Shigar, he convinced Samuel to end this practice.[49] Reinink approvingly quotes Morony's conclusion that 'the final separation between Nestorians and Monophysites in Iraq occurred in the second decade of the seventh century when mixed congregations and monasteries were purged by both sides'.[50]

Meanwhile, Miaphysites had also become influential in monasteries where they challenged the Dyophysite Christology. As we have seen, the Neo-Chalcedonian doctrine may have contributed to a schism within the Church of the East with one party defending one *qnoma* and the other two *qnome.* This schism undermined the Church and may have facilitated further reception of Miaphysite propaganda.

The argumentation needed to counter all these challenges may have demanded a more refined use of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic concepts current at that time. Babai had to oppose not only the Miaphysite emphasis on the one nature (and one *hypostasis*), as it had been defended most vigorously by Philoxenus and by Severus, but also the Neo-Chalcedonian doctrine (553) of the one composite *hypostasis (hypostasis synthetos*; Syr. ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܪܟܒܐ),[51] which was propagated by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian.

Babai rejected the *qnomatic* union mainly because it impaired the transcendence of God: it would lead to the detested Theopaschism and to the belief that the divine nature can be diminished. Furthermore, connecting it with Origenist notions, he argued that it would reduce Christ's resurrection to an illusion and appearance, which would impair the very basis of faith.[52] It would introduce mixture and confusion of the two natures in Christ and even the—rejected—teaching that human beings have the same nature as God. Babai argued that if the human *qnoma* of Christ could become one with the divine *qnoma*, this would apply to all human *qnome.* Babai concluded therefore that admitting a *qnomatic* union was the same as falling to the heresy of Origen, because it would imply 'that it is possible that all people become a divine nature, according to the impiety of Origen'.[53]

Babai's TV is directed entirely against people who compared the union of the natures in Christ to that of the union of the human body and soul and who claimed: 'Just as the soul and

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[49] F. Nau (ed. and trans.), 'Histoires d'Aḥoudemmeh et de Marouta. Métropolitains jacobites de Tagrit et de l'Orient (VIe et VIIe siècles)', (PO 3; Paris, 1909), pp. 53-54 and 75-77.
[50] Michael G. Morony, 'Religious Communities in Late Sasanian and Early Muslim Iraq' (*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17.2 (1974), p. 116; Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 249-50.
[51] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 3/10, p. 101.
[52] Antoine Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'origénisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens* (Paris, 1962), pp. 189-93, with references.
[53] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV,* p. 295; Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica'*, pp. 189-93.
ܘܡܫܟܚܐ ܗܝ ܕܐܦ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܪܘܫܥܗ ܕܐܘܪܝܓܢܣ.

the body are one *qnoma*, thus God the Word and man are one *qnoma*'.[54] Cyril is already known for using this metaphor this way.[55] As we have seen, it also appeared in the Syriac fragments of Theodore's *On the Incarnation*. The fact that Babai discussed this metaphor extensively, supports Reinink's suggestion that the opposite arguments for either one *qnoma* or two centred on these fragments.[56] Interestingly, Babai did not mention Narsai, who also used this metaphor but spoke only of *parsopa* instead of *qnoma*. This was probably due to the fact that Narsai reserved the term *qnoma* for the Word as a divine Trinitarian *qnoma*.[57]

Babai may further have referred to the probably inauthentic gloss in the Syriac *Liber Heraclidis* to the one *parsopa* of Christ, when he asserted that the Fathers using the expression 'natural and *qnomatic*' did not mean one *qnoma*, but two.[58] Babai opposed here in particular one statement of Severus which he quoted: 'the union was naturally and *qnomatically* like (that of) soul and body, which necessarily suffer together by force according to the natural law'.[59] It has already been suggested that the formula was also known in the school of Henana.[60]

2.1.3.2. Henana

We have seen in Chapter 1 that the Synods of 585, 596 and 605 confirmed the authority of Theodore while probably covertly rebuking Henana. The Synod of 585 focussed on Theodore's authority in exegesis and formulated its Creed similar to his commentary on the Nicene Creed. What Henana actually did teach is not clear, since most information on Henana's teaching consists of many biased accusations by Babai. These involved a variety of heresies connected with the 'impious' Cyril, Arius, Eunomius, Justinian, the 'Theopaschite Severians',

[54] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 25-26; Appendix in Vaschalde, *Liber de Unione*, *TV*, pp. 291-307, see also pp. v-vi (cf. trans. idem, pp. 235-47); *Tractatus Vaticanus* (TV) in manuscript from single ms. of the Eighth Century (Codex Vat. Syr. 178, fol. 229-234b. 228. 236).
Quotation esp. p. 291, ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܘܦܓܪܐ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ: ܗܟܢܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ.
[55] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 63, with references.
[56] Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 228-29. The two versions preserved of this fragment have been discussed above in section 1.4.4.2. See also the discussion in the School of Nisibis, section 1.12.
[57] Narsai explained in *Memra* 81 that the perfect humanity and perfect divinity in Christ are called one *parsopa*, just as soul and body together are called one *parsopa*. See above, section 1.8.
[58] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/9, pp. 84-85.
ܡܕܝܢ ܒܢܝܫ̈ܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܡ ܡܕܢ̈ܚܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܚܝܢܝܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܝܐ. ܠܐ ܕܠܗ ܠܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܥܒܕܘ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܚܕ: ܐܠܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܚܕ
ܡܪܝܐ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܬܝܕܥܝܢ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢ̈ܐ ܘܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܩܢܘܡ̈ܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܘܕܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ:
[59] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/9, p. 79. Cf. Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 68-69.
ܘܕܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܘܩܢܘܡܐܝܬ ܗܘܬ ܚܝܕܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܢܦܫܐ ܘܦܓܪܐ. ܕܚܫܐܝܢ ܠܗ ܥܡ ܚܕܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܠܨܐܝܬ ܒܩܛܝܪܐ ܒܢܡܘܣܐ ܟܝܢܝܐ ܐܝܬ.
A similar statement also appears in his introduction to the third *memra*. Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/9, p. 72.
[60] See above section 1.12. Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 297-300; eadem, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 20-27.

magic and astrology, and especially Origenism.[61] Babai also ascribed, for instance, the following quotations to Cyril and Henana to show that they denied that the name Christ denoted the two natures in the one *parsopa* of the union: 'God is Christ and Christ is God and these appellations do not signify something different'; 'there is no difference between the Only-Begotten (ܝܚܝܕܝܐ) and the First-Born (ܒܘܟܪܐ)'; and 'these two (appellations) mean the same'.[62]

Babai considered the teaching of the 'natural and *qnomatic* union' (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܟܝܢܝܬܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܝܬܐ) the basic Christological error that mainly started with Cyril, who would have followed the teachings of Arius, Apollinarius and Mani.[63] This error would have led to many heresies, such as those of the Miaphysite or Monophysite Theopaschites. Babai named here Eutyches, Dioscorus, Julian, Philoxenus and Severus.[64] Babai also held that Justinian's writings had resulted in the 'heresies' of his actual opponents Henana and the Messalians which he even associated with each other.[65] After 621, Babai still stated in his *Life of George* that Henana not only made God limited, susceptible to suffering, mortal, divided and separated, but also denied the resurrection of the body, admitting salvation to the soul only and—like Origen—taught that everyone could participate in the nature of God.[66] Probably, discussions on human free will were involved as well and Henana was accused of denying this.[67]

Although followers of Henana may have defended the view that Christ had only one *qnoma*, it is contested whether Henana taught this himself. According to Babai, he did, and this would imply the teaching of one nature.[68] Two sources stemming from scholars connected to the School of Nisibis that might shed some more light on the question of what Henana actually taught do not give us conclusive information concerning his Christology. The *Ecclesiastical History* written by Barhadbeshabba ʿArbaya,[69] a former student of Henana, considered the confession of a single divine nature and a single *qnoma* a heresy. The 'Cyrillians and Severi-

[61] Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica'*, pp. 189-96, with references; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, IV*, p. 295. On Babai's condemnation of Justinian see also Guillaumont, 'Justinien et l'Église de Perse', pp. 57-62; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/10, pp. 101 and 98 (cf. trans. idem pp. 70, 71 and 79).

[62] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/12, pp. 137-38 (cf. trans. idem, p. 111).
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܐ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ. ܘܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܦܪܝܫܐ ܡܘܕܥܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܫܡܗܐ. ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܕܠܝܬ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܒܝܬ ܗ̇، ܕܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܠܒܘܟܪܐ: ܘܬܪܝܗܘܢ، ܠܐ ܚܕ ܗ̇، ܡܘܕܥܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܘܢ.

[63] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 62-66; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/9, pp. 76-77.

[64] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/9, p. 79. Cf. Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 68-69.

[65] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/9, pp. 75-83.

[66] Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica'*, pp. 194-95; Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, p. 477.

[67] Karl Pinggéra, 'Das Bild Narsais des Großen bei Barḥaḏbšabbā ʿArḇāyā. Zum theologischen Profil der "Geschichte der heiligen Väter"', in Arafa Mustafa, Jürgen Tubach and G. Sophia Vashalomidze (eds.), *Inkulturation des Christentums im Sasanidenreich* (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 254-56, with references.

[68] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 225. See also above in section 1.12.

[69] F. Nau, 'La seconde partie de l'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba ʿArbaïa', (PO 9; Paris,1913), pp. 489-631; idem, 'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba ʿArbaïa. Première partie', (PO 23; Paris, 1932), pp. 176-343.

ans' are said to acknowledge one nature and one *qnoma* after the union and thus to introduce mixture and confusion. Unfortunately, it is not sure whether or not it was written under the auspices of Henana.[70] The other source, the already mentioned *Cause of the Foundation of Schools,* possibly by the same author, does not contain clear Christological statements.

Because so little is known of Henana's work itself, Reinink concedes only that Henana 'was no pronounced supporter of the two-*qnome* option' and he does not go as far as Abramowski who suggests that Henana applied the Neo-Chalcedonian composite *qnoma.*[71] Reinink recognizes, however, that Henana's disciple Isaiah of Tahal 'taught the Chalcedonian doctrine of the one hypostasis or perhaps the neo-Chalcedonian formula of the one composite hypostasis.'[72]

Concerning the debate on the question as to what extent the School should hold on to the Theodorian tradition, Reinink assumes that a liberal and open tendency opposed a strict-Theodorian tendency which elevated Theodore to 'the determining factor in the formation of their theological identity and that of their church'. The followers of Henana would represent the liberal tendency, as they compared their teacher to Theodore, while granting him the discretionary authority to also use other Fathers like Diodore, Basil, Chrysostom and Evagrius. Reinink explains the strict-Theodorian position as a reaction to the many Christological disputes in the popular School of Nisibis which seemed to threaten this bulwark of East Syrian Orthodoxy. To prevent this School from being closed (as had happened before in Edessa due to the Miaphysites), the strict Theodorians would have started to emphasize Theodore's position even more and granted him therefore the exclusive authority in exegetical instruction as expressed in the Synod of 605.[73] This Synod thus seems to have taken a somewhat stronger position than the earlier Synod of 585, which still called Chrysostom 'blessed', although he was merely brought in acknowledging that 'the Interpreter was the teacher of truth' and a 'treasure of the Church'.[74] The fact that the 'strict' Babai described in his CE both Evagrius Ponticus and John of Apamea as another 'pillar of orthodoxy' next to Theodore might contradict the suggested dichotomy between a strict and liberal exegesis, but might also be ex-

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[70] On Hadbeshabba ʿArbaya and the ecclesiastical history, see also above, section 1.12. Karl Pinggéra assumes that the author belonged to the opponents of Henana and had left the School of Nisibis. Pinggéra, 'Das Bild Narsais', pp. 257-58; Nau, 'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba 1', p. 193 and quotation p. 197.
ܒܚܢܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܗܝ ܗܘܬ ܒܬܢܝܢ. ܗܟܢܐ. ܚܕ ܕܝܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܬܪ ܚܘܝܕܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ. ܘܡܘܙܓܐ ܘܚܘܠܛܢܐ ܡܥܠܝܢ.
[71] Reinink, Tradition and Formation', pp. 222-26, with references.
[72] Reinink, 'Life of George', p. 183.
[73] Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 242-44; idem, '"Edessa grew dim and Nisibis shone forth": The School of Nisibis at the transition of the sixth-seventh century', in J.W. Drijvers and A.A. MacDonald (eds.), *Centres of Learning. Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near East* (Leiden, 1996), pp. 84-89, also in Reinink, *Syriac Christianity*, Chapter 1.
[74] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 137. ܡܒܪܟ ܠܗ ܠܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ [...] ܣܝܡܬܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ.

plained by its focus on asceticism rather than on exegesis, or by being an early work.[75] In the latter case, this would be an indication that it was already written before 605.

In the discussion on the polemics in the School of Nisibis, we have seen that Reinink further holds that linguistics played a major role, with Henana's party probably accepting a close connection between *qnoma* and *parsopa*.[76] This connection was, however, similar to the proposed terminology of Justinian who identified *hypostasis* and *prosopon*.[77] It is therefore not impossible that Henana sought common grounds with neo-Chalcedonians and even with Miaphysites, at least for the sake of clarity in debates.

Several other scholars also point to the rivalry between the School of Nisibis and the Great Monastery. Vööbus, in his tentative reconstruction of the sparse and somewhat contradictory sources, finds indications that the School of Nisibis could have been challenged by a rival school with connections to the Great Monastery, but Jean Maurice Fiey and Adam Becker take here a more careful position.[78] Alberto Camplani attributes victory to the Great Monastery in the complex situation of conflicting powers. He suggests that this monastery increased its influence when Babai became the supervisor of the Persian monasteries thanks to its loyalty to the conservative party of the Church of the East, as was demonstrated for instance by welcoming the group that had left the School of Nisibis.[79] If one recognizes Labourt's conviction that without the opposition by the first three abbots of the Great Monastery the teachings of Henana would have prevailed,[80] one might suggest that the Great Monastery challenged the position of the School of Nisibis by incriminating Henana and offering formative theological knowledge itself.[81]

Adam Becker holds that the main reason for the conflicts between Babai and Henana may have been the rival claims concerning the best way to receive some knowledge of God. Was it through the school or through a monastery only? Although the particulars of the rivalry are not clear, Becker's drawing attention to the rival epistemology of the School of Nisibis and that of monasteries is worthwhile and will be discussed in section 2.1.3.4. in more detail.

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[75] See also below section 2.1.3.3.
[76] Reinink, Tradition and Formation', pp. 228-31.
[77] Grillmeier with Hainthaler, *JdChr* 2.2, p. 484.
[78] Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, pp. 265-68, with references; Fiey, *Nisibe*, pp. 48-49; Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 159-60.
[79] Camplani, 'The revival of Persian monasticism', pp. 286-89.
[80] Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse*, p. 215.
[81] Sabino Chialà, however, rejects hypotheses that the Great Monastery incorporated a school. Sabino Chialà, 'Les mystiques syro-orientaux: une école ou une époque?', in Alain Desreumaux (ed.), *Les mystiques syriaques* (Paris, 2011), pp. 72-73.

2.1.3.3. Monastic circles and Origenism

From at least 486, when the *Synodicon* first mentioned them, there was a large and heterogeneous group of monks that rejected the clergy and followed their own ways. They might have been influenced by various combinations of Miaphysitism, Origenism, Messalian tendencies and—at least since 573—also by Henanian circles. The challenge caused by these diffuse groups might have elicited Babai's attacks on their basic tenets. These monks should not be confused with the monks who belonged to the reform monastery affiliated with the Great Monastery of Izla of which Babai was the abbot. Where monks often had lived solitarily, this situation was changed by the reformed monasteries. In the Great Monastery, newcomers had to spend a minimum of three preparatory years in the community, followed by a secluded life in a separated cell in the vicinity of the monastery. All the time they remained subject to the abbot, as seen in the rules of Dadishoʿ and Babai.[82]

The dissenting monks were often referred to as 'Messalians' (ܡܨܠܝ̈ܢܐ). Babai stated in his CE that the falsely named 'Messalians' claimed that human beings can know God as he does himself and that they can see him.[83] He described them as 'diviners' (ܡܨ̈ܠܝܢܐ ܡܩܣ̈ܡܐ) and named them in one breath with Henana and Justinian.[84] Though the term 'Messalians' was often indiscriminately used to discredit opponents, 'Messalian' tendencies might nevertheless have played a role, if one defines 'Messalian' with Adam Becker as an 'ascetic movement which advocated an immediate access to the divine' and challenged the social order. This would correspond with Becker's view on the epistemological difference between schools and monasteries, the former relying more on reason and the latter on inspiration in obtaining knowledge about God.[85]

The Neoplatonic and Origenist work of Evagrius Ponticus (345-99), which was also condemned by the 553 Council, played an important role in monastic mysticism. Evagrius held that originally, intelligent souls were in intellectual unity with the divine, but had fallen away from this unity into a bodily state in which they had to find their way back to this former unity through asceticism and reflection (ܬܐܘܪܝܐ).[86] The communion of the mind with God is without intermediaries, such as images or words. Adam Becker sees here a contrast with the teach-

[82] Camplani, 'The Revival of Persian Monasticism', pp. 281-83, with references.
[83] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 2:11, pp. 136-37.
[84] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/9, p. 82.
[85] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 194-95.
[86] The word *theoria* (Greek. θεωρία; Syriac, ܬܐܘܪܝܐ) is often translated as 'contemplation' or 'vision'. Because Babai often used it in the context of a 'vision' in a mirror it will be rendered in such cases with 'reflection'.

ing at the School of Nisibis, where images and mentally created pictures or statues of God were acceptable.[87]

Evagrius' book *Kephalaia Gnostica* was available in two Syriac versions. One was a quite accurate translation that probably went back to Sergius of Reshʿayna (d.536) and that still contained Origenist elements. Babai was aware of this version, but rejected it as forgery. He used the other version which was almost devoid of Origenist elements. According to Guillaumont, it may have been made at the order of Philoxenus of Mabbug.[88] However, John Watt suggests that it was already translated in Edessa at the time Antiochene theology dominated the 'Persian' school and before Philoxenus attended this school. Philoxenus was influenced by it and may not have been aware of some Antiochene elements.[89]

We have seen that according to Babai, Origenism not only taught human participation in the divine nature, but also the denial of the Resurrection, and it would therefore impair the foundation of faith. It also would teach the pre-existence of the soul.[90] As the Origenist elements were almost absent in his Syriac version of the *Kephalaia,* Babai did not recognize Evagrius' Origenist background. The editorial note of the copyist of the CE even stated that it was written to defend Evagrius against false claims associating him with the heretical Origen.[91] Babai corrected such 'Origenism' in his CE. For instance, when he referred to Evagrius' statement that 'all of them will be Gods', he mentioned an imputed statement of Origen (and Henana): 'one nature we are made (ܒܢ̈ܝܐ) with God'.[92] Babai rejected this, arguing here and elsewhere that rational beings (ܡ̈ܠܝܠܐ) are not children or heirs of God by nature, but only by grace.[93]

It is moreover remarkable that Babai even elevated Evagrius, together with the monk John of Apamea, to the same position as that of Theodore, whose authority was claimed by the recent Synods. Babai considered them the two pillars of orthodoxy that corresponded with two ways for believers: spiritual knowledge (ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܪܘܚ) and training of virtue (or asceticism)

[87] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 176-77.
[88] Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica'*, pp. 227, 261 and 272.
[89] John W. Watt, 'Philoxenus and the Old Syriac Version of Evagrius' Centuries', *OC* 64 (1980), pp. 76 and 80-81.
[90] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 5/19, pp. 184-88.
[91] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 8-9.
[92] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 4:51, pp. 294-95.
ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܡܪ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܠܗ̈ܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ܆ ܠܐ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܘܪܝܓܢܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܘܚܢܢ ܘܕܣܝܥܬܗ: ܕܢܬܚܠܛ ܕܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘܝܢ ܒܢ̈ܝܐ. ܥܡ ܐܠܗܐ.
[93] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 6:51, pp. 392-93.

(ܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܕܡܬܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ). He commended Theodore for beginners as providing basic knowledge of faith, and Evagrius and John for the more advanced internal development of virtues.[94]

John of Apamea (first half of the fifth century), who is also known as John the Solitary, wrote in Syriac on the path of perfection (ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ) which requires baptism and the purification of the soul. John discerned three orders (ܛܟܣܐ) of spiritual development: the ways of the body, the soul and the spirit. The ascetic can successively attain three levels: purity (ܕܟܝܘܬܐ), serenity (ܫܦܝܘܬܐ), and finally perfection (ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ) that is only fully attained after the resurrection. His works were used by Syriac monastic circles of both Monophysite and Dyophysite denominations and Brock notes that he 'shows no trace at all of the influence of Evagrius'.[95] The concept of divine *paideia* permeated his work as seen in his statement: 'As it is man alone that God wanted to train by the teaching of his wisdom, he has set up all of nature'.[96]

Babai held that Origenism was the logical consequence of the teaching of the *qnomatic* union, arguing that if the human *qnoma* of Christ could become one with the divine *qnoma*, it would also be possible that 'all human beings become a divine nature'. In fact, however, the Miaphysites also rejected Origenism and tended to associate this in turn with the Dyophysitism of Theodore.[97]

The reasons for which Babai accused Henana of Origenism seem to be diffuse and it is not sure whether Henana really was an Origenist. Tamcke holds that Henana was an Origenist who used the works of Evagrius for his argumentation and that Babai consequently had to defend the 'Nestorian' theology against Henana while giving an anti-Origenist commentary.[98] More probably Babai's identification of the teaching of one composite *qnoma* with Origenism was an important reason for the accusation. Babai may further have considered a passage in *The Cause* an evidence for Origenism. This passage claims that in order to prevent human envy of the honour of the angels, human beings were called 'Gods', and they even received the ability to traverse the firmament and authority over creation, including the course of the

[94] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 16-19; Guillaumont, 'Justinien et l'Église de Perse', p. 59; Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica'*, pp. 269 and 289-90.

[95] Although Werner Strothmann considered John of Apamea's Christology of Monophysite character, André de Halleux cannot find sufficient indications in John's vocabulary and thinking to support this thesis. On the identity of John of Apamea who seems to have been influenced by Ephrem, see for instance: André de Halleux, 'La christologie de Jean le solitaire', *Le Muséon* 94 (1981), pp. 35-36; Leo van Leijsen, 'De driedeling van het geestelijk leven bij Johannes van Apamea. Kritische kanttekeningen bij enige gangbare interpretaties', *Het Christelijk Oosten* 51 (1999), pp. 213-30; Robert A. Kitchen, 'Yoḥannan Iḥidaya. John the Solitary of Apamea (first half of 5th cent.)', *GEDSH*, p. 442; Werner Strothmann, *Johannes von Apamea* (Berlin, 1972), pp. 73 and 80; Sebastian Brock, 'John the Solitary, "On Prayer"', *JThS* 30 (1979), p. 84.

[96] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 28 and 222, with references.

[97] Guillaumont, *Les 'Képhalaia Gnostica'*, pp. 182, 191 and 196; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV*, p. 295: ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܗܘܝܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ.

[98] Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšō'*, p. 33.

luminaries.[99] Babai, however, granted only the best part of the human soul, the free reasoning (ܚܘܫܒܐ) with its free will, the freedom to leave the body and to choose to either go to heaven or to remain in a low state.[100] Babai further rejected the idea that the rational part of the soul (*logistikon*, ܡܠܝܠܬܐ ܡܚܝܬܐ ܚܘܫܒܐ) is part of divinity, by stating: 'This knowledge can connect itself to the wisdom of God, but not with his nature, as Origen and Henana state, it is however a gift of the Spirit.'[101] Additional reasons may have been that Babai rather wished to incriminate Henana with this label, or that Origenism was being associated with an epistemology rejected by Babai.

2.1.3.4. Epistemology

Adam Becker connects the problems around Henana with an intellectually and socially destabilizing 'influx of new ideas into the Church of the East—West-Syrian theology, alternative forms of exegesis and an Evagrian emphasis on divine accessibility, which was labelled Origenism'. He seeks the cause for the rivalry between the school and the monastery not so much in a different Christology, but rather in a different epistemology which might have enabled Henana to challenge the hierarchy within the Church.[102] Becker suggests that Henana's acceptance of Evagrius' Origenism might have strengthened Henana's claim to offer the best way to spiritual knowledge in the school. Where monasteries might facilitate temporary access to the divine, thanks to prolonged spiritual purification and divine grace,[103] the schools allowed claims to be made about the divine while relying on the Neoplatonic commentary tradition of the Aristotelian *Organon*. This can be seen in the *Cause* that used Aristotle 'to interpret the created world in order to learn something about its essentially unknowable Creator'.[104] Although the concept of divine *paideia* already permeated Antiochene Christology, this now culminated in a formalized education system according to which indirect knowledge of the Divine could be accessed through a rational and philosophic process.[105] Becker speculates that if Henana, who had an independent position, accepted in his school a radical Evagrianism permitting direct knowledge of God, this might have challenged the position of Babai and his monastery which was close to Nisibis.[106]

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[99] Becker, *Sources*, pp. 114-16; Scher, 'Cause', p. 346.

[100] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 28-31.

[101] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus,* 6:51, pp. 392-93. ܡܛܠ ܠܡ ܕܗܝ ܗܕܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܠܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܬܩܦܬܐ: ܘܠܐ ܠܟܝܢܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܘܪܝܓܢܣ ܘܚܢܢܐ: ܐܠܐ ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܪܘܚܐ.

[102] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom,* pp. 202-203.

[103] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom,* p. 177.

[104] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom,* p. 150; idem. *Sources*, p. 92.

[105] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom,* pp. 194-95.

[106] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom,* pp. 202-203.

It was perhaps in this context that Babai defended a hierarchy in which the school offered only preparatory learning, while the monastery was the place where prolonged asceticism might ultimately grant access to higher knowledge. Spiritual knowledge and asceticism were instrumental to having a vision of the Trinity. Humans had to practice asceticism while following the commandments, and might then reach a temporary spiritual contemplation (ܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܕܪܘܚ) of the Trinity.[107] The monastic-ascetic life was therefore an ongoing effort to gradually gain more knowledge of the transcendental God, whereby the last step was only possible in prayer and dependent on God's mercy to reveal himself.[108] Babai's commentary on *The Spiritual Law* expounded how Christ—as the summit of Grace—would live in the human soul of the believer and would make it his temple.[109]

Babai's CE allowed the ascetic monks a mystical revelation of God without this impairing the transcendence and impassibility of God. Babai achieved this by omitting the remaining Origenist parts from the already adjusted Syriac translation, giving corrective interpretations and focussing on a phased knowledge of God, which the monks could attain. One started with the contemplation of the visible creation (natural contemplation). When the underlying principles or *logoi* of the visible creation were understood, the ascetic could contemplate the intelligible realm.[110] The last stage was reached after a long process of purification of the three parts of the soul. Only when anger and desire were no longer affected by impressions, and the rational part of the soul was focussed in silent prayer on the light, could the mystic have a vision of this light. The rational soul was compared to a mirror that had the freedom to focus on either the light of truth or the darkness of ignorance.[111]

The earlier phases could be reached in the school under the guidance of teachers. But 'in the knowledge of the oneness (ܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ), which is the divine essence (ܐܝܬܘܬܐ), whenever that divine perfection (ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ) comes into being, there is no one who learns and teaches, since one perfect knowledge pervades in each'.[112] This distinction may have corresponded with Babai's two 'pillars of orthodoxy', Theodore and Evagrius, discussed above. We have

[107] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 1:11-13, pp. 56-59.
[108] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 176-77; Till Engelmann, 'Der Kephalaia-Kommentar Babais des Großen als Beispiel monastisch-mystischer Theologie', in Martin Tamcke (ed.), *Mystik – Metapher – Bild. Beiträge des VII. Makarios-Symposiums, Göttingen 2007* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 47-53.
[109] Paul Krüger, 'Zum theologischen Menschenbild Babais den Großen. Nach seinem noch unveröffentlichten Kommentar zu den beiden Sermones des Mönches Markus über "Das geistige Gesetz"', *OC* 44 (1960), pp. 52-53.
[110] Engelmann, 'Der Kephalaia-Kommentar Babais des Großen', pp. 47-51; Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 176-77.
[111] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 1:81.84, pp. 118-21.
[112] Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom*, pp. 183; Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 4:51, pp. 294-95.
ܒܝܕܥܬܐ ܠܡ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܗܝ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ: ܡܐ ܕܗܘܬ ܗ̇ܝ ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ܆ ܠܝܬ ܕܝܠܦ ܘܡܠܦ. ܒܗ̇ ܕܚܕܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܓܡܝܪܬܐ ܦܪܝܣܐ ܒܟܠ.

also seen that the monks had to spend a minimum of three preparatory years in the community of the Great Monastery, before they were allowed to live in a separated cell in the vicinity,[113] The possibility is therefore not to be excluded that Babai's distinction applied to the situation in this monastery.

The *Cause* had made a similar division between intelligence and action in the access to knowledge of the fundamentally unknowable God, while stating that God makes human beings 'apprehend' his being (using the *Aphel* of ܠܒܟ), in the form of an image of him.

> […] learning (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ) about the creator and creation is found only in [...] angels and human beings. But because these are too weak to see that divine essence, he has established for us an invisible lamp, the soul within us, and he has filled it with the oil of immortal life, and he has placed in it continuous wicks of intellectual thoughts, and the light of the divine mind, by which we are able to see and to distinguish, makes (us) apprehend (ܐܠܒܟ) the hidden things of the creator in it (the soul), and to go around all of the rich treasury of his kingdom—like the woman who lost one of the ten *zuz* (a coin)—until we ourselves also find that *zuz* upon which is stamped (ܛܒܝܥ) the glorious image (ܝܘܩܢܐ, *yuqna*, from Greek *eikon*) of him, the eternal King of Kings.[114]

Babai, however, emphasized that such knowledge was only available for those who were baptized, held to the Commandments and were completely purified through asceticism. The highest knowledge is seen for a moment as in a mirror and the ascetic knows in that moment of peace and love that no creature can know the creator, who cannot be grasped (ܡܬܬܦܝܣ) and who evades before he is apprehended (ܡܢ ܩܕܡ ܕܢܬܠܒܟ ܥܪܩ).[115]

Becker's analysis of the difference in epistemology is valuable for pointing out the rivalry between the School of Nisibis and monasteries, suggesting that their relative statuses might have depended on the ways (or times) knowledge of the divine could be obtained. It does not, however, discuss the future of the students of the School. If monasteries like the one on Izla were no longer necessary, where should these men have gone and what would have been their role? Probably the conflict was not simply with any monastery, but specifically with the Great Monastery and its school that might even have been founded in reaction to the teachings of

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[113] Camplani, 'The Revival of Persian Monasticism', pp. 281-83. See also above, section 2.1.3.3.

[114] Translation after Becker, *Sources*, pp. 108-109, with some adjustments; Scher, 'Cause', p. 340.
ܐܠܐ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܒܪܘܝܐ ܘܒܪܝܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܗܠܝܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܬ ܒܟ̈ܝܢܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܫܟܚ: ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܘܬ ܡ̈ܠܐܟܐ ܘܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܚܝܠܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܠܡܚܙܐ ܗܘ ܒܗ̇، ܐܝܬܘܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ: ܐܬܩܢ ܠܢ ܫܪܓܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܝܬܐ ܢܦܫܐ ܕܒܢ ܘܡܠܝܗ̇ ܡܫܚܐ ܕܚܝ̈ܐ ܠܐ ܡܝܘܬܬܐ. ܘܣܡ ܒܗ̇ ܦܬܝ̈ܠܐ ܡܬܡܝ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܒܚܘ̈ܫܒܐ ܡܕ̈ܪܟܢܝܬܐ. ܘܐܠܒܟ ܒܗ̇ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ: ܕܒܗ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܠܡܚܙܐ ܘܠܡܦܪܫ: ܐܝܟ ܗ̇، ܐܢܬܬܐ ܕܐܘܒܕܬ ܙܘܙܐ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܥܣܪܐ: ܟ̈ܣܝܬܐ ܒܩܫܝܬܐ ܕܒܪܘܝܐ ܘܠܡܬܟܪܟܘ ܒܟܠܗ ܒܝܬ ܓܙܐ ܥܬܝܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܗ: ܥܕܡܐ ܕܐܦ ܚܢܢ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܗܿܘ ܙܘܙܐ ܕܛܒܝܥ ܒܗ ܝܘܩܢܐ ܫܒܝܚܐ: ܕܗܘ ܡܠܟ ܡ̈ܠܟܐ ܡܬܘܡܝܐ.

[115] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 38-41.

Henana. Moreover, if the suggested difference in epistemologies (with Origenist elements opposing the basic Antiochene dogma) was indeed the critical factor, this might precisely have elicited Christological discussions.

Babai might indeed have opposed Henana and his school because of differing claims on how to gain knowledge of the transcendent God. One could further suggest that the emphasis on the purification of the individual human soul of each monk—who had Christ as his prime example—might have required the acknowledgment of an individual human soul in Christ as well. As will be shown below, this might have resulted in the idea that Christ must have had his own human *qnoma* too. Such an intrinsic motivation caused by ascetic spirituality might therefore have contributed to the development of the two-*qnome* doctrine.[116]

2.1.3.5. Geo-politics and lay elites

Jean-Maurice Fiey describes how various groups or individuals in and around Nisibis had a pro-Byzantine attitude. This became critical again during the time that the Byzantine emperor Justin II started to attack Persia in 565 and even tried to recapture Nisibis in 572. Khosrau, of course, preferred here higher clergy he trusted. But this did not always work. The varying loyalties can be seen in the examples of Paul the Metropolitan of Nisibis and of Ishoʿyahb I, then the bishop of Arzun and formerly head of the School of Nisibis. Paul provided Justin II with strategic information, but was deposed in 573 when the Persians took the nearby Byzantine garrison of Dara, and he died shortly thereafter, while Ishoʿyahb I supplied intelligence to the Persian king and became Catholicos in 581/82. Although Nisibis remained in Persian hands, its position continued to be contested during the next decades.[117] According to Martin Tamcke, Henana headed a heterogeneous but powerful movement, which favoured Byzantium.[118]

Morony holds that the conflict with Miaphysite movements escalated after the fall of Edessa in 610, when the Persian King started to experiment with a pro-Miaphysite policy to attract people of the newly conquered provinces, and churches in and around Seleucia-Ctesiphon were handed over to Miaphysites. Opposition came from monks of the Great Monastery under the leadership of Babai and Yazdin.[119] Yazdin was the powerful tax collector at Khosrau's court and so influential within the Church of the East that he was called the 'head of the believers' (ܝܙܕܝܢ ܪܫ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ). He owned many estates and, like other landed Christian Persian

[116] See below, section 2.2.7.
[117] Fiey, *Nisibe*, pp. 53-57.
[118] Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, p. 31.
[119] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 350.

aristocrats, built churches and monasteries.[120] Yazdin's influential family seems to have had pro-Byzantine sympathies. During the Byzantine conquests around 628, Yazdin's family is said to have provided the new Byzantine emperor Heraclius with valuable information on strategic matters and to have won a prominent position at his court in the final years of his reign. Moreover, Yazdin's son Shamta is said to be responsible for killing Khosrau while supporting his son Sheroy, the new king.[121] It is not clear whether Yazdin's family belonged to the influential Persian Christians that supported Heraclius's Monenergist compromise in 632-33.[122]

Morony further draws attention to the already existing system of patronage over churches and monasteries by local aristocrats, who strove for more influence within the church. He suggests that the rivalry was mainly between these aristocrats allying with Henana versus clergymen and a monastic party headed by Babai defending their ecclesiastical autonomy, and that Babai's party had therefore developed a distinct Christological doctrine.[123] Although considering the role of the lay patrons is a valuable addition in trying to understand the conflicts, the proposed dichotomy between monks and clergymen versus a lay school party does not seem to stand, and consequently would not have been a factor in the development of the new Christology. Babai fought other monastic circles and there were tensions between clergy and monks as well. The situation was far more complex and there were many exceptions, such as Yazdin and other influential lay Christians who sided with the clerical party and aristocratic converts who had become monks. It does not seem unthinkable however that some local aristocrats allied with the Church of the East in an attempt to protect their churches and monasteries from being taken away and handed over to Miaphysites, while other aristocrats might even have encouraged this transfer as long as these properties remained under their patronage. This suggestion is in line with Joel Walker's observation that by the end of the Sasanian period, 'the monasteries of northern Iraq had become critical institutions for the transmission of

[120] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 170, 348; Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors*, Chapter 1.23, p. 47.

[121] In any case, Yazdin's family had not only managed to keep a key role under Khosrau and Heraclius, it also survived the Arab conquest while maintaining its aristocratic status and connection with the Church. Around 646, for instance, Yazdin's descendants were in charge of the burial of Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II. Budge (trans.), *The book of Governors.* Chapter 1.35, pp. 112-15; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 171 and 357-58; Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003; 2007), pp. 170-75; Jean Maurice Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand: Vie du catholicos nestorien Īšōʿyaw III de Adiabène (580-659)', *OCP* 35 (1969), p. 317.

[122] W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement. Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries* (1972; corrected edn, Cambridge, 2008), pp. 347-48.

[123] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 347, 350-54.

Christian family wealth', because the traditional kinship structures of these families were intertwined with their surrounding environment.[124]

2.1.3.6. Babai of Nisibis

Babai was in conflict with another pupil of Abraham of Kashkar, Babai of Nisibis, who founded a new monastery on the Izla close to the Great Monastery. After Abraham's death he is said to have left the Great Monastery and to have lived together with Sabrishoʿ and some other monks.[125] He emphasized the ascetic life and about 300 monks belonged to his monastery during his life time.[126] The *Chronicon Anonymum* does not specify the date of his leaving the Great Monastery, but reports that many brothers resided with him. When the influential Yazdin had seen his hard ascetical works, he bestowed precious gifts, including a part of the Cross, on his monastery.[127] Enmity between the two Babais was strong and was compared to that between Catholicos Sabrishoʿ and Gregory of Kashkar.[128]

Martin Tamcke draws attention to the contacts Babai of Nisibis had with Ishoʿzeka and Sabrishoʿ. They would have been involved in the baptism of the Arab King Nuʿman, and they seem to have opposed the monastic ideals of the Great Monastery. Tamcke sees a fundamental difference between the monasteries: the Great Monastery was oriented externally as it was engaged in dogmatic debates of the Church, and the new rules of Babai the Great emphasized the common life and secured its material base. The other monastery, however, seems to have stuck to the old rules of Abraham, to have been more individualistic and to have focused on spirituality and asceticism.[129] However, Babai's works on asceticism do not fully support such a dichotomy. It is therefore not clear what kind of role the enmity between the two Babais played within the already complicated conflicts among the monks. There seem to be no references to his namesake in Babai's works.

2.1.3.7. Tradition. The authority of the Fathers

As before, theology had to be in line with the teaching of the Fathers. This is noticeable in the questions of the 612 debate in which the Church of the East had to defend its position by

[124] Joel Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh. Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq* (Berkeley, 2006), p. 242.
[125] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', p. 454.
[126] François Nau (ed. and trans.), 'Histoires d'Abraham de Kaskar et de Babai de Nisibe', *ROC* 21 (1918-19), p. 172.
[127] Unlike Guidi and Nöldeke, I would suggest that these comments refer to Babai of Nisibis and not to Babai the Great, because they indicate that this Babai had left Abraham's monastery and built a monastery in the vicinity. See Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 23-24; Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 22-23.
[128] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 92, p. 553.
[129] Tamcke, *Der Katholikos-Patriarch Sabrīšōʿ*, pp. 52-54.

proving that it was in line with the Fathers of the Church, and also in Babai's LU which is presented as a systematic overview of the teachings of the Fathers.[130] Babai referred several times to the Holy Fathers of Nicaea and their Symbol and explained sayings that were either self-contradictory or conflicted with his views. Following common practice in Eastern Christianity, he sometimes re-interpreted those sayings in order to save the tradition and prove his own orthodoxy.[131] When Babai for instance admitted that the Fathers sometimes had used the expression 'two natures, one *prosopon*' while omitting the addition of 'two *qnome*', he explained this as being self-evident by that time.[132]

> Therefore it is known and evident that it is impossible for us to say that the two *kyane* were united to one *parsopa* without our confessing and declaring with them two *qnome*. There are also (instances) where the Fathers make use of (the expressions) 'two *kyane*, one *parsopa*', not denying and demolishing the *qnoma*, for see, in many places where it is necessary, they declare with the *kyane* also the *qnome*. For the Fathers were convinced that there is no *kyana* which has no *qnoma*, and they knew that when they were setting down '*parsopa*', they were declaring a *qnoma*, because it is impossible for *parsopa* to stand without *qnoma*, so that it (sc. the *parsopa*) is seen to be fixed (ܡܩܒܥ) in it for its differentiation. And they were discerning accurately that it is not possible for *parsopa* to be the same as the common *kyana*, because it (sc. the common *kyana*) encloses all the *qnome* that are in it.[133]

In his later *Life of George*, Babai claimed that in contrast to Henana and other heretics, the tradition (*mashlmanuta*) of the whole church in Persia would have followed the right faith (which acknowledged the two *qnome*) as expressed by the three holy teachers, Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius.[134] He admitted that the Fathers had used the terms *parsopa* and *qnoma* interchangeably, but that Cyril, Eutyches, Julian and 'the rest of the Theopaschites' falsely would have identified *qnoma* with *parsopa*, and *parsopa* with *qnoma*.[135] After Cyril of Alexandria would thus have started the 'Theopaschite heresy', Nestorius and others like him had to declare 'two natures and two *qnome* preserving their properties in one *parsopa* of Christ'. Babai even asserted that Theodore would have expressed the formula 'two natures and two *qnome* in one *parsopa* of Christ, the Son of God', when Theodore refuted Apollinarius in

[130] Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 236; Vaschalde (trans.), *Liber de Unione*, 1/1, pp. 2-3. Some other references to the Fathers will also be given in the following sections on Babai's Christology.
[131] Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-700)*, pp. 8-10 and 39.
[132] Babai moreover explained why the Fathers had even used the expression 'one *qnome* from two natures' (ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܡܢ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܟܝܢܐ), probably referring to Flavian of Constantinople while relying on a distorted account by Nestorius. Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV*, p. 305; Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', p. 301.
[133] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 10, p. 209 (cf. trans. eidem p. 125).
[134] Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, pp. 503-504.
[135] Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, pp. 498-500.

Memra 8 of his *On the Incarnation* (ܟܘܢܫܬܐ ܕܦܓܪܢܘܬܐ ܒܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܬܡܝܢܝܐ).[136] Babai concluded that all the Fathers countering the Theopaschites would specify the properties of the two natures in their '*qnomatic* state'.[137]

Reinink draws attention to the two rival streams in the School that claimed to represent the real tradition (*mashlmanuta*, ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ) in the Church in Persia. A substantial group of theologians and scholars, to which Henana might have belonged, would have considered the two-*qnome* Christology an innovation, while the Synods of 585, 596 and 605 claimed that Theodore especially represented the *mashlmanuta*, and Babai even ascribed this two-*qnome* Christology to him.[138] Although Reinink's analysis of the rival groups is highly valuable, it does not seem to offer a sufficient explanation for the polemics, because 'tradition' always had been the norm for accepting or rejecting specific interpretations. 'Tradition' was thus a necessary argument used in any debate, but it does not seem to address the specific dilemmas here. It is moreover not clear to what extent this use of *mashlmanuta* is connected to the oral traditions which, according to the *Cause*, stemmed from Narsai and Ephrem and were contrasted to the commentaries (*pushshaqe*) of Theodore.[139] Unfortunately the difference between *mashlmanuta* and *pushshaqa* is not always clear.[140]

Interestingly, the LU does not name Ephrem and offers only a few explicit references to Theodore. Babai called Theodore 'the perfect disciple of the blessed apostles, the dwelling of the Holy Spirit and the mansion of all good things, the mirror of virtue and the firm column which is never shaken nor will ever be shaken'. He subsequently gave two quotations that

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136 Braun, *Märtyrer*, p. 249; Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, pp. 498-99. The term ܦܓܪܢܘܬܐ (*pagranuta*) was another rendering for 'inhomination' but could also be used for 'incarnation'. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 126-36. See also section 1.4.4.2.

137 Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, p. 500. ܡܦܪܫܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܝܠܝ̈ܬܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܝܘܬܗܘܢ

138 Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 227 and 239.

139 We have seen that the *Cause* had explained that the *mashlmanuta* of the School of Nisibis consisted of what had been orally transmitted and stemmed from Ephrem and Addai, distinguishing this from the *pushshaqa* of which Theodore was the main authority. The author thus may have wanted to demonstrate that Theodore was not the sole source for exegetical instruction. See also section 1.8.

140 Van Rompay holds that the *mashlmanuta* seems to have been transmitted orally and anonymously, whereas *pushshaqa* referred to compositions written by individual authors. Van Rompay, 'The Christian Syriac Tradition of Interpretation', pp. 632-33. Reinink defines the distinction as follows: 'According to Barhadbshabba "tradition" (*mašlāmānūtā*) and "explanation" (*puššāqā*) of the Scriptures can be either oral or written. In oral form "traditions" (*mašlmānwātā*) can be transmitted by the teachers in the practice of exegetical instruction (*puššāqā*). In written form they can be transmitted in written commentaries (*puššāqē*).' Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 234-41, quotation esp. p. 241; idem, 'The School of Nisibis', pp. 86-87. Around the same time, Babai recommended Theodore for the acquisition of basic knowledge of faith (probably referring especially to Theodore's *Commentary* [*pushshaqa*] on *the Nicene Creed*), but both Evagrius and the monk John of Apamea for the more mystical asceticism. Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 16-19; Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, p. 503.

refer to the conjunction (*naqiputa*) but are further unknown.[141] Although they do not mention the two *qnome*, Babai argued that they fitted in his two-*qnome* doctrine.[142]

Babai quoted first: 'We say the union (is) the conjunction of the two, when they (the two) are considered one thing in the *parsopa*'.[143] According to Babai, this would mean that the conjunction is without confusion or mixture of the two natures in one *parsopa* and would therefore exclude the possibility of a union according to nature and *qnoma*. After asking what it was that made the conjunction, Babai gave the second quotation: 'Where they are called one thing in the *parsopa* (the two are) not one thing according to nature; but according to *parsopa* (they are) one Son, Lord, Christ, Emmanuel etcetera'.[144] Babai thereupon argued in several ways that a union of two things requires that they are different before the union and remain so after their union. He further stated that there is no union that is not different in something, but one in something else.[145] As example he quoted Christ's statement 'the Father and I are one' (John 10:30). Their being one according to nature would not destroy the fact that the appearance of the two *qnome* (Father and Son) were not the same.[146] This reminds one of Ephrem's comparison of Father and Son to a tree and its fruit, where he similarly stated that they are not one—though they are one—and that they are both united and separated. Babai did not use here Ephrem's accompanying view that something real needs a *qnoma* as further legitimation for his two-*qnome* doctrine. However, he may have implied this in his discussion on the right epithet for Mary.[147]

Where Ephrem seems to have restricted his comparison to the Trinity, Babai could jump to Christology. Similarly to Gregory of Nazianzus and later Nestorius, he compared the union in Christ to the Trinitarian Union:[148] just as the three divine *qnome* are one eternal nature and essence and existence, the human and divine natures with their *qnome* constitute one Son. The

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[141] Luise Abramowski cannot identify these quotations. Eadem, 'Die Christologie Babais', pp. 235-36; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 186-87.
[142] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/21, pp. 245-46. Translation after Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 186.
[143] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/21, p. 246. ܐܡܪ ܠܟܢ ܗܟܢܐ: ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܐܡܪܝܢܢ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܕܬܪܝܢ : ܟܕ ܚܕ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܚܫܒܝܢ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ. The expression 'one thing' (*had medem*) reminds one of Theodore's *Contra Eunomius* and also appears in the Nisibene version of *Memra* 8 of his *On the Incarnation* (N10). Referring to the *Catechetical Homilies, Memra* 8, Chediath holds that the expression *had medem* is taken from Theodore. Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 133-34 and 186-87; Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 8:10, pp. 200-201. Cf. Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, p. 204.
[144] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/21, p. 246.
ܗܟܐ ܠܗ ܕܚܕ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܐܡܪܝܢ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ: ܠܘ ܠܗ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܚܕ ܡܕܡ: ܐܠܐ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܚܕ ܒܪܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܡܢܘܐܝܠ. ܘܫܪܟܐ.
[145] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/21, p. 246. ܘܠܝܬ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܡܕܡ ܦܪܝܫܐ ܘܒܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܢܝ ܚܕ..
[146] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/21, pp. 246-47.
ܠܐ ܡܒܛܠ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܗܝ ܕܚܕ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܠܗܝ ܕܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܕܐܬܚܙܝܘܗܝ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܒܗ ܒܗܘܢܐ ܚܕ ܒܢܝܐ.
[147] See section 2.2.3.
[148] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 130-32.

two *qnome* have kept their fixed properties without confusion in the one *parsopa* of the Son of God. What naturally and fixedly belongs to the divine *qnoma* pertains to the human *qnoma* by union and by *parsopa*; but vice versa it is in addition by assumption.[149]

2.2. Babai's Christology

It has become clear that many of Babai's statements were directed against several rival groups and had a highly polemical character, rejecting what he considered wrong. This section discusses in more detail what he considered the right Christology. For the *Liber de Unione*, Babai's extensive Christological work on the union of the two *kyane* and two *qnome* in one *parsopa* of Christ, he used the *Liber Heraclidis* of Nestorius as starting point. He elaborated the concept of two *qnome* in Christ in order to keep the properties of the two natures intact and to explain that the exchange of properties was not possible at the level of the *qnoma*, but only of the *parsopa.*[150]

In line with Antiochene theology Babai emphasized God's transcendence whose Being (ܐܝܬܝܐ, *itya*) is known to people, but not the mode of his essence (ܐܝܬܘܬܐ, *ituta*). This transcendence excludes any mixture of God with creatures, because the finite cannot apprehend the infinite.[151] God alone is the eternal Being and is unchangeable.

> For God is the creator and cause of everything good, he alone is the eternal Being, who exists from eternity, and he is the cause of everything and is above everything, and he is who he is, and he is unchangeable and exalted in his essence, above all visible and invisible creatures.[152]

2.2.1. The human and divine names of Christ

The union of the two natures is an act of all three *qnome* of the Trinity. These are distinguished from each other by their own name (ܫܘܡܗܐ ܕܝܠܝܐ) which is their distinct (ܦܪܝܫܐ)

[149] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 132-33; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, p. 71.
ܐܠܐ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܘܩܢܝܢܐܝܬ. ܒܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܝ ܘܦܫܩܐܝܬ ܚܝܕܐܝܬ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܫܘܡܗܐ ܕܒܪܗ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܩܢܝܢܐܝܬ ܒܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܕܚܝܫܗ
ܐܢܫܐ. ܢܣܒܢܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܝ ܘܦܫܩܐܝܬ ܚܝܕܐܝܬ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ.

[150] Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 302-306.

[151] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 1/2, pp. 6-19; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 108-111; Peter Bruns, 'Finitum non capax infiniti – Ein antiochenisches Axiom in der Inkarnationslehre Babais des Großen († nach 628)', *OC* 83 (1999), pp. 70-71.

[152] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai,* pp. 108-109; cf. also trans. by Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum,* pp. 90-91; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 1/2, p. 7.
ܐܠܗܐ ܓܝܪ ܒܪܘܝܐ ܘܥܠܬܐ ܕܟܠ ܛܒ̈ܬܐ. ܗܘܝܘ ܒܠܚܘܕܘܗܝ ܐܝܬܝܐ ܡܬܘܡܝܐ. ܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܡܬܘܡ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܘܥܠܬܐ ܕܟܠ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܘܠܥܠ ܡܢ
ܟܠ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ: ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦ. ܘܡܪܝܡ ܒܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܠܥܠ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܗܘ̈ܝܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ.

parsopa.[153] The three infinite *qnome* are that of the Fatherhood, Filiation and Procession.[154] The *qnome* of the Trinity have everything in common in their one divine nature, but each has its own property. The Father sent the Son, the Holy Spirit formed the body and united it with the Word, but only God the Word revealed himself in the flesh and made himself one Son in one honour.[155] The united Son is therefore not added to the Trinity, because the three *qnome* remain without mixture in the infinite essence and one nature.[156]

In the first *memra* of the LU, Babai affirmed that 'Christ is head of our life, and our hope and our God'.[157] He also stated that the names of God (*Alaha*) are his properties and belong to him by nature and his hidden essence that cannot be known by creatures. He is 'I am who I am', 'I am God, and there is no other', the Life, Spirit, Eternal Being, Light, etc. With respect to his *mdabbranuta*, names like Lord, Prince, Judge and Providence (ܒܛܝܠܘܬܐ) are applied to him.[158] Babai further devoted the whole sixth *memra* to the names of Christ the Son of God, again distinguishing between the names for his divinity before the *mdabbranuta* in the body and those thereafter.[159]

Chediath points out Babai's subtle distinction between 'Word' and 'Son', which would speak of two aspects of one and the same reality. 'Word' signifies the divine nature (with properties such as eternity, infinity and incomprehensibility) it shares with the other two *qnome* of the Trinity, but that cannot be shared with any creature. 'Son' signifies the *parsopa of filiation*, the natural, unique and unchangeable property of the 'Word', which makes it distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit. This *parsopa of filiation* is full of honour and glory and is communicable with creatures but not with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Chediath further states that the Synods had not expressed such a distinction, but that this does not prove that it was not known, as Theodore had already indicated that it was not the Word that died or suffered, but the Son.[160] It reminds one also of Narsai's distinction between the Word and its

[153] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 1/5, p. 34.
[154] These terms are also known in their Latin version as *genitor*, *genitus* and *procedens*. Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 1/5, p. 32. ܐܒܗܘܬܐ ܘܒܪܘܬܐ ܘܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ or ܝܠܘܕܐ ܘܝܠܝܕܐ ܘܡܦܩܢܐ. See also idem, 6/20, p. 206.
[155] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 117-118.
[156] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 2/7, pp. 56-57.
[157] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 120, with references. Quotation esp. p. 2, cf. pp. 6 and 27.
[158] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 112-14; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 1/2, pp. 18-19 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 14-16, with references to the biblical texts).
[159] The names of the *mdabbranuta* are among others: Jesus, Christ, Infant, First-Born of Mary, Emmanuel, Child, Man, Son of man, Priest, Son of David, King, Lord, Prophet, Adam, Image (ܨܠܡܗ) of the invisible God, Righteous, Holy, Stone, Bread, Life, Road, Lamb, Shepherd. The divine names for Christ are: Son, Word, God, Lord, Only-Begotten, Light, Splendour, Image, Life, Form of God, King, Holy. Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/20-21, pp. 199-252. There is an enumeration of these names on pages 200-201.
[160] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 123; idem, 'The Christology of Mār Bābai the Great', in Mustafa, Tubach and Vashalomidze (eds.), *Inkulturation des Christentums im Sasanidenreich*, p. 208.

activities referred to as *mdabbranuta.*[161] This impression is supported by the fact that Babai also called the *parsopa of filiation* the *parsopa of mdabbranuta*, explaining that everything which pertains to the *mdabbranuta* is ascribed to the Son.[162]

The Word is also called 'Form of God'. Babai referred here to Paul's expression 'he was in the form of God' (Phil. 2:6), specifying that Paul had said 'form' and not 'body' or 'imprint' or 'image' (ܠܘ ܦܓܪܐ ܘܛܒܥܐ ܘܨܘܪܬܐ)', and moreover that he used the verb 'was' (ܐܝܬܘܗܝ) and not 'became' (ܗܘܐ). Paul would have done so in order to emphasize that the Word is of the same nature as the Father, is in his *qnoma* like a son of his father, and has received everything from the Father except for the property of the *parsopa of the genitor* (ܕܝܠܝܘܬ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܠܘܕܐ). Interestingly, Babai seems to have felt compelled here to reject the Audians (ܥܘܕܝܐ) and others who would consider the Son merely a material image or imprint of the Father.[163]

Babai further connected the names 'Light' and 'Splendour' with the name 'Word' and argued that they should not erroneously be considered a power, action (ܣܥܪܘܬܐ) or energy (ܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ) without a *qnoma.* Similarly to what Theodore of Mopsuestia had argued, Babai stated therefore that the Fathers had added 'and the Word was God' in order to prevent the wrong conclusion that the Son has no *qnoma* or is from a different nature. Babai explained that such misunderstandings could arise from comparisons with the sun and its splendour when one neglected the fact that the sun is prior to its splendour, but that there is no priority in the eternal Trinity.[164] The comparison with the sun and its splendour and flame would also be defective because the latter were powers but not subsisting *qnome* (ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܡܩܝ̈ܡܐ).[165]

2.2.2. Descriptions of the union

Babai repeatedly used several adverbs to describe the union of the two natures that somehow resemble the Chalcedonian adverbs 'without confusion, without change, without division,

[161] See above, section 1.8.
[162] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 116-118, with references. See for instance Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 2/6, p. 48, which explains that the Son had descended to complete God's *mdabbranuta*.
[163] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/20, pp. 207-208. The Audians taught that God has a human form, because they took Gen. 1:26-27 and 5:3 literally. These verses stated that God had made Adam according to his own image (ܨܠܡܐ) and form (ܕܡܘܬܐ). Babai, however, argued that the Son did not acquire the form (ܕܡܘܬܐ) of humans in a material way—like an image or imprint or likeness (ܨܘܪܬܐ ܐܘ ܛܒܥܐ ܐܘ ܐܣܟܡܐ). See on Phil. 2:6, section 1.3. Babai's deliberate rejection of the verb 'became' with respect to the incarnation was of course a rejection of Philoxenus' argumentation. See also above section 1.5.4, Brock, '"Syriac Dialogue" – An example from the Past', pp. 64-65.
[164] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 6/20, pp. 205-206.
[165] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 1/5, pp. 30-31.

without separation'.[166] The rejection of any kind of confusion or change dominated however.[167] Babai stated for instance that God the Word 'assumed the form of a servant unitedly over his *parsopa* and dwelt in it unitedly in one conjunction without mixture, without admixture, without commixture and without confusion' and that he made him his one Son with him for ever'.[168] Babai described the Christological union as follows:

> Thus God the Word, who is an infinite *qnoma* like the Father and like the Holy Spirit is also uniting in this adorable union with the finite *qnoma* of his human being whom he assumed over his *parsopa*—like fire in the thorn bush—in one *parsopa of filiation*, without confusion, without mixture, without admixture; while the properties of those two natures are preserved in their *qnoma*: in one conjunction of the one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.[169]

Babai further analysed five traditional Antiochene descriptions for the Christological Union: assumption (ܢܣܝܒܘܬܐ), indwelling (ܥܡܘܪܘܬܐ), temple (ܗܝܟܠܐ), clothing (ܠܒܘܫܐ) and conjunction (ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ).[170] These terms are used in an attempt to describe different aspects of the incomprehensible union of the finite with the infinite. The conclusive remarks in Chapter 21 following these descriptions have been coined as Babai's central explanation of the characteristic features of the Christological Union. The union is infinite, not passible and not out of necessity but voluntary.[171] As has been pointed out above, this emphasis on the free will of man is an important trait of Antiochene Christology.

> This adorable, marvellous, ineffable union has therefore all these ways and is above all these in a different way: unsearchable and exceeding the parts that limit each other: it is not by a conjunction from outside alone, and not by an inclusion and limitation from inside, and not at a distance according to the *parsopa*, and not by the will while (the parts) keep distance, but the infinite (is) in the finite and they remain without confusion (ܠܐ ܒܠܠܐܝܬ), without mixture (ܠܐ ܡܙܓ ܡܙܓܐܝܬ), without admixture (ܠܐ ܚܠܝܛܐܝܬ), without composition (ܠܐ ܡܪܟܒܐܝܬ) and without parts (ܠܐ ܡܢܬܐܝܬ).

[166] Greek: ἀσύγχυτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως; Syriac: ܕܠܐ ܒܘܠܠܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܦܘܠܓܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܦܘܪܫܐ. See also section 1.7.
[167] For instance, Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 2/7, p. 57. Corresponding Syriac terms also appear in the Syriac translation of Nestorius' *Liber Heraclidis*.
[168] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 137; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 2/7, p. 56.
ܢܣܒ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܚܝܕܝܐܝܬ ܠܦܪܨܘܦܗ. ܘܥܡܪ ܒܗ ܚܝܕܝܐܝܬ ܒܚܕܐ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ. ܠܐ ܡܙܓ ܡܙܓܐܝܬ: ܠܐ ܚܠܝܛܐܝܬ: ܠܐ ܡܚܒܟܐܝܬ: ܠܐ ܒܠܠܐܝܬ. ܘܥܒܕܗ ܥܡܗ ܚܕ ܒܪܐ ܠܥܠܡ.
[169] Bruns, 'Finitum non capax infiniti', p. 63; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 2/7, p. 57.
ܗܟܢܐ ܘܐܦ ܒܗܕܐ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܕܬܐ. ܚܣܝܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ. ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܡܐ: ܐܝܟ ܐܒܐ ܘܐܝܟ ܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ: ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܬܚܡܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܗ ܕܗܘ ܢܣܒܗ ܠܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܐܝܟ ܢܘܪܐ ܒܣܢܝܐ ܒܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܒܢܘܬܐ. ܠܐ ܒܠܠܐܝܬ. ܠܐ ܡܙܓ ܡܙܓܐܝܬ. ܠܐ ܚܠܝܛܐܝܬ. ܟܕ ܢܛܝܪ̈ܢ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܒܩܢܘ̈ܡܝܗܝܢ: ܒܚܕܐ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܕܚܕ ܡܪܝܐ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ.
[170] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/21, p. 227.
[171] Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 331-32.

> This union is without distance, and also is this union not finite (ܡܣܝܟܘܬܐ), subject to necessity (ܩܛܝܪܘܬܐ) or passible (ܚܫܘܫܘܬܐ), but voluntary and according to the *parsopa* towards the one adorable *mdabbranuta* in one conjunction and indwelling and union of the assuming with the assumed. And the conjunction (is) without confusion and the indwelling (is) infinite. For unitedly God dwells infinitely in his finite humanity, like the sun in a shining pearl, in one union.[172]

Though the divine nature is invisible, the result of the union of the natures is visible in the glory of the one *parsopa*, which is like the sun in a shining pearl. Such metaphors occur repeatedly in Babai's epistemology. Babai also explained how the *parsopa* can become one, but the natures and *qnome* do not, when he compared Christ to a golden coin carrying the picture (*parsopa*) of the king that is pressed into clay. He moreover gave the example of the mirror to explain this. What is of most interest is that such examples contain indications that Babai's Christology and epistemology may have been closely connected.[173]

Like Nestorius, who claimed to follow the Nicene Creed in starting with the man Jesus Christ and not with God the Word, Babai often started his explanations with the historical Jesus Christ before he discussed Christ's divinity.[174] Deification was only possible for him who 'had taken the name surpassing all names in one conjunction and one *parsopa* of the one Lord Jesus Christ'.[175] However, Babai also explicitly acknowledged the opposite movement when he stated that the term 'ascend' referred to Christ's humanity, while 'descend' referred to his divinity.[176] Babai could also begin with the Word of God because he—similarly to Narsai—understood the Nicene expression 'was embodied and inhominated' (ܘܐܬܓܫܡ ܘܐܬܒܪܢܫ, *etgasham w-etbarnash*) as 'assumed' (a form of *nsab*, ܢܣܒ).[177] Babai thus interpreted John 1:14[178] as 'he assumed flesh and made a dwelling place in it'. But Babai immediately added

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[172] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/21, 230.
ܗܕܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܦܠܓܘܬܐ ܘܬܚܘܡܘܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܠܠܢܘܬܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ: ܘܟܠ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܠܗܘܬܗ: ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܒܥܝܢܐ ܡܬܠܝܐ ܗܝ ܡܢ ܩ̈ܢܘܡܐ ܡܦܝܣܬ ܠܚ̈ܕܕܐ. ܘܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܠܒܪ ܢܣܝܒܘܬܐ ܠܒܝܫܐ: ܘܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܠܓܘ ܚܒܝܫܘܬܐ ܘܡܣܝܟܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐܝܬ ܒܢܝܫܘܬܐ: ܘܠܐ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܒܪ ܡܟܒܢ.
ܐܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܢܛܪܝܢ ܠܐ ܒܠܠܐܝܬ ܠܐ ܡܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܠܐ ܣܠܝܩܐܝܬ. ܠܐ ܡܬܒܥܝܢܐܝܬ ܠܐ ܡܬܠܐܝܬ. ܠܗ ܒܢܝܫܘܬܐ ܐܬܝܬܗ ܗܕܐ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܡܣܝܟܘܬܐ ܘܩܛܝܪܘܬܐ ܘܚܫܘܫܘܬܐ: ܐܠܐ ܨܒܝܢܝܬܐ ܘܦܪܨܘܦܝܬܐ ܠܚܕܐ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܕܬܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܘܡܥܡܪܘܬܐ ܘܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܢܣܘܒܐ ܥܡ ܢܣܝܒܐ. ܘܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܒܘܠܒܠܐ ܘܡܥܡܪܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܣܝܟܬܐ. ܠܐ ܡܣܝܟܐܝܬ ܓܝܪ ܚܕܝܐܝܬ ܥܡܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܡܣܝܟܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܫܡܫܐ ܒܡܪܓܢܝܬܐ ܢܨܝܚܬܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ.

[173] This will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.7.

[174] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 122.

[175] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, (TV), p. 299. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܬܒܪܢܫ ܕܢܣܒ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ: ܘܓܒܪ ܒܗ ܡܬܝܚܕܐܝܬ. ܘܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܐܬܐܠܗ ܕܢܣܒ ܫܡܐ ܕܡܥܠܝ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܫܡܗ̈ܝܢ: ܒܚܕܐ ܢܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܒܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܚܕ ܡܪܝܐ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ.

[176] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/20, p. 210.

[177] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 122-26.

[178] John 1:14, 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us' (Peshitta: ܘܡܠܬ݂ܐ ܒ݁ܣܪܐ ܗܘܐ. ܘܐܓ݂ܢ ܒ݁ܢ.). Narsai had rejected the possibility that the Word was lowered to a state of coming into being. He therefore reformulated this as 'there came into being flesh and he (the Word) dwelt (ܥܡܪ) in us' and he explained that the Word fash-

that this is 'in one of the *qnome* of our humanity'.[179] He emphasized that 'he became flesh' does not signify a change (ܫܘܚܠܦܐ), but an assumption. He thus rejected the view of Cyril and Philoxenus that the phrase 'he became flesh' was the main proof that God 'became' a man.[180] Babai's interpretation allowed him to remain within the Antiochene tradition that spoke of the union in terms of inhabitation or indwelling, assuming the form of a servant, and 'assumer' and 'assumed', as is also known in the work of Diodore.[181] Babai further understood the Nicene expression 'was embodied and inhominated' as an indication of the doctrine of successive animation that belonged to the Edessene-Nisibene school tradition. He commented: 'That is why the Fathers say he was incarnate and then subjoin that he was inhominated with a rational soul'. Chediath suggests that Babai used this also to oppose the Origenist idea of the preexistence of the souls.[182]

2.2.3. Mary's title

Concerning Christ's birth, Babai also discussed the appropriate title for Mary. In *Memra* 7 of the LU, he argued that if one held that Mary had born 'God incarnate', she was either a Goddess, or had born a human with merely the name 'Lord and Highest Son', but without the required *qnoma*. Babai concluded that 'if he [God the Word], who is incarnated through her, is a name without *qnoma*, he is not incarnated'. This was presumably in line with both Ephrem and Nestorius, who held that a name needs a *qnoma* to actually exist.[183] Babai certainly followed Theodore and Nestorius when he acknowledged that Mary could be called Mother of God and Mother of Man, provided these titles would not deny the union of the two natures.

ioned for himself flesh and dwelt in his good will. Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. 171; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 95-97, with references. See also above, section 1.8.

179 Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/11, p. 126.

ܡܛܠܬܐ ܠܗ ܒܣܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܘܐܝܟ ܟܝ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܢܣܒ ܒܣܪܐ ܘܥܒܕ ܠܡܕܘܪܐ ܒܗ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܒܚܕ ܡܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܢ.

A similar interpretation (without the addition of the *qnoma*) of John 1:14 is found in the addition to the LU, which was addressed against 'those who denied that Christ was assumed by the Word and against those who advocated a union according to nature and *qnoma*'. Idem, 7, p. 257.

ܗ̇ܘ ܕܡܢ ܠܡܠܬܐ ܢܣܝܒ ܕܐܝܟ ܟܝ: ܐܢܫܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ. ܘܐܝܟ ܡܫܟܢ ܠܗ ܒܨܒܝܢܗ ܘܠܘܬ ܠܗ ܒܫܘܚܠܦܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܚܘܝܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܫܘܡܗܐ ܕܚܘܝܬܐ. ܒܗ̇ ܕܗܘܝܐ ܒܠܫܘܢܝܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܘܕܐ ܚܘܝܬܐ ܕܐܬܝܢ ܠܘܬ. ܒܪܠܗ ܢܫܡܬܐ ܘܡܬܒܪܢܫܢܘܬܐ. ܘܗܕܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܣܪܐ: ܗ̇ܝ ܕܢܣܒ ܒܣܪܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܐ.

180 Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 334-36; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 95-97; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 7, pp. 253-57.

181 Cf. also Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 336-38.

182 Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 157-58; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/10, p. 95.

ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܒܗ̈ܬܐ ܕܐܬܒܣܪ ܘܡܢ ܡܩܦܝܢ ܕܐܬܒܪܢܫ ܒܢܦܫܐ ܡܠܝܠܬܐ.

183 Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 7, p. 264.

ܘܐܢ ܗܘ ܫܘܡܗܐ ܒܠܥܕ ܡܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܗܘ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܐܬܒܣܪ ܡܢܗ̇: ܡܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܐܬܒܣܪ.

Babai preferred therefore the title 'Mother of Christ', claiming that he followed the example of the Scriptures.[184]

> God the Word is consubstantial (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܗ) with the Father, and because of the union the blessed Mary is called Mother of God (ܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ) and Mother of Man (ܝܠܕܬ ܒܪܢܫܐ): Mother of Man according to her own nature, but Mother of God because of the union which he had with his humanity, which was his temple at the beginning of its fashioning and was begotten in union. Because the name 'Christ' is indicative of the two natures in the *qnomatic* state (ܒܩܢܘܡܝܘܬܗܘܢ) of his divinity and his humanity, the Scriptures say that the blessed Mary bore Christ (ܝܠܕܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ): not simply God in a disunited way, and not simply man, who was not put on (ܠܒܝܫ) by God the Word'.[185]

2.2.4. Kyana

Although Babai was aware of the difference in uses of terminology that had contaminated the Christological debate, he stuck to the definitions he was familiar with and rejected others. He explained the tight interrelationship between *kyana*, *qnoma* and *parsopa* and the necessity to recognize the individual instances (*qnome*) of each general nature (*kyana*) as follows:

> Every nature is known and revealed in the *qnome* which are beneath it, and every *qnoma* is a demonstrator and upholder of the nature from which it is. And every *parsopa* in the *qnoma* is fixed (ܡܬܚܡ) and made distinct (as to what) it is. And no nature can be known without a *qnoma* and no *qnoma* can stand without a nature, and no *parsopa* can be distinguished without the *qnoma*. Take the *qnoma* and show us the *parsopa*! Take away the nature and show us the *qnoma*! Because nature is common and invisible, it is known in its proper *qnome*. And just as the nature of the Trinity is common to the three *qnome*, so the nature of men is common to all the *qnome* of men.[186]

Kyana is the invisible nature in a general or abstract sense (e.g. divinity, humanity), which is made known by its individual instances, the *qnome.* These *qnome*, in turn, are distinguished

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[184] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 78-81, with references; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 7, pp. 263-65.

[185] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 7, pp. 264-65. Cf. translation by Birnie, including his comment that the Scriptures regularly call Mary 'Mother of Jesus', though Matt. 1:16, 18 and Luke 2:11 might allow another interpretation. Soro and Birnie, 'Is the Theology of the Church of the East Nestorian?', p. 129.

[186] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 10, p. 207, (cf. trans. eidem with small adjustments, pp. 123-124).
ܟܠ ܟܝܢܐ ܒܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܕܬܚܘܬܘܗܝ، ܡܬܝܕܥ ܘܡܬܓܠܐ. ܘܟܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܚܘܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܘܡܩܝܡܢܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܕܡܢܗ. ܘܟܠ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ. ܒܩܢܘܡܐ
ܡܚܝܕ ܘܦܪܝܫ ܕܐܝܢܘ. ܘܠܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܢܬܝܕܥ ܕܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܢܩܘܡ ܕܠܐ ܟܝܢܐ. ܘܠܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ܆ ܕܠܐ
ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܬܦܪܫ: ܫܩܘܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܚܘܝ ܠܝ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ. ܐܪܝܡ ܟܝܢܐ ܘܚܘܝ ܠܝ ܩܢܘܡܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܗܘ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ ܗܘ.
ܒܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܬܝܕܥ. ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܕܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܗܘ ܠܬܠܬܝܗܘܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ
ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ܀

from each other and made visible by their *parsopa*.[187] Thus, one nature could have many *qnome*, but one *qnoma* with two natures was unthinkable.[188] However, Babai was not very consistent in his use of abstract and concrete expressions. Theodore had done so similarly, whereas the Synods of the Church of the East showed a preference for abstract terms.[189]

2.2.5. Parsopa

We have seen that according to Babai, the *parsopa* is the property (ܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ or ܕܝܠܝܬܐ) of the *qnoma*, the individual instance of a nature. Each *qnoma* has a *parsopa* which distinguishes it from others.[190] The *parsopa* is ‘assumptive’ (ܢܣܝܒܐܝܬ, capable of assuming or being assumed) and ‘unitive’ (ܡܚܝܕ, capable of uniting). The *parsopa* of Christ is therefore the same as the *parsopa* of the Son that has assumed this specific human *parsopa*. The natures remain distinct in spite of the union, because the divine *qnoma* preserves its divine properties (e.g. invisibility) by assuming to its *parsopa of filiation* the human *qnoma* with its humble *parsopa*. Since the divine *qnoma* cannot change, Christ is both visible and invisible, both the assumer and the assumed in two forms. Only the names (which are considered a *parsopa*) of the Son are different before and after the union.[191]

Babai denied he taught two sons, because the two *qnome* would not impede an intimate union between the two natures in the one *parsopa of filiation*.[192] He called the *parsopa of filiation* of the eternal Son, which became the *parsopa* of Christ, by several names already familiar from the Syriac translations of Nestorius’ work. The *parsopa of union* (ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ) indicated the unitive element of the one Sonship. Nine times Babai called it *parsopa of mdabbranuta*. Another name was *common parsopa* (ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܓܘܢܝܐ). It belonged to both *qnome*: to God the Word by nature and to Christ the man, who was compared to a temple, by union and assumption. The name ‘Christ’ was considered both a *parsopa of union* and a *common parsopa*.[193] Abramowski comments that the term *parsopa** kept its old meaning with Babai: what you see, what is before the eyes. All the examples of Babai to describe the union, explain only

[187] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 86-91.
[188] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/17, p. 171.
[189] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, 3/10, p. 121.
[190] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/17, p. 160:
ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܕܝܠܝܬܗ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܦܪܫ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ.
[191] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 147-52; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/17, p. 172; 6/21, pp. 251-52 and *TV*, p. 302.
[192] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 127-29.
[193] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 128-30; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/17, pp. 162-64.

the appearance. But maybe this was rather an indication of the immeasurable difference between the natures.[194]

2.2.6. Qnoma

In Babai's early CE, *qnoma* was mainly used in a Trinitarian context, but sometimes also in Christological context. He spoke of the '*qnoma* of his humanity' next to his divine *qnoma*,[195] and rejected the 'heresy of the Arians' which taught that the Son in his divinity was a creature with the same nature in one *qnoma* as the 'First-Born' in his humanity.[196] In a few instances *qnoma* was used in the old Syriac meaning of 'self' that sometimes can be translated as 'person', or was in line with the East Syrian writers in the sixth century who used it for the representation of the individual example, or manifestation of a nature.[197] Babai stated for instance that through the eyes the mind obtains knowledge of '*qnome* and their appearance and their different energies and forms, how they are, what they do or undergo'.[198] When Babai explained the nature of human reason, which is not part of the divine nature though it distinguishes us from animals, he indicated that the nature of the rational soul needs a *qnoma* to exist. They are thus brought in close association.

> We are distinguished by the gift of the rationality of our soul. It is a nature that subsists and lives in its *qnoma*, even if it cannot act (in) its characteristic (way) without a body; but it is not like the animals whose life is in their blood.[199]

Later, Babai used *qnoma* predominantly in a Christological context and he repeatedly argued why two *qnome* were needed for the union of both natures to one *parsopa* and why the one-*qnoma* doctrine had to be rejected.[200] One of his reasons brought forward is that *qnoma* is the individual instance of a nature and that nature cannot really exist without *qnoma*. Chediath

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194 Abramowski, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 244.
195 For instance, Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 194-95, 372-73, 426-27 and 446-49.
196 Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 4:24, pp. 278-81.
ܠܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܐܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܪܝܢ ܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܕܒܪܐ: ܕܢܬܪܥܡܢ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܕܒܪܐ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܗ:؛ ܘܡܒܪܝܢܐ ܐܬܐܡܪ ܡܢ ܐܒܐ: ܘܒܐܢܫܘܬܗ، ܐܝܟ ܒܟܘܪܐ ܠܟܠܗ ܒܪܝܬܐ، ܟܠ: ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܒܪܝܬܐ: ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ.
In the LU, Babai also accused Henana of ignoring the difference between 'Only-Begotten' and 'First-Born' that would indicate the different natures of Christ. This line of argumentation appeared already in Theodore's *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*, see above, section 1.4.2.
197 Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. 169.
198 Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 6:18, pp. 436-37. ܘܒܝܕ ܥܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܠܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܩܒܠ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ. ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܕܐܣܟܡܝܗܘܢ ܘܕܡܫܚܠܦܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܘܕܐܕܫܝܗܘܢ ܦܥܠܝܬܐ. ܘܕܐܝܟ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܘܡܢܐ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܐܘ ܚܫܝܢ.
199 Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 6:51, pp. 392-93. ܦܪܝܫܝܢ ܒܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܠܘܬܗ ܕܢܦܫܢ. ܟܝܢܐ ܗܝ ܡܩܝܡܬܐ ܘܚܝܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ: ܐܦ ܟܠܗ ܕܠܐ ܦܓܪܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܢܦܥܠ ܕܝܠܝܬܗ: ܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܒܕܡܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܚܝܘܬܗܘܢ.
200 Several reasons to reject a *qnomatic* union are already given above in the section on Henana (section 2.1.3.2).

suggests therefore that *qnoma* may be translated as for instance 'subsistence' or 'reality' (as opposed to the unreal or illusion).[201] This would be in line with the use we already recognized in the work of Ephrem and which remained in the tradition of the Church of the East.

Another reason was that from the Trinity, only the *qnoma* Word was involved in the union and similarly, from mankind only Jesus Christ. The union of these two individual natures implied therefore two *qnome.* Otherwise the whole divine nature and the whole human nature would be united to this *parsopa.*

> And if we say of the two natures that they were united in one *parsopa*, not declaring expressly two *qnome* with them, we are saying that the whole nature of the Trinity was united, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that the whole nature of men was united, Jesus, Judas and Simon. This is wickedness and blasphemy, in that *parsopa* cannot be the same as nature, because it (sc. nature) is common; but it (the *parsopa*) is fixed and distinguished in *qnoma*, as in the visible, so in the known (things), so that the Father is not the Son, nor is Gabriel Michael, nor Peter John. For the difference between these is in *parsope*, not in *qnome* and not in the equality of the natures.[202]

Babai also argued that a *qnoma* is fixed (ܩܒܝܥ), incommunicable and indivisible, and henceforth cannot be taken by or added to another *qnoma*. Yet, although the *parsopa* was considered to be fixed too, it could be assumed by another *parsopa,* while remaining in its own *qnoma* of which it is the authentic *parsopa.*[203]

> The *qnoma* is fixed and stable and possesses all the properties of its common nature; it is called the individual *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ). But a *parsopa* is fixed and can be assumed. It is fixed as it indicates the distinction of the *qnoma*: that this is not that one. And it can be assumed by another *qnoma* indicating everything the *qnoma* acquired in his distinction from another.[204] […] For a *qnoma* that subsists in itself (ܡܩܘܡ ܒܢܦܫܗ), cannot be assumed or added to by another *qnoma* and become together one subsisting *qnoma,* which acquired

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[201] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 88-89.

[202] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 10, pp. 207-208, (cf. trans. idem with small adjustments, p. 124).
ܘܐܢܗܘ ܕܬܪܝܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܐܬܚܝܕܘ ܒܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ: ܟܕ ܬܪܝܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܐ ܡܦܩܝܢ ܥܡܗܘܢ܆ ܟܠܗ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܐܬܚܝܕ: ܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ. ܘܟܠܗ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܐܬܚܝܕ܆ [...] ܒܗ̇ ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܥܠ ܟܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܡܨܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܡܛܠ ܕ ܓܘܢܝܐ ܗܘ. ܐܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܩܒܝܥ ܘܡܬܦܪܫ. ܐܝܟ ܒܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ ܐܦ ܒܡܬܝܕܥܢܐ ܕܐܒܐ ܠܐ ܒܪܐ. ܘܓܒܪܐܝܠ ܠܐ ܡܝܟܐܝܠ. ܘܦܛܪܘܣ ܠܐ ܝܘܚܢܢ. ܦܪܝܫܘܬܗܘܢ ܓܝܪ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܒܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܗܝ܀208܀ ܠܐ ܒܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܫܘܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܕܟܝ̈ܢܐ:

[203] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, pp. 88-89; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/10, p. 97 and *TV*, p. 301.

[204] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV*, pp. 299-300; cf. trans. by André de Halleux, 'La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona dans l'évolution du nestorianisme', *OCP* 23 (1957), pp. 11-12.
ܩܢܘܡܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܩܒܝܥ ܗܘ ܘܡܫܪܪ. ܘܩܢܐ ܠܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܓܘܢܝܐ. ܐܘܣܝܐ ܓܝܪ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ ܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܠܗ. ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܩܒܝܥ ܘܡܬܢܣܒ. ܩܒܝܥ ܕܡܚܘܐ ܦܪܝܫܘܬܗ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ. ܕܗܢܐ ܠܐ ܗܘ. ܘܡܬܢܣܒ ܡܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ. ܘܡܚܘܐ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܩܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܦܪܝܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܢ ܐܚܪܢܐ.

> everything of the nature. But a *parsopa* can be assumed and yet remain in its proper *qnoma* of which it is the authentic (ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ) *parsopa.*[205]

The terms 'common nature' and 'individual *ousia*' show the influence on Babai of the Cappadocian Fathers, who already had influenced Nestorius and many others.[206]

The following general definition of *qnoma* also shows the influence of at least some chapters of Aristotle's' *Categories* or its commentaries that deal with substance, quality and opposites.[207] The last sentence bears resemblance to Gregory of Nyssa's example.[208]

> An individual *ousia* is called a *qnoma.* It subsists in itself and is one in number. It is distinguished from many. Not (only) because it is made one, but also (because) it receives various accidents (ܓܕ̈ܫܐ) like virtue, evil, knowledge or ignorance, whenever it is with the created (ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ), the rational and free. But considering the irrational: here (are) also various accidents, like the temperaments that belong to the opposites, or some other way; these (accidents) are—as I said—not created and (not) made alone.
>
> For the *qnoma* is fixed in its nature, included under the species and nature of which it is a *qnoma.* It is with a number of *qnome,* its fellows, but is distinguished from its fellow *qnome* through the specific property (ܕܝܠܝܬܐ) it possesses in its *parsopa* - so that Gabriel is not Michael, and Paul is not Peter.[209]

Babai explained in a less abstract way how the *parsopa* can be one, but the natures and *qnome* can not, when he compared Christ to a golden coin carrying the picture (*parsopa*) of the king. When the coin is pressed into clay, the clay receives the *parsopa* of the king with his honour and splendour. In this example, the gold represents the divine nature; the picture the *parsopa*; the coin the *qnoma* of God the Word; the clay the human nature. The clay keeps and shows the newly acquired *parsopa*, while gold and clay keep their nature. The *parsopa* of the king is therefore one, but exists in two *qnome*: that of the golden coin and the clay. In the language of

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[205] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV,* p. 301.
ܩܢܘܡܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܣܝܒ ܒܐܝܕ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܢܐ ܘܡܫܬܘܬܦ ܥܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ. ܕܢܗܘܐ ܒܗܘܢ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܟܠܗ ܕܟܝܢܐ.
ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܫܬܩܠ. ܘܡܩܘܐ ܒܕܝܠܝܘܬ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܕܝܠܗ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ.

[206] See also Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai,* p. 88.

[207] Compare for instance King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation of Aristotle's Categories*, Chapter 2: On Substance (*ousia*, ܥܠ ܐܘܣܝܐ), pp. 100-113; Chapter 5: On Quality (ܥܠ ܐܝܢܐ), pp. 134-47; Chapter 7: On Opposites (ܥܠ ܕܠܘܩܒܠܝܘܬܐ), pp. 148-61.

[208] See section 1.5.3.

[209] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 4/17, p. 159 (cf. trans. idem, p. 129). On this passage, which is difficult to translate, see also Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', p. 311. See also the translation in Soro and Birnie, 'Is the Theology of the Church of the East Nestorian?', p. 127.
ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ ܡܬܩܪܐ: ܩܐܡ ܒܝܬܗ ܠܚܘܕܝܬܐ ܒܡܢܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܚܕ: ܘ ܦܪܝܫ ܡܢ ܣܓܝܐܐ: ܠܘ ܒܗ، ܕܐܬܒܪܝ ܐܠܐ ܘܐܦ
ܡܩܒܠ ܐܝܬ ܐܡܬܝ، ܠܘܬ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܡܠܝܠܐ ܘܚܐܪ̈ܐ: ܠܓܕ̈ܫܐ ܡܫܚܠܦܐ ܐܘ ܕܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܕܒܝܫܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ
ܐܘ ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ. ܠܘܬ ܠܐ ܡܠܝܠܐ ܕܝܢ: ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ ܠܓܕ̈ܫܐ ܡܫܚܠܦܐ. ܐܘ ܒܡܘܙ̈ܓܐ ܕܕܠܘܩܒܠܝܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܒܐܝܕܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܘܢ. ܘܗܠܝܢ ܐܝܟ
ܕܐܡܪܬ ܠܘ ܒܪܝܐ ܘܡܬܥܒܕܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܩܢܘܡܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܩܒܥ ܗܘ ܒܟܝܢܘܬܗ ܘܚܒܝܫ ܐܕܫܐ ܘܟܝܢܐ ܕܕܝܠܗ ܗܘ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܥܡ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܩܢܘܡ̈ܐ
ܚܒܪ̈ܘܗܝ ܣܟܡ. ܘܦܪܝܫ ܡܢ ܩܢܘܡ̈ܐ ܚܒܪ̈ܘܗܝ. ܒܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܕ ܠܓܒܪܝܐܝܠ ܠܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܡܝܟܐܝܠ. ܘܦܘܠܘܣ ܠܐ ܦܛܪܘܣ.

Babai this means that the one *parsopa* of the king and his splendour belongs truly (or 'authentically') (ܡܪܝܪܐܝܬ) and fixedly (ܡܩܒܥܐܝܬ) to the *qnoma* of the gold, while it belongs assumptively (ܢܣܝܒܐܝܬ) and qua *parsopa* (ܦܪܨܘܦܐܝܬ) to the clay.[210] Interestingly, the words ܡܪܝܪܐܝܬ and ܢܣܝܒܐܝܬ can be used as opposites, indicating something like authentic versus assumed.[211]

Although Babai emphasized that generally *qnome* cannot be assumed or added to by another *qnoma*, he acknowledged besides simple *qnome* also *qnomatic* compositions (ܪܘܟܒܐ ܩܢܘܡܝܐ). In contrast to angels and animals, human beings have a *qnomatic* and natural unity, consisting of a soul and a body, of which the natures and *qnome* are necessarily (ܡܐܠܨܢܐܝܬ) and forcefully (ܩܛܝܪܐܝܬ) united into one *qnoma*. Babai compared this to the limbs in one body. He also described this unity in terms of the infinite 'inner man' and the finite 'outer man'. They are named 'man' according to their union in one *parsopa*, but when the *qnomatic* composition (ܪܘܟܒܐ ܩܢܘܡܝܐ) is separated out, they have their own names again: 'body' and 'soul' with their properties.[212] Separately, the *qnome* of the human soul and body are not subsisting (ܡܩܝܡ), as they cannot completely exist and function without each other. But together, as one *qnoma*, they subsist as one *qnoma* in itself (ܡܩܝܡ ܒܝܬܗ) and cannot unite with other *qnome*. This formed another argument to reject the teaching of a composite *qnoma* of the divine and already composite human *qnome*, which often was compared to the union between body and spirit. Babai rejected this comparison especially because he considered it to be forced and involuntary and he rather emphasized the Christological Union that is personal, voluntary, not compelled and not susceptible to suffering.[213] An additional reason to reject a composite *qnoma* in Christ might have been that such *qnome* were considered unstable and temporary.[214]

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[210] Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 307-308; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione,* 4/17, pp. 164-66. Quotation from p. 165:
ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܒܬܪܝܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܕܗܒܐ ܘܕܛܝܢܐ. ܡܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܡܩܒܥܐܝܬ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܕܕܗܒܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܠܛܝܢܐ
ܘܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܒܚܠܦ ܥܦܪܗ. ܢܣܝܒܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܘܐܟ ܦܪܨܘܦܐܝܬ ܘܐܟ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܕܛܝܢܐ.
We have seen above that Babai had intended to refute the claims of the Audians considering the Son as an image or imprint. Since he used the metaphor of imprints himself, one might wonder whether he had to defend himself against accusations of adhering to Audian heresies.

[211] Bar Bahlul used these terms three centuries later to describe some classes of 'kingdom' (ܡܠܟܘܬܐ). The first was for God and the latter for people. These connotations seem to fit Babai's explanation well. Rubens Duval (ed. and trans.), *Lexicon Syriacum. Auctore Hassano Bar Bahlule* 2 (Paris, 1901), col. 1094; J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, p. 302. The word 'assumptively' (ܢܣܝܒܐܝܬ) is sometimes translated as 'feignedly', 'pretendingly'. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, p. 925.

[212] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV,* pp. 295-98.

[213] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV,* pp. 297-301; Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 309-14 and 332; eadem, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 244; Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai,* pp. 87-89.

[214] Luise Abramowski suggests that Babai was especially influenced by Proclus' assumption that a composite *qnoma* would end in dissolution and loss of existence of its parts. She further suggests that ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܩܝܡ ܒܝܬܗ was an attempt to translate Proclus' term αὐθυποστατόν, although she acknowledges that Proclus applied it only with respect to simple *hypostaseis*. But as Proclus also held that the intellectual soul is an αὐθυποστατόν which somehow can be tied up with bodies, this suggestion does not seem improbable. Abramowski, 'Christologische

We have seen that already Narsai (d.503) emphasized the simplicity of God, where he called him 'The one without composition'. The *Ecclesiastical History* also rejected the one composite *qnoma*. The *qnoma* of a soul is marked by subtlety (ܩܛܝܢܘܬܐ) and simplicity (ܦܫܝܛܘܬܐ), which terms are generally used to refer to the attributes of the immaterial (and therefore without parts) spiritual realm.[215] Michael Malpana, who also was among those who left the School out of protest against Henana, stated that the Father 'is not incarnate and not composite' (ܠܐ ܡܬܒܣܪܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܪܟܒܢܐ), and that therefore the *qnoma* of the Son is not composite either. This would mean that man and God the Word are not united *qnomatically* and naturally, but 'willingly and according to order'.[216]

2.2.7. Christology and epistemology

Babai associated the *qnoma* with the soul, which processes the bodily and rational impressions and is therefore fundamental in acquiring knowledge of the world and God.[217] Babai further held that the soul is an incorporeal, rational nature, which is united with the body in one human *qnoma*.[218] The impressions received by the outward senses arouse the passive part of the soul to wear the forms they are imprinting in it. Likewise, both the visible and rational natures are imprinting meanings of the mysteries and stimulate the rational nature to 'put on' (ܠܡܠܒܫ) their reflection (ܬܐܘܪܝܢܐ), as in a clear mirror.[219] God reveals himself therefore in the rational part of a soul that is baptized,[220] pure and free from passions. It even becomes God's home and temple, who shines in it during prayer.[221]

As the rational soul (ܢܦܫܐ ܡܠܝܠܬܐ) can function as a mirror (ܡܚܙܝܬܐ) after baptism, which is thus endowed with free will, it can choose to receive either the light of truth or the darkness of

Probleme', pp. 307-14; eadem, 'Die Christologie Babais', p. 244; Marije Martin, *Proclus on Nature. Philosophy of nature and its methods in Proclus' Commentary on Plato's 'Timaeus'* (Thesis Leiden, 2008), p. 26. The expression ܩܘܡܐ ܡܩܝܡ ܒܝܬܗ is moreover very close to Sextus Empiricus' μένει ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ὑποστάσει, mentioned below in note 234, but it is not sure whether or not the two are in fact related.

[215] Becker, *Sources*, pp. 51 and 101-102.

[216] Nau, 'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba 2', p. 593; Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 3, p. 109 (cf. trans. eidem, p. 63).

[217] See also Metselaar, 'The Mirror, the Qnoma, and the Soul', pp. 357-62.

[218] Babai rejected the view that the soul is only a mixture of the four elements and an irrational and incorporeal nature. Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 4:67, pp. 302-303.
ܢܦܫܐ: [...] ܚܝܘܬܐ ܡܠܠܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܓܫܡܐ: ܕܡܚܝܕܐ ܥܡ ܦܓܪܐ ܒܚܕ ܩܢܘܡ ܒܪܢܫܐ.

[219] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 4:67, pp. 302-303.
ܨܘ̈ܪܬܐ ܠܡ ܡܛܝ̈ܢ ܒܚ̈ܙܘܬܐ ܕܢܦܠ ܬܚܝܬ ܪ̈ܓܫܐ ܕܠܒܪ: ܡܠܒܫ ܠܗ ܠܡܢܬܐ ܚܫܘܫܬܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ: ܠܡܠܒܫ ܕܡܘ̈ܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܒ̈ܥܝܢ ܒܗ. [...]
ܗܟܢܐ ܠܡ ܘܟܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ: ܘܐܦ ܣܘ̈ܟܠܐ ܡܬܝ̈ܕܥܢܐ ܕܐ̈ܪܙܐ: ܕܠܒܫܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ ܘܐܦ ܡܬܝ̈ܕܥܢܐ: ܡܪܫܡܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܝܡ
ܠܟܝܢܐ ܡܠܝܠܐ ܕܝܢ: ܠܡܠܒܫ ܒܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܡܚܙܝܬܐ ܡܪܩܬܐ: ܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ.

[220] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 1:70, pp. 110-11.

[221] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 6:28, pp. 452-53.

ignorance.[222] Not only the rational part of the soul, but also the other parts, anger and desire, are involved in the choice for chastity and holiness.[223] When focussed on the light, the spiritual (ܪܘܚܢܐ) can see the incorporeal things and understand (ܡܣܬܟܠ) their reflections.[224]

> The rational soul is naturally like a shining mirror, and because of its freedom it can henceforth receive any image it wants [...]. However, because of the free will given to it, it can (also) receive the darkness and obscurity of ignorance. But if it seeks to gaze up again from the earthly to the heavenly (realm), it imprints the light of knowledge and the habits of virtue in its *qnoma*.[225]

This statement shows clearly that the mirror, soul and *qnoma* are closely connected and that the soul can imprint (ܛܒܥ) the light of knowledge and the virtues in its *qnoma*. When the soul is pure, the mind can receive the reflection of its *qnoma* in which God in his revelation shines.

Commenting on another sentence of Evagrius concerning saints who receive the reflection (ܬܐܘܪܝܐ) of their *qnoma*, Babai explained that they see their *qnoma* by means of the sunrise above them in this marvelous moment.

> It is henceforth a spiritual vision, in which (there is) stillness and silence and unsearchable light. […] And behold then this hope, the bodily eye has not seen it and the physical ear did not hear it and it did not come to the natural heart of thoughts, except to the one who did receive the reflection of his *qnoma*, and saw its secret in the clear mirror (ܡܚܙܝܬܐ) in which God in his revelation shines to his delight.[226]

The highest form of knowledge is that of the Trinity. It is found in the soul that—to the delight of its *qnoma*—assumes the reflection of the knowledge that 'everything is from him and through him' after it has perceived all the varying imaginations in the world.[227] Until the Res-

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[222] For instance, Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 86-87, 100-101, 118-21 and 142-43.
[223] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 1:84, pp. 120-21.
[224] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 1:70, pp. 110-11.
ܪܘܚܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܗܘ ܕܚܙܐ ܚܙܝܐ ܡܚܫܘܫܬܐ ܢܦܫܗ ܗܘܬ܆ ܚܙܐ ܠܠܐ ܡܬܓܫܡܢܐ. ܘܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ ܒܬܫܡܫܬܗ. ܘܡܣܬܟܠ ܥܠ ܬܐܘܪܝܣ ܕܒܗܘܢ.
[225] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 1:59, p. 100.
ܕܢܦܫܐ ܡܠܠܬܐ ܒܟܝܢ ܒܢܬܗ̇܆ ܐܝܟ ܡܚܙܝܬܐ ܡܨܠܚܬ ܒܡܦܪܢܘܬܗ̇ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܘܡܟܝܠ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܒܗ̇ ܚܐܪܘܬܗ̇ ܠܟܠ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܐܝܕܐ ܕܗܝ
ܒܪܡ܆ [...] ܐܠܐ ܗܝ ܕܒܝܕ ܡܨܠܚܢܘܬ ܚܐܪܘܬܐ ܕܐܬܝܗܒܬ ܠܗ̇܆ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܠܚܫܘܟܐ ܘܥܡܛܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ. ܘܐܢ ܬܒܥܐ ܬܘܒ ܕܠܥܠ ܬܚܘܪ
ܚܙܬܗ̇: ܡܢ ܐܪܥܢܝܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܫܡܝܢܝܬܐ܆ ܛܒܥܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ̇ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ ܘܗܒܝܐ ܕܡܬܝܪܬܐ.
[226] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 2:62, pp. 174-75
ܘܚܙܬܐ ܗܝ ܡܟܝܠ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ: ܕܒܗ̇ ܫܠܝܐ ܘܫܬܩܘܬܐ ܘܢܘܗܪܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܒܨܝܢܐ. [...] ܘܗܐ ܗܝܕܝܢ ܗܢܐ ܣܒܪܐ: ܥܝܢܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܬܐ ܠܐ
ܚܙܬܗ. ܘܐܕܢܐ ܡܪܓܫܢܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܫܡܥܬܗ. ܘܥܠ ܠܒܐ ܟܝܢܝܐ ܕܡܚܫܒܬܐ ܠܐ ܣܠܩ. ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܥܠ ܗܘ ܕܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܩܒܠ:
ܘܟܣܝܘܬܗ ܚܙܐ ܒܡܚܙܝܬܐ ܕܟܝܬܐ: ܕܒܗ̇ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܓܠܝܢܗ ܕܢܚ ܠܒܘܣܡܗ.
[227] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 7:55, pp. 466-67.
ܒܗ ܡܢܗ ܟܠ ܓܝܪ ܘܒܗ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܗܘܠܐ ܕܠܝܢ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܬܐ ܠܐ ܠܒܫܐ ܠܗ: ܡܢ ܕܠܒܫܬ ܚܕܐ ܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܠܒܘܣܡܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ.
ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܬܠܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܦܠܚܬܐ܆ ܠܘܬ ܚܕܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܢܝܚܬܐ: ܕܡܢܗ ܟܠ ܘܟܠ ܒܐܝܕܗ.

urrection, however, the highest knowledge can only be experienced temporarily and imperfectly like in a mirror (cf. 1 Cor. 13).[228]

Babai used the example of an iron mirror (the purified soul) and a magnetic stone to explain how the soul can be lifted up by the life-giving stone to a height above sensory perception, and to warn at the same time that this does not imply the 'heresy' of making the soul a part of the divinity, because stone and iron have different natures.[229] The example of the mirror figured also in the LU to explain that two natures still can have one *parsopa*. The mirror can absorb (ܡܩܒܠܐ ܒܟܠܗ) the whole appearance (ܐܣܟܡܐ) of the sun 'unitedly' (ܚܕܝܐܝܬ) and temporarily acquires its properties: it becomes hot and can ignite fire. It does not, however, receive the nature of the sun, which does not change and remains one, even if reflected in many mirrors.[230] In the TV, the metaphor of the mirror illustrated that an individual face can be noticed in two *qnome*. Babai's example is paraphrased here as follows: when looked at in a mirror, the face (*parsopa*) is there in two ways: one is fixed in the viewer's *qnoma*, while the other is assumed in the *qnoma* of the mirror. There is consequently one *parsopa* in two *qnome*.[231]

It is difficult to see in Babai's examples a clear development, if any, from his earlier use of *qnoma* to that after 612. But there seems to be a consistency in the metaphor of the mirror that must have fascinated him, as it had fascinated Ephrem. In the CE the *qnoma* of the mirror (the human soul) receives an imprint of the light of knowledge when it is directed towards this light. In the LU, this metaphor of the mirror explains the one *parsopa* of the two natures, with the human soul receiving properties of the divinity, though the natures remain distinct. The TV might further have elaborated the example of the face and the mirror given in the CE to clarify that both natures have their own *qnoma*, while the LU already explained *qnoma* similarly in metaphors of wax and clay.

The other metaphors illustrating the imprint of the *parsopa* of one *qnoma* in another *qnoma* of different nature can be useful to understand Babai's metaphor of the mirror better. Examples are the imprint of a *parsopa* in materials that can receive this, such as wax, clay or gold. The example of a coin has already been given above. Babai used this also in the TV to explain why the *parsopa* is given or assumed, while the *qnoma* is not given or assumed. When the

[228] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 3:63, pp. 232-33.
[229] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, 2:34, pp. 152-55.
[230] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 3/11, p. 129.
[231] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, *TV*, p. 303-304.
ܐܝܬܝܐ ܡܚܙܝܬܐ ܕܡܚܙܝܬܐ ܘܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܠܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܦܢ̈ܝܢ. ܗܘܐ ܢܫܡܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܨܘܪ̈ܬܗ ܘܠܐ ܠܩܢܘܡܝܢ. ܐܦܠܐ ܠܡܩܢܘܡܘܬܐ ܕܝ ܦܪܨܘܦ ܐܠܐ ܠܒܠܗ
ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܝܢ ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܝܢ ܒܬܪܝܢ ܦܘܪ̈ܫܢܐ: ܚܕ ܡܩܒܠ ܒܩܢܘܡܝܢ. ܘܚܕ ܢܫܡܬܐ ܒܩܢܘܡ ܡܚܙܝܬܐ. ܘܚܕ ܗܘ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܪܝܢ.
ܘܬܪܝܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܘܠܐ ܚܕ.

image and name of the King are engraved in gold and this is stamped into clay (or wax), the clay does receive the image and text, but not the gold. The one *parsopa* is now visible in two ways: fixed and *qnomatically* in the gold and assumptive in the clay, while both have their own *qnoma*.[232] The *parsopa* in these examples is not 'unitive'; however, in a Christological context it is.[233]

The example of wax appeared already in the work of Sextus Empiricus, a Sceptic philosopher who flourished in the late second century. His comments 'concerning the question of becoming and the generation of one thing from another', could have come to Babai via a route at present unknown. Sextus Empiricus gave for instance the example of wax which 'changes its shape and receives various forms at various times.'[234] This example might ultimately have been derived from Plato, who compared the human soul to wax that can be imprinted by the perceptions. The quality of this wax determines the quality and durability of the imprint.[235] Both notions might have been used by Babai, as this reminds one also of his comparison of the soul to a mirror: only when pure can it reflect the light of divinity.

The examples show not only how the natures were thought to remain distinct while being in one *parsopa*, but might also suggest that Babai could have applied these to Christ in a more profound manner. Taking into account the soteriological necessity of Christ having a free will in a human *qnoma* which had to be tried, one might conclude that it was the purity of the human *qnoma* itself that enabled Christ to receive his qualities and possibly even to show the *parsopa* of God in a clear and lasting manner. His obedience in doing God's will out of his own free will had a strong soteriological character and was the ultimate example for man. The role of his human *qnoma* for salvation can clearly be seen in Babai's comment on Heb. 5:8-9.[236] Babai did not comment on the last part explicitly, but the soteriological aspect is implied

[232] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione, TV*, p. 303.
[233] Abramowski, 'Christologische Probleme', pp. 307-308.
[234] Sextus Empiricus wrote: 'And if it is converted into another thing, either it passes out from its own *hypostasis* (ἰδίας ὑποστάσεως) when it is converted and generated, or it remains in its proper *hypostasis* (μένει ἐν τῇ οἰκείᾳ ὑποστάσει) and is generated by assuming one form instead of another, just like the wax which changes its shape and receives various forms at various times.' Possekel, *Philosophical Concepts*, p. 71.
[235] Plato wrote: 'we hold this wax under the perceptions and thoughts and imprint them upon it, just as we make impressions from seal rings; and whatever is imprinted we remember and know as long as its image lasts, but whatever is rubbed out or cannot be imprinted we forget and do not know.' [...] 'When the wax in the soul of a man is deep and abundant and smooth and properly kneaded, the images that come through the perceptions are imprinted upon this heart of the soul [...]; when this is the case, and in such men, the imprints, being clear and of sufficient depth, are also lasting. [...] For the imprints are clear and have plenty of room, so that such men quickly assign them to their several moulds, which are called realities; and these men, then, are called wise.' Harold North Fowler (trans.), *Plato 7. Theaetetus. Sophist* (London, 1921; repr. 1987), pp. 184-97.
[236] Heb. 5:8-9. The NRSV renders this with: 'Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.'
The Syriac Peshitta renders 'what he suffered' with 'the fear and sufferings he endured'. ܘܥܡ ܕܒܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ܆ ܡܢ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܘܚܫܐ ܕܣܝܒܪ܆ ܝܠܦ ܠܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܐ. (9) ܘܗܟܢܐ ܐܬܓܡܪ܆ ܘܗܘܐ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ ܠܗ. ܥܠܬܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ܆

in his statement that the human *qnoma* of Christ, just like that of other men, had to experience the temptation of suffering and obedience in order to be perfected and receive immortality and unchangeableness.

> Although he is a son from the womb in a union with God the Word in one sonship, because of the sufferings he endured he learnt obedience and was thus perfected (ܐܬܓܡܪ). That is to say, he learnt in which (state) he was because of obedience. For he did not know immortality and unchangeableness, how they are, until he effectively received them in his human *qnoma*. And similarly he did not know the sufferings until he was tried by them, because they were not natural and fixed; but through trial he received them in his *qnoma*.
> ‘We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but (one) who has been tried in every way, like us, yet without sin.’(Heb. 4:15). Therefore: without trial he was also not instructed in and did not get to know the knowledge of the things by which he was tried. And without falsehood is: ‘He grew in stature and wisdom and in favour’. And true is indeed everything written about him that he endured in his human *qnoma*.[237]

We have already seen that the ascetics had to purify their *qnoma* in order to reach perfection, but Babai emphasized here that even Christ had to experience temptations in his human *qnoma*. Although Babai might have elaborated the comparisons of the *qnoma* with mirrors, gold or wax in order to integrate his two-*qnome* doctrine in monastic life, one might also suggest that the metaphors reflected several developments within asceticism. Four of these developments might even have resulted in an intrinsic motive to acknowledge two *qnome* in Christ. These developments could have been as follows:

First, the individual self, the free individual soul and *qnoma* were associated tightly with each other. Second, the ascetics were eager to purify their soul so that its substance (its *qnoma*) could become like a clear mirror in which they could see a reflection of the light of God. This can also be seen in the *Ecclesiastical History* which similarly seems to use the metaphor of the mirror, when describing the relation between the *qnoma*, the soul and its purification, and divine contemplation (or reflection) in the account of Narsai’s spiritual efforts. Narsai, the ‘icon which is akin to the true prototype’, is praised for trying to act according to the ‘first cause’ (ܠܥܠܬܗ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ) and for taking care to perfect (ܢܓܡܘܪ) the free will of his intellectual

As can be seen in the next note, Babai omitted this ‘fear’ and further elaborated the concept ‘Son’.

237 Abramowski, ‘Christologische Probleme’, pp. 323-325; Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/15, pp. 145-46. ܕܟܕ ܓܝܪ ܒܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܟܪܣܐ ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܥܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܒܪܘܬܐ: ܐܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܚܫܐ ܕܣܒܠ ܝܠܦܗ ܠܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܐ ܘܗܟܢܐ ܐܬܓܡܪ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܝܠܦܗ ܠܐܝܕܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܗ ܡܛܠ ܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܗ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܝܕܥ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܠܐ ܡܝܘܬܘܬܐ ܘܠܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܘܬܐ. ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܝ: ܥܕܡܐ ܕܒܗ 146 ܒܣܥܪܐ ܩܒܠܗ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܐܢܫܝܐ. ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܗܘܐ ܠܚܫܐ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܡܣܬܢܝܬܐ ܥܕܡܐ ܕܐܬܢܣܝ ܒܗܝܢ: ܒܗ̇ ܕܠܘ ܒܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܗܘܝ ܠܗ ܘܡܩܒܥܢܝܬ: ܐܠܐ ܒܢܣܝܢܐ ܩܒܠ ܐܢܝܢ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ. ܠܝܬ ܠܢ ܠܢ ܪܒ ܟܘܡܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܕܢܚܫ ܥܡ ܡܚܝܠܘܬܢ: ܐܠܐ ܕܐܬܢܣܝ ܒܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܐܟܘܬܢ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܚܛܝܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܢܣܝܢܐ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܐܬܪܕܝܐ ܕܒܗܝܢ ܐܬܢܣܝ ܘܐܬܝܕܥ ܘܝܕܥ ܐܝܟ. ܘܠܐ ܕܓܠܐ ܗ̇ ܕܪܒܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܩܘܡܬܗ ܘܒܚܟܡܬܗ ܘܒܛܝܒܘܬܐ. ܫܪܝܪܢ ܐܝܟ ܓܝܪ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒܢ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܕܣܒܠ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܐܢܫܝܐ.

soul.[238] Meanwhile, the other—passive—part of the soul is trained as well.[239] The *Ecclesiastical History* continues to explain how actions and obedience to the commandments polish the passive part of the soul and the divine contemplation purifies the intellectual part.

> (The soul), because of its subtlety and the simplicity of its *qnoma*, is liberated from this necessity of the body, and continually meditates with its subtle intellect that it might perform the things which that essence, the master of virtues, takes pleasure in. […] From this is known that all practice and a life (spent) performing the commandments polish (ܡܪܩܝܢ) the passive portion of the soul, that is, the movements and the two faculties (ܚܝ̈ܠܐ) of anger and desire [...]. The practice of divine contemplation (ܬܐܘܪܝܐ), the other part of the soul, which is the first and exalted, is entrusted with purification (ܠܡܨܠܠܘ ܠܗ)—I refer to the intellectual thought and the discerning mind.[240]

The third step in this process was that Christ was their ultimate example and had all the human properties except for sin. Fourth, when the ascetics consequently ascribed such purification to Christ as well, it might finally have become necessary to identify a human *qnoma* in Christ in addition to his divine *qnoma*. Moreover, as the sun was a metaphor for God, while the Son was compared to a ray that enlightens the mind and empowers and shines in the *qnoma* that received it, he might have been considered the mirror in which he could reflect the light of Divinity, like the sunlight dwelling in a pearl, and this light might also have been reflected by the saints.[241]

Summarizing, I suggest that the close relation between Babai's Christology and epistemology, which required the purification of the individual soul or *qnoma*, may have formed an additional and intrinsic reason to add two *qnome* to the Antiochene formula.

As Paul Krüger holds that Mark had strongly influenced the asceticism and mysticism of Babai,[242] a closer examination of the remaining parts of an unedited commentary on the two sermons of Mark the Monk (Marcus Eremita) may corroborate this thesis.[243]

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[238] Nau, 'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba 2', p. 592. ܘܡܢ ܕ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܝ ܒܗܢܐ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܡܫܬܡܠܝܘܬܐ.

[239] Adam Becker comments that the *Cause* divides the soul similarly and that this distinction is originally Aristotelian, but was mediated through the Neoplatonism of Evagrius and Neoplatonic commentaries on Aristotle. Becker, *Sources*, pp. 50-52.

[240] Nau, 'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba 2', p. 593. Translation with adjustments after Becker, *Sources*, pp. 50-52.
ܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܥܕ ܡܠܝܘܬܐ ܘܡܥܡܠܢܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ̇: ܡܫܪܐ ܗ̇ܝ، ܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܐܢܢܩܐ ܕܦܓܪܐ. ܘܐܡܝܢܐܝܬ ܗܪܓܐ ܒܗܘܢܗ̇ ܡܠܝܠܐ. ܕܬܦܠܘܚ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܒܗܢܐ ܒܗܝܢ: ܗ̇ܝ، ܐܘܣܝܐ ܡܪܬ ܠܛܒ̈ܬܐ. [...] ܘܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܝܕܝܥܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܘܚܝ̈ܐ ܕܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܕܦܘܩܕܢ̈ܐ: ܠܡܢܬܐ ܚܫܘܫܬܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܡܪܩܝܢ. ܗ̇ܘ ܕܝܢ ܠܙܘ̈ܥܐ ܘܠܬܪܝܢ ܚܝ̈ܠܐ ܕܚܡܬܐ ܘܕܪܓܬܐ.[...]. ܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ: ܡܢܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ، ܐܚܪܬܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ: ܕܪܫܝܬܐ ܘܡܥܠܝܬܐ ܡܗܝܡܢ ܠܡܨܠܠܘ ܠܗ. ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܡܫܩܠܐ ܡܕܥܢܝܬܐ ܘܠܡܦܪܫܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ.

[241] Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 18, 36, 42 and 278.

[242] Paul Krüger, 'Zum theologischen Menschenbild Babais', p. 74.

[243] The commentary is preserved in Brit. Libr. Add. 17,270 and was probably written by Babai. See for a description of this text Paul Krüger, 'Zum theologischen Menschenbild Babais', pp. 46-48; idem, 'Cognitio sapientiae. Die Erkenntnis der Wahrheit nach den unveröffentlichten beiden Sermones Babais des Großen über das geistige

2.3. The debate in 612

2.3.1. The purposes and participants

All the sources available for the 612 debate (ܕܪܫܐ, *drasha*) stem from circles within the Church of the East. Although it can be assumed that such a debate actually took place in 612, a biased view can therefore not be excluded.[244] One account of the debate is found in the appendices to Chabot's *Synodicon Orientale.* After a short introductory description of the situation,[245] it presents the Creed, provides arguments against the opposite party and mentions two questions of Khosrau that are answered at length.[246] Another account is included in *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts.*[247] Abramowski and Goodman comment briefly that this anonymous account is generally better than the one preserved in the *Synodicon Orientale* and they point to several differences between the accounts.[248] The former can therefore sometimes serve as addition or correction.

Two relatively contemporary sources give further background information to this debate: the already mentioned hagiographic *Life of George* by Babai and the *Chronicon Anonymum* (composed not long after 659).[249] The later *Chronicle of Seert* can also be mentioned.[250]

As we have seen, the debate was instigated by the influential Miaphysite Gabriel of Shigar, while the bishops of the former dominant Church of the East now had to defend their Christology before Khosrau. They had to prove that the doctrine of two *qnome* was already held by the Fathers prior to Nestorius, and they took the opportunity to plead for a new catholicos.

During this debate the doctrine of two *qnome* was officially formulated. Reinink argues that this actually was the culmination of the tactics of the ever more influential Miaphysites to

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Gesetz des Mönches Markus', *Studia Patristica* 5 (1962), pp. 377-81. Cf. also Lucas Van Rompay's report on the discovery of eight additional folios in Deir al-Surian: 'From Waste to Wealth' (*Newsletter of Levantine Foundation* 3, 2009), pp. 3 and 7. See further Sebastian Brock and Lucas Van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)*, (OLA 227; Leuven, 2014), pp. 10-11; 47-48; 241-42 and 351.

244 Reinink, 'Life of George', pp. 177-80.

245 See the quotation at the very beginning of the introduction to this study.

246 Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 564-80 (cf. trans. pp. 580-98).

247 The first part is titled: 'The creed of the bishops of Persia which Khosrau requested from them'. The second part is introduced as 'main points of the debate' (ܪܫܐ ܕܕܪܫܐ) which the Fathers drew up and affixed to the creed'. It also contains the beginning of the answer to three questions posed by Khosrau, but the rest is missing. Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, pp. 150 and 157 (cf. trans. eidem, pp. xlii-xliv, 88 and 93). These authors translate ܪܫܐ ܕܕܪܫܐ as 'controversial chapters'.

248 Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, pp. xxxv and xlii-xliv.

249 Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 1-48; Reinink, 'Life of George', pp. 177-80, with references.

250 Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', pp. 536-39.

weaken the position of Church of the East by dividing it internally. At this point, two questions in particular which the 'Nestorians' had to answer seem to have been intended to force the Church of the East to set out official and conclusive statements on the two *qnome* in Christ. It may have been anticipated that this in turn would drive those East Syrians who acknowledged two natures but only one *qnoma* away from the Church of the East into Miaphysitism.[251] The three questions, of which the last is not explicitly formulated in the *Synodicon Orientale*, are as follows:

> 1. Is it the Nestorians (ܢܣܛܘܪ̈ܝܢܐ) or the monks (ܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ) who have declined from the foundation of the Faith which the former teachers have transmitted?
> 2. Previous to Nestorius, is there anyone who says that Christ is two natures and two *qnome*, or not?
> 3. Did Mary bear man or God?[252]

It was the first time the term 'Nestorians' occurred in the *Synodicon Orientale*, and here it was put in the mouth of the opponents. The version in *Nestorian Collection* and the *Life of George* also use the term 'Nestorians' for the Church of the East.[253]

It is not clear who the opponents exactly were. The *Synodicon Orientale* refers to them as monks and as heretics, or more precisely as 'Theopaschite Severians' (ܣܐܘܝܪ̈ܝܢܐ ܚܫ̈ܫ ܐܠܗܐ), who would acknowledge only one nature or *qnoma*.[254] They would have shared the opinion of Gabriel of Shigar.[255] The *Life of George* also describes the opponents as monks[256] and connects them moreover with Henana.[257] The version in the *Nestorian Collection* calls the opponents 'Severians, and all the Theopaschites'.[258]

It is generally thought that the opponents are Miaphysites and not Severians or Monophysites. Brock calls them representatives of the 'Syriac-Orthodox'.[259] Reinink agrees and explains this term moreover as 'Syriac-speaking Miaphysites'.[260] Reinink further emphasizes that neither Henana nor his disciples adhered to a Christology of one nature and one *qno-*

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251 Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 230-31 and 245-48.
252 Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 571 and 574 (cf. trans. pp. 588-89 and 591); Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, pp. 168-69; Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, pp. 516-17. Hoffmann comments that the *Life of George* manuscript has been altered later whereby the 'two' (*qnome*) are replaced by 'one'. Hoffmann, *Akten Persischer Märtyrer*, p. 106.
253 Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, pp. xliii and 100.
254 For instance in Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 567-68.
255 Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 562-63.
256 Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, pp. xliii-xliv.
257 Reinink, 'Life of George', p. 184.
258 Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, p. 150 (cf. trans. eidem p. 88).
259 Brock, 'Christology in the Synods', p. 127.
260 Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', p. 247.

ma.[261] There are no indications that Julianists are meant, although Michael Malpana, whom Babai had mentioned as one of the participants in the debate, wrote against the Julianists who would deny that Christ shared (sinful) human nature.[262] Abramowski and Goodman assume that the opponents are not 'Monophysites' but a group of sympathizers of Henana, headed by Gabriel of Shigar. They argue that the King did not call the opponents 'Severians', and that they did not use this epithet as a self-description either. Abramowski and Goodman suggest therefore that the Church of the East tried to raise the suspicions of Khosrau by linking the opponents to Severus of Antioch, the city which until recently had belonged to the Byzantine Empire.

Concerning the other form of address, 'monks' (ܕܝܪܝܐ), Abramowski and Goodman suggest that it might rest on a misunderstanding or erroneous translation, since monks also belonged to the delegation of the Church of the East.[263] However, since the term 'monks' also appears in the *Life of George*, it seems less likely to be the result of an incidental error. Peter Bruns suggests that the term 'monks' is deliberately given from the Miaphysite perspective.[264] Another suggestion would be that the East Syrians used the term 'monks' to indicate that their opponents (still) lacked any officially recognized high clerical rank. This might be an additional indication that Miaphysites were involved. Although Miaphysite bishops had been consecrated, it is not clear to what extent this had been officially recognized by Khosrau. Traditionally, the Sasanian Empire had allowed only one representative of the Christians. It is in this respect perhaps telling that Miaphysites could install their first *Maphrian* only after Khosrau's death, but other explanations are also possible. For instance Morony linked this event with the first possibility for Miaphysites to establish formal ties with the 'Jacobite Church in the West'.[265]

The fact that the sources call the opponents by different names is in line with the complicated challenges the Church of the East encountered. As we have seen, Babai had polemically associated Henana—who had died some years before the debate—with dissident monks, Severians, Miaphysites and Origenists among others.

The delegation of the Church of the East was headed by Shubhalmaran, the Metropolitan of Karka d-Bet Slok, who was imprisoned later in 620. The two chronicles mention further

[261] Reinink, 'Life of George', p. 183; idem, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 226-27.
[262] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, 3d, pp. 64-65.
[263] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, pp. xlii -xliv.
[264] Peter Bruns argues that Miaphysites had become used to see celibacy as an evident sign of their orthodoxy, in opposition to the Church of the East that had forbidden this temporarily at the end of the fifth century. Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis und die Aufhebung der Klerikerenthaltsamkeit', pp. 13-14.
[265] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 377.

Jonadab the Metropolitan of Adiabene. According to the *Chronicon Anonymum*, he had good relations with Khosrau and was therefore entrusted with the leadership over all the inhabitants of the mountains. This even would have included the monks of Mar Mattai, ‘the deceivers of Mosul’, whom Jonadab wanted to drive away with Khosrau’s consent. Gabriel of Shigar would have prohibited this.[266] Both chronicles also mention a doctor Sergius from Kashkar, Gabriel the Bishop of Nhargul[267] (the later Metropolitan of Bet Lapat), and the Persian monk George of the mountain Izla, who was murdered after the debate. The *Chronicle of Seert* moreover reckons Henanishoʿ the monk and Ishoʿyahb of Gdala (the bishop of Balad who became catholicos in 628) to the participants.[268] Babai named beside George, Henanishoʿ and Metropolitan Shubhalmaran (as head of the present bishops), also the priests and teachers Andreas and Michael from Bet Garmai, and the deacon Gausishoʿ from Bet Qardu.[269] Babai attributed the text of the Creed to George and to Henanishoʿ.[270]

As mentioned earlier in the discussion on Hira, this Henanishoʿ is said to have been a relative of the Arab King Nuʿman. He was a famous debater with a preference for ‘logical discussions’, which also can be seen in his treatise preserved in the *Nestorian Collection*.[271] The same collection contains work by Michael Malpana (‘the teacher’) who also made ample use of syllogistic argumentation. Michael was a former student of Henana and had taught at the School of Nisibis, but had left it in opposition to Henana’s views.[272]

2.3.2. The content of the debate

We have seen that the debate can be divided in three parts: the Creed; the main points of the debate (ܪ̈ܫܐ ܕܕܪܫܐ); and the answers to the questions of Khosrau. The Creed starts with the Trinity, emphasizing a strict transcendence of all its three *qnome*.

> We believe in one divine nature, everlasting, without beginning, living and quickening all, powerful, creating all powers, wise, imparting all wisdom, simple spirit, infinite, incomprehensible, not composite and without parts, incorporeal, both invisible and unchangeable, impassible and immortal; nor is it possible, whether by itself, or by another, or with another that suffering or change should enter in unto it; but it is perfect in its es-

[266] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 22; Nöldeke, ‘Die syrische Chronik’, p. 20.
[267] Nhargul, or Nhargur, was a diocese of Maishan, in the south of today Iraq. Fiey, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, p. 114; Margoliouth, *Supplement to the Thesaurus Syriacus*, p. 206.
[268] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 61; Nöldeke, ‘Die syrische Chronik’, pp. 20-21 and 36; Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 83 and 85, pp. 529 and 534-36.
[269] Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, pp. 507-508; Braun (trans.), *Märtyrer*, pp. 253 and 258-59; Hoffmann, *Akten Persischer Märtyrer*, pp. 107-108.
[270] Bedjan (ed.), *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, pp. 514-16; see also Reinink, ‘Life of George’, pp. 181-82.
[271] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, 8, pp. xliv-xlv and 101-106.
[272] Abramowski, ‘Die Christologie Babais’, p. 227; Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, 3, pp. xxxiv and 61-67.

sence (ܐܝܬܘܬܗ) and in everything which belongs to it, nor is it possible for it to receive any addition or subtraction, it being by itself substance (ܐܝܬܝܐ), and God over all.

He who is known and confessed in three holy *qnome*, equal in nature and equal in glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the nature threefold (in) *qnome* essentially (ܐܝܬܝܐܝܬ), and the single *qnome* (in) nature everlastingly without any distinction between themselves, with the exception of the diverse properties of their *qnome*, fatherhood, sonship and procession; but for the rest, in every way that the nature in common is confessed, in the same way also each one of the *qnome*, alone, is confessed without diminution.

And because the Father is impassible and unchangeable, so also is the Son and the Spirit confessed with him (to be) as he is without suffering and change, and just as the Father is believed to be infinite and without parts, so also is confessed Son and Spirit to be without limits and composition (ܪܘܟܒܐ); three *qnome*, perfect in everything, in one godhead, one power which cannot be weakened, one knowledge which cannot be turned aside, one will which cannot be bent, one authority which cannot be annulled; is he who created (ܒܪܐ) the worlds in his goodness, and rules all by the indication of his will.[273]

The divine *paideia* can be clearly seen when the Creed goes on to praise God for his instructions and revelations that culminated in the coming of Christ into the world.

He who since the beginning has instructed in a concise manner the human race in accordance with the extent of the infantile state of its knowledge with knowledge concerning his godhead, and in intervening times by diverse visions and various forms (ܕܡ̈ܘܬܐ) revealed himself to the saints (and) by various laws corrected and instructed mankind as an increase of their knowledge; and to whose incomprehensible wisdom in the last times it seemed good to reveal and declare to the rational beings the wondrous mystery of his glorious Trinity; and in order that he might raise our nature to honour, [...] the Son of God, God the Word, without departing from being with him who begat him, came into the world while he was in the world, and the world came into being through him.[274]

In already familiar language it is further stated that one of the *qnome* of the Trinity, the Word, which cannot be seen by creatures, came to the world and built a holy temple and clothed himself with this. Jesus Christ is recognized in one *parsopa* and his two natures cannot be mixed. But then a new element is introduced in the *Synodicon Orientale*: the necessity of two *qnome* in Christ is explained as Babai had done.[275]

[273] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, pp. 150-52 (cf. trans. eidem, pp. 88-89 in which I made some adjustments).
[274] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, p. 152 (cf. trans. eidem, pp. 89-90).
[275] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 10, pp. 207-208, see also above section 2.2.6.

> […] when we call Christ perfect God, we do not name the Trinity, but one of the *qnome* of the Trinity: God the Word. But when we call Christ perfect man, we do not name all men, but that one *qnoma* which was manifestly assumed for our salvation into the union (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ) with the Word.[276]

The bishops added that this Jesus Christ is eternally born (ܝܠܝܕ, *ilid*) in his divinity from his Father, and was born (ܐܬܝܠܕ, *etiled*) another time in his humanity from the Virgin.[277] The bishops further claimed that this is the correct belief which has been safely maintained in Persia, while the Roman Empire suffered under many heretics who were expelled and fled to Persia, as for instance the Severians. The bishops hoped Khosrau would restore the orthodox faith now that he had defeated and conquered Roman territory.[278]

The next part of the debate is called 'main points of the debate' in the *Nestorian Collection*,[279] and 'objections (ܦܒ̈ܪܐ) of the Orthodox against the Theopaschite Severians' in the *Synodicon Orientale*.[280] The order of these points is more systematic in the *Nestorian Collection*. It consists of refutations of the doctrine of one nature and *qnoma,* of Theopaschism, of the accusation of quaternity, of the term *theotokos* or *anthropotokos,* and of the doctrine of two sons.[281] Most of the lengthy argumentation is presented in the form of syllogistic reasoning, often in the form of questions intended to show the absurdity of the wrong premises.

The last part is a reply to Khosrau's questions. The bishops offered here (indirect) support found in the Bible and in sayings from the Fathers. They argued that the Bible proves that Christ has two natures; because comments on his humanity and divinity are mutually exclusive and that Christ must therefore be perfect God and perfect man. They also named several Greek Fathers before Nestorius who would have acknowledged the two natures. As the bishops held that natures are only perfect if they have their own *qnoma*, they argued with some sort of circular reasoning that those who acknowledge two natures must also have acknowledged two *qnome* in one *parsopa* and are therefore to be considered orthodox.[282] The Severians, however, who acknowledged only one nature and *qnoma,* would have fallen from the true faith. Meanwhile, the bishops emphasized that Christ is one; not because of the unity of the

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[276] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale,* p. 566. See also the highly similar version in Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection,* 10, p. 155 (cf. trans. eidem, p. 91).
ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܫܠܡܐ ܟܕ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ. ܠܐ ܠܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܡܫܡܗܝܢܢ: ܐܠܐ ܠܚܕ ܡܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ: ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ.
ܘܟܕ ܬܘܒ ܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܡܫܠܡܐ ܩܪܝܢܢ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܡܫܡܗܝܢܢ: ܐܠܐ ܠܗܘ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܡܢܟܣܬ ܐܬܢܣܒ ܚܠܦ
ܦܘܪܩܢܢ: ܠܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܥܡ ܡܠܬܐ.
[277] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 566.
[278] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 567-68.
[279] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, p. 157 (cf. trans. eidem, p. 93).
[280] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 568. ܦܒ̈ܪܐ ܕܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܕܐܪ̈ܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܬܐܘܦܣܟܝܐ ܚܫ̈ܝ ܐܠܗܐ
[281] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, p. xliii.
[282] As we have seen in section 2.1.3.7, Babai argued similarly.

two natures or *qnome,* but because of his single *parsopa of filiation,* one authority, one will and one *mdabbranuta.*[283]

> (Christ our Lord) is perfect God and perfect man in one filiation and in one majesty: one authority, one will, one *mdabbranuta.*[284] […] And just as it is recognized from the opposite statements concerning Christ, that Christ has two natures and two *parsope*; similarly, in what is said about one Christ, Son of God, it is recognized that Christ is 'one'; he did not become (one) by the unity (ܚܕܝܘܬ) of nature and *qnoma*, but by the one *parsopa of filiation*, one authority (ܫܘܠܛܢܐ), one *mdabbranuta*, one power (ܚܝܠܐ), one majesty.[285]

The concept of one will (Monothelitism) in Christ was not new to the Church and this statement seems to be in line with at least the work of Nestorius and Narsai. Nestorius' Syriac work had argued that the two wills and the energies had become one in the *parsopic* union, which was contrasted with a union according to nature.[286] A text attributed to Narsai also mentioned the union in one love and one will, while he differentiated elsewhere between the divine nature of the Word and its *mdabbranuta* such as love, will and power.[287] Babai's concept of the *parsopa of mdabbranuta* may have been in line with this.

Morony suggests that the above formulations of the 612 debate might have amounted to later Monothelite positions.[288] It is not impossible that this official statement has been used later by some parties when responding to the efforts by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius to find a Christological formula that would be acceptable to the various Churches.[289]

The bishops also presented sayings from several Greek teachers who had indicated that only one part of the Trinity and only one human is involved and that the transcendent nature of God has to be separated from the passible human nature. The bishops further explained that each nature needs its *qnoma*, which is individual. A nature can have many *qnome* but a *qnoma* cannot contain many natures, unless they have become one nature before and are henceforth called one *qnoma.* This probably referred to the one human nature that consists of body and

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[283] Braun, *Synhados,* pp. 324-29; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale,* p. 575 (cf. trans. p. 592).
[284] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 574.
ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܫܠܡܢܐ: ܒܚܕܐ ܒܪܘܬܐ ܘܒܚܕܐ ܡܪܘܬܐ: ܘܚܕ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ: ܘܚܕ ܨܒܝܢܐ: ܘܚܕܐ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ.
[285] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 575.
ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܠܘܩܒܠܝܘܬܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܐܡܝܪ̈ܢ ܥܠ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܬܝܕܥܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܘܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܗ̣ܝ [ܕܡ̣ܢ]
ܕܥܠ ܚܕ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܡܝܪ̈ܢ: ܡܬܝܕܥܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܚܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܠܐ ܗ̇ܘܐ ܒܚܕܝܘܬ ܟܝܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ
ܕܒܪܘܬܐ. ܘܚܕ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ. ܘܚܕܐ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ. ܘܚܕ ܚܝܠܐ. ܘܚܕܐ ܡܪܘܬܐ܀
[286] Bedjan, *Le Livre d' Héraclide*, p. 96. See also section 1.5.3.
[287] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 5, 129-30 (cf. trans. eidem, p. 74). See also section 1.8.
[288] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 357.
[289] See also below section 2.6.3.

soul. However, the eternal and finite nature cannot become one nature with the created and finite.

> For the nature cannot exist without a *qnoma*. Because the *qnoma* is individual (ܝܚܝܕܝܐ), many *qnome* can exist in one nature, but two or many natures cannot exist in one *qnoma*, unless they first become one nature before and are also called one *qnoma* because of the union of the nature. If it is then impossible that the eternal nature and the infinite Spirit becomes one nature with the created (ܒܪܝܐ), corporeal and finite nature, it is known clearly that Christ is two natures and two *qnome*. And because of the inseparable union between his divinity and his humanity, he is believed in one Sonship, majesty and authority (ܫܘܠܛܢܐ).[290]

Concerning the third question whether Mary had born a man or God, the bishops stated that she should be called *Christotokos* because this term referred to both natures, while the terms *theotokos* and *anthropotokos* would deny either his manhood or his divinity.[291] This is similar to Nestorius' and Babai's conclusions, but does not express their reconciling preliminary remarks.

Despite their efforts, the bishops of the Church of the East did not succeed in convincing Khosrau. The records of the debate were concluded with the remark:

> After they had written and brought before the king this Confession of Faith together with the connected debate, they received no answer from him. (This was) either because paganism was unable to understand the doctrine of the knowledge of the fear of God and therefore despised it, or because the king of kings was favourable to Gabriel, the leader of the faction of the heretical Theopaschites.[292]

In Babai's version, Khosrau first read the Creed and also the considerations and objections (ܦܪ̈ܐ ܘܗܦ̈ܟܬܐ) with which the bishops of the Church of the East could defend their theological position as compared to that of their opponents. After this, Khosrau informed the East Syrian delegation that they were not allowed to elect a catholicos as long as they preached the name of Nestorius. He then also gave the three questions the delegation could respond to later.

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[290] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 578-79, (cf. trans. p. 597); Braun, *Synhados*, p. 329.
[291] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 571. This report is identical to the one in Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 7, pp. 163-64.
[292] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 580 (cf. trans. p. 598); Braun, *Synhados*, p. 331; Reinink, 'Life of George', pp. 187-88.
ܟܕ ܕܝܢ ܗܢܐ ܫܘܕܥܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܥܡ ܕܪܫܐ ܕܢܩܝܦ ܠܗ ܟܬܒܘ ܘܐܩܪܒܘ ܠܩܕܡ ܡܠܟܐ: ܦܘܢܝ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܡܢ ܩܕܡܘܗܝ، ܠܐ ܢܣܒ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܘ ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܐܫܬܟܚܬ ܚܢܦܘܬܐ ܠܡܕܪܟܘ ܪܚܢܐ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܕܚܠܬ ܐܠܗܐ܆ ܘܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܒܣܪܬ ܒܠܥܘܣ: ܐܘ ܡܛܠ ܕܢܩܦ ܗܘܐ ܡܠܟ ܡܠܟܐ ܒܐܦ̈ܘܗܝ ܕܓܒܪܐܝܠ ܪܫ ܦܠܓܐ ܕܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܡܚܫܝ̈ ܐܠܗܐ܀

But when it handed in its treatise, Khosrau did not react further. Meanwhile, Gabriel of Shigar accused the leader of the delegation and machinated to have George imprisoned.[293]

In 612, the doctrine of two natures, two *qnome* and one *parsopa* in Christ became normative within the Church of the East. Other definitions were no longer acceptable, although the doctrine was not found in the *Synodicon Orientale* before and remained challenged within the Church during the seventh and eighth centuries. In line with the supposed Miaphysite tactics, other positions having become unacceptable within the East Syrian community, their adherents were inclined to switch to the Miaphysite position. This process had not been completed in early Muslim Iraq.[294] Moreover, as we have seen above, the final process of separation between the Church of the East and the Miaphysites seems to have taken place during the second decade of the seventh century. Thereafter the villages tended to be completely Miaphysite or ‘Nestorian’ (a term which by now generally referred to those adherents of the Church of the East who defended the doctrine of two natures and two *qnome*), although this ‘Nestorian’ identity was still not fully integrated within the Church of the East.[295]

Richard Payne states that the promoters of the two *qnome* formula started to refer to their beliefs as an ‘orthodoxy’ (ܐܘܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܐ) rather than with the terms ‘correct belief’ (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬܐ), ‘true faith’ (ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ,), or ‘correct faith’ (ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬܐ), which had prevailed before.[296] In fact, ‘orthodoxy’ had already appeared before in the second letter of the learned Mar Aba concerning the ‘orthodoxy of faith’ (ܐܘܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ).[297] In support of Payne’s view is the fact that it also appears in the canons for the Great Monastery under Babai’s predecessor Abbot Dadishoʿ.[298] Later, moreover, it appeared in the letters of his successors Ishoʿyahb II and Ishoʿyahb III.[299] However, this Greek loan word was also used by Ishoʿyahb III’s opponent Sahdona, who was accused of rejecting the two-*qnome* doctrine. It seems therefore more likely that this term had become familiar in the Church of the East as part of the increasing influence of Greek words in Syriac.[300]

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[293] Hoffmann, *Akten Persischer Märtyrer*, pp. 106-108.
[294] Reinink, ‘Tradition and Formation’, pp. 230-50. See also above, section 2.1.3.1.
[295] Morony, ‘Religious Communities in Late Sasanian and Early Muslim Iraq’, pp. 249-50.
[296] Richard E. Payne, ‘Persecuting Heresy in Early Islamic Iraq: The Catholicos Ishoyahb III and the Elites of Nisibis’, in Noel Lenski and Andrew Cain (eds.), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2009), p. 399; Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 54 and 65.
[297] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 540.
[298] The first canon of the second Abbot, Dadishoʿ (588-604), required a strict adherence to the ‘orthodox Fathers’ (ܐܒܗܬܐ ܐܘܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܐ) Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius. Jullien, *Le monachisme en Perse*, p. 144.
[299] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, p. 171; Rubens Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, pp. 77; 97; 124; 128; 136; 142; 156; 170; 202; 222; 228 and 288.
[300] See section 1.1.2, which mentioned the thoroughgoing adoption of Greek learning by Syrian theologians from the fourth to seventh century. On Sahdona, see section 4.2.2.

2.4. Political and religious developments among Arabs around 612

By the time of the 612 debate, many people may have become confused and tired of all the (religious) wars and the ever more complicated and abstract Christologies, especially because they were often accompanied with fierce intolerance. The conflicts probably affected most towns as the ownership of churches and monasteries including their extended property could be contested. It is not clear to what extent this also affected the Arab tribes living nearby. Peter Brown holds that the political and religious debates also reached the Arabian Peninsula where the disadvantages of Judaism and Christianity could be discussed freely without a government dictating 'Orthodoxy'.[301] It was probably in such an atmosphere that around 610 the Arab Muhammad started to proclaim his faith in the one God which led to a different view on the position of Christ. Referring to the earlier revelations of God to the Jews and the Christians, who would have forgotten or even falsified parts of God's message, Muhammad professed that the recent revelations presented God's final instruction to mankind.[302]

Around the same time, somewhere between 604 and 611, the Battle of Dhu Qar had shown that Arabs were able to defeat the Sasanians, and several tribes in varying alliances were already fighting for hegemony over the fertile grounds around Hira and the trade routes leading to it. The Meccan Quraysh, to which tribe Muhammad belonged, were significant players in these rivalries.

It is not sure to what extent the participants of the 612 debate were already aware of such developments among Arab groupings. Conversely, it is highly contested to what extent Muhammad may have been in contact with Christians and Jews, and to what extent the Islamic tradition may have been influenced by them.[303] Griffith argues that Muhammad and the

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[301] Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000* (2nd edn, Oxford; 2005), pp. 286-88.

[302] Sura 5:14-19. Later Muslim commentators could find allusions to Muhammad in the Bible, claiming that the Christians had corrupted the original. So would Muhammad have been the Paraclete announced by Jesus (John 14:16, 26; 16:7; Sura 61:6 calls the one who comes after Jesus 'Ahmad'), G.C. Anawati, ''Īsā', *EI*[2] 4 (1978), pp. 81-86.

[303] This accords with the general uncertainties concerning Muhammad's life. The heterogeneous material on his biography contains many inconsistencies. This has led to scepticism among western scholars, although there is also a tendency to return to the traditional view. Wim Raven still warns, however, that many early biographical works offer considerable intertextuality, which makes them less suitable for historiography. Most of the accounts on nascent Islam and Muhammad stem from later times, have many discrepancies and 'the later the sources are, the more they claim to know about the *Prophet*'. Wim Raven, 'Biography of the Prophet', *EI*[3] (Brill Online, accessed 18 Feb. 2014). Robert Hoyland gives an overview of the various approaches to the divergent stories and

Qurʾanic milieu was in contact with Arabic-speaking Christian communities, which generally belonged to the three main denominations. Muhammad's audience would have been thoroughly familiar with Jewish and Christian narratives from various sources which circulated in the first third of the seventh century. The Syriac liturgy and the *memre*, which contained many (apocryphal) Biblical narratives and offered thus an 'interpreted Bible', would have been presented in *ad hoc* oral Arabic translations.[304] It has also been suggested that Muhammad may have reacted to specific forms of Christianity he encountered in Arabia.[305]

According to Islamic tradition, the revelations Muhammad received were collected under his first successor ʿAbu Bakr (632-34). Several versions of this collection, which became known as the *Qurʾan*, came then into circulation.[306] In general, recent scholarship agrees with the traditional claim that the literary canonization of the Qurʾan took place at the order of ʿUthman (644-56) and that a greater standardization in orthography was effected towards the end of the century.[307] It has been argued that some verses are the product of a redaction after Muhammad's death, integrating older verses.[308] This timing brings us more into the period of Ishoʿyahb III, and the Christology of the Qurʾan will therefore be discussed later.

Muhammad's revelations enticed affiliated groupings to wars against people who did not accept them. Within a few decades, Arab tribes conquered a huge area and continued to dominate it. Unfortunately, most of what we know of the conquests starting in the first half of the

concludes that the main problem is the absence of criteria for the authenticity. Robert G. Hoyland, 'Writing the Biography of the Prophet Muhammad', *History Compass* 5 (2007), pp. 1-22.

304 Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the 'People of the Book' in the Language of Islam. Jews, Christians and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 26-27 and 91-95.

305 See for instance C. Jonn Block's comments on the Trinity, given below, section 3.5.2. However, Sidney Griffith is critical of such attempts to connect Qurʾanic statements about Christians with (ancient) heresies. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 36-37.

306 Islamic tradition offers an account of events that has been questioned in several ways by western scholars, who have offered alternative hypotheses. Harald Motzki provides an overview of these and concludes that the earliest accounts cannot be proved, but that both the first reports on the collections on Abu Bakr's behalf and the canonisation under ʿUthman can be dated relatively early (around 700). This fact undermines some elements of the alternative hypotheses, which still deserve further study. Harald Motzki, 'The Collection of the Qurʾān. A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments', *Der Islam* 78 (2001), pp. 1-31, esp. p. 31; idem, 'Alternative account of the Qurʾān's formation', in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾan* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 59-76; Claude Gilliot, 'Creation of a fixed text', in Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾan*, pp. 44-48.

307 A comparison with the earlier codices preserved shows that there are only some variant readings. For instance Kufa had its own version, while another version was known in most parts of Syria. In general, these variant readings show no great deviations. W. Montgomery Watt and Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'an* (Edinburgh, 1970, repr. 2005), pp. 44-45. See also: Aziz Al-Azmeh, 'Canon and canonisation of the Qurʾan, in the Islamic religious sciences', in *EI*[3] (Brill Online, accessed 13 June 2014); Gilliot, 'Creation of a fixed text', pp. 44-48; Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 98-99.

308 Karl-Friedrich Pohlmann, *Die Entstehung des Korans, Neue Erkenntnisse aus Sicht der historisch-kritischen Bibelwissenschaft* (Darmstadt, 2012), pp. 193-94.

seventh century derives from chronicles that were compiled more than two centuries later.[309] The chronicles were based on accounts compiled since 750, which in turn depended on the oral tradition of the conquerors. These later chronicles were to remain the basis for a traditional view of the history of nascent Islam that was tightly connected with the conquests. Although the chronicles provide ample information, they suffer sometimes from one-sidedness, lack of precise dates, and many uncertainties and inconsistencies. This has given rise to numerous studies attempting to reconstruct what actually may have happened. Several scholars moreover have studied the various factors, both ideological and material, that may have caused or fostered the campaigns in the first half of the seventh century.

Where already many data on ‘neutral’ and ‘hard’ facts (such as the date of the fall of a city, participants), are missing or inconsistent, further difficulties arise when one tries to consider what kinds of ideological and sociological motivations drove the people who were engaged in the conquests. This difficulty stems not only from the scarcity of contemporary (Muslim) documents before 692, but also from the fact that later reports—either positive or negative—tend to be rather biased for various reasons.

The present section focusses on the possible religious motives of the first conquests. This study is not aimed at investigating the early developments of nascent Islam per se, but is an attempt to give some background information relevant to what the catholicoi of the Church of the East may have experienced, concentrating on Ishoʿyahb III. This attempt necessarily includes all the uncertainties just mentioned.[310]

Most modern scholars agree that Arabs formed the determining factor in the early conquests. Arabs could adhere to several religions, including Christianity and Islam. This situation would have changed and Islam would have been favoured towards the end of the seventh century, with other religions being disqualified more.[311] Karl Friedrich Pohlmann holds that a considerable number of converts from various Christian and Jewish milieus must have belonged to the Qurʾanic community and that differences would have caused internal debates, especially after Muhammad’s death.[312]

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[309] Two histories of the conquests that became famous and authoritative among Islamic historians were written by the Persian Baladhuri (d.892) and by Tabari (d.923), who was born in Iran. The similarly authoritative biography of Muhammad was written by Ibn Ishaq (d. around 767), the grandson of a Christian of Kufa who was brought as slave to Medina. The original text is lost, but an edited version made by Ibn Hisham (d.829 or 834) is still extant, while Tabari also uses another edited version for his history.

[310] On the first conquests in the Arabian Peninsula see the subsequent section 2.5. Further developments will be discussed in Chapter 3 and section 5.1-2.

[311] Robert Hoyland, review of Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam,* in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44 (2012), pp. 573-76.

[312] Pohlmann, *Die Entstehung des Korans,* pp. 185 and 194.

Fred Donner emphasizes the 'ecumenical' character of an 'apocalyptically oriented pietistic movement', which he calls the 'Believers movement', as this would have been the name the members of the movement applied to themselves. This movement would have aimed at attaining salvation on the Last Day by forming a 'community of the righteous' and spreading this as far as possible. Its believers (المؤمنون, *al muminun*) adhered to several basic beliefs: the oneness of God; the Last Day (or Day of Judgment); God's messengers or prophets; the Books God sent to the people of which the Qurʾan is the last and best; God's angels. To these basic beliefs belonged the religious duties, which have remained the same. They consisted of regular ritual prayer; giving of alms; fasting during the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca. After 692, this movement would have changed into a more restrictive 'Islam' in which more emphasis was given to the role of Muhammad and the Qurʾan and most of its adherents started to use the term 'Muslim' as self-description.[313]

Robert Hoyland's description resembles that of Donner although he criticizes its 'excessive emphasis on the role of religion' and the idealization of the putative ecumenical part.[314] The close connection of some Christians and Jews with the initial movement reminds him of Muhammad's *Constitution of Medina*, a document meant for 'a single politico-religious community uniting different religious denominations' that fought for God. The first Caliphs would have extended this policy—which brought together fighting men from different religions into one *umma* fighting the enemies of God—into an expanding *jihad* state. Because of the religiously pluralist background of the participants, with each religion having its own binding book, the leaders would only have neutral titles that did not point to a specific religion.[315]

Hoyland's warning against an idealization of an early ecumenical character seems appropriate. The example of Christians and Jews from Najran being expelled from the Peninsula under ʿUmar (634-44)[316] seems to indicate that whatever early tolerant or ecumenical attitude there may have been at the very onset, it faded away rather quickly. The *ridda* wars, which will be discussed below, also show that the treaties with the Quraysh originally had a strong political component. The idea of an ecumenical community itself seems to be problematic. This relies too much on the assumption that the boundaries between Islam versus Judaism and Christianity were already clear cut and Islam was perceived as a distinct confession. The pos-

[313] Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, pp. 57-61 and 194-205.
[314] Hoyland, review of *Muhammad and the Believers*, pp. 573-75.
[315] Robert Hoyland, 'New documentary texts and the early Islamic state', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 69.3 (2006), pp. 409-410. On the *Constitution of Medina* see also idem, *Seeing Islam as others saw it. A survey and evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian writings on early Islam* (1997; repr. Princeton, 2007), pp. 548-49 and 554-57.
[316] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, p. 135.

tulated tolerance may therefore have been foremost the result of the uncertainty and vagueness concerning many aspects of the new movement which was still in development, but attracted many because of its familiar elements.

For example, apocalyptical thinking was also apparent in other religions of the time.[317] It is of most interest for our study of the new movement that the Last Day was considered to be imminent, which would be followed by a new Era of Righteousness with believers inheriting what had belonged to the sinners. Donner holds that this view would have enticed people to follow the rules of the new movement in order to be rewarded in both heaven and the present world.[318] It may moreover be noteworthy that the apocalyptic expectations in nascent Islam had led some groupings to expect the Mahdi ('the rightly guided one'). It is, however, not sure how much earlier this expectation had originated before the eighties of the seventh century, when the role of this Mahdi started to be claimed by various rival parties, such as the Umayyads and Shiʿites, and later the Abbasids as they held that the Mahdi was a descendent of Muhammad. The arrival of the redeemer Mahdi would coincide with the time of the descent of Jesus, who thus remained to be closely connected to Islamic expectations of salvation.[319]

2.5. The first Arab conquests in the Arabian Peninsula

The victory of the Bakr at the Battle of Dhu Qar may have had an immense psychological impact on the Arabs.[320] Within Islamic tradition the date of the battle has been associated with various key dates in Muhammad's life, ranging from his birth to events some months after the battle of Badr (623-25). When the Sasanians were occupied with their disputed succession in Ctesiphon (628-32), the Bakr of the north took the opportunity to raid the cultivated land again, headed by al-Muthanna b. Haritha, a leader of a subdivision, the Shayban.[321] Hira was eventually taken in 633 by this al-Muthanna and by the successful Arab commander Khalid b. al-Walid, who belonged to the Quraysh.[322]

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[317] Michael G. Morony, 'Apocalyptic Expressions in the Early Islamic World', *Medieval Encounters* 4.3 (1998), pp. 175-77.

[318] Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers,* pp. 80-81.

[319] By the end of the tenth century it was still a commonly accepted doctrine that the Mahdi would rule the Muslim community and would surrender his leadership to Jesus. W. Madelung, 'al-Mahdī', *EI*[2] 5 (1986), pp. 1230-38; idem, 'S͟hīʿa', *EI*[2] 9 (1997), pp. 420-24; Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers,* pp. 183-84.

[320] Veccia Vaglieri, 'D͟hū Ḳār', p. 241. See also section 1.14.4.

[321] Caskel, 'Bakr b. Wāʾil', pp. 962-64.

[322] Fred M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), p. 86.

Meanwhile, without the Lakhmid control over many tribes in the Arabian Peninsula, the Sasanian influence weakened here as well. The supremacy of the Quraysh over other tribes increased correspondingly, especially after these started to cooperate with Muhammad's movement in 630. The resistance of many Jews in Medina to Muhammad's claim to be the final messenger of God led to their expulsion or elimination. The problems with these Jews and with Christians in the eastern and southern districts in the Peninsula led to more negative comments in the Qurʾan on both, while they were hardly distinguished from each other.[323]

The situation of Bahrain and Oman is of particular interest because two decades later Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III had to deal here with rebellion in his Church. The leaders of Oman would have converted to Islam in 630 and all the Arabs in Oman would have followed them. New governors were appointed.[324] As we have seen in Chapter 1, the Sasanians had divided Bahrain in two regions. Thus, at the beginning of the Islamic conquests in the Arabian Peninsula, the coastal area of Bahrain seems to have been governed by a Persian *marzban* named Siboht, while the tribes living in the rest of Bahrain were governed by the Tamim al-Mundir b. Sawa, who had a lower position.[325] The two leaders of Bahrain would have received Muhammad's message in 630 or 632.[326] Each leader probably reacted differently to proposals to ally with Muhammad, but the precise circumstances are not clear.[327] Al-Mundir b. Sawa became the prophet's governor in Bahrain.[328] Daniel Potts suggests that he would have converted to Islam in order to overthrow Siboht and to put an end to any Sasanian control. Instead of paying taxes to the Sasanians, al-Mundir b. Sawa is said to have concluded a treaty with Muhammad whereupon he collected taxes (dates and grain) for Medina. Because the Arabs in Bahrain renounced Islam as soon as the Prophet died, this conversion to Islam would have been mainly politically motivated.[329]

The Christians in Bahrain, including the Taghlib from Syria and Mesopotamia, whom Khosrau II had deported to Bahrain, would also have received Muhammad's message, but refused to convert and therefore paid one gold coin (*dinar*) each. Baladhuri reports that these

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[323] F. Buhl and A.T. Welch, 'Muḥammad1. The prophet's life and career', *EI*^{2} 7 (1993), pp. 360-76.
[324] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* pp. 62-63, with references.
[325] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* p. 62, with references. According to Muhammad b. Ishaq, al-Mundir b. Sawa belonged to the Qays. Donner describes him as 'a chief of the Darim clan of Tamim', who became the Prophet's tax agent over Bahrain. *Donner, Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia*, p. 70. M. Lecker also reckons him to the Tamim. Lecker, 'Tamīm b. Murr', pp. 172-76. Aloys Sprenger gives both possibilities. Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad*, pp. 375-76.
[326] As many of these late reports were intended to establish the relative authority of the diverse tribes, their accuracy can be debated. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* pp. 62-63.
[327] W. Caskel holds for instance that both governors welcomed Muhammad's messages. Caskel, 'ʿAbd al-Ḳays'.
[328] Lecker, 'Tamīm b. Murr', pp. 172-76.
[329] Daniel T. Potts, 'Northeastern Arabia. From the Seleucids to the Earliest Caliphs', *Expedition* 26.3 (1984), p. 30.

'heretical' Arabs converted later to Islam, but that Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians kept their own faith. Muslims now had to pay only a tenth, the others more.[330] Aloys Sprenger comments among other points that after the mighty Tamim would have acknowledged the supremacy of the Quraysh and converted at the beginning of the year 630, many others would have followed for fear of them. Before this time, the Tamim would also have attacked Hira, but without success. In Bahrain, Muhammad would have requested only that believers voluntarily gave a part of their income as alms (the *zakat*) for the poor in the region. Later, Muhammad would have changed the voluntary contribution into a prescribed taxation and in 631 demanded that all taxes collected should be sent to Medina. This led to upheaval among the population. Siboht initially would have been one of the strongest opponents to this new taxation while being supported by a Tamim leader.[331]

After Muhammad's death in 632, other tribes that had allied with him also revolted and refused to pay the taxes. This rebellion is called the *ridda* (apostasy), as it traditionally has been connected with a strong religious element.[332] The example of Bahrain suggests that it may have been a reaction to the new taxation rules of 631 and was therefore mainly political. Donner also holds that the resisting tribes mainly opposed the growing political control of the Islamic state. In some cases there was an additional religious element with alternative prophets being presented.[333] One of them was the prophetess Sadjah, who belonged to a Tamim clan and was also related to the Taghlib through whom she may have become acquainted with Christianity.[334]

The Hanifa (a branch of the Bakr) in al-Yamama, central Arabia, followed the prophet Musaylima. Their resistance against Medina was probably the strongest.[335] They had been acting as vassals of the Sasanians and conducted Persian caravans from Yemen to Iraq. When the Hanifa tried to extend their influence in the northern parts of this trade route, they met with opposition from the Tamim, who had a similar function. Probably before 628, Siboht had aid-

[330] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* pp. 62-63.

[331] Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad,* pp. 364-82. Unfortunately, Sprenger does not always specify his sources.

[332] Donner, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia,* p. 151.

[333] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests,* pp. 85-86. Ioan also holds that the *ridda* was not an apostasy of Islam, but rather a fight against the dominance of Medina and the local governors that were supported by Medina. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* p. 65.

[334] V. Vacca, 'Sad̲j̲āḥ', *EI*^{2} 8 (1995), pp. 738-39.

[335] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests,* pp. 266-67. Musaylima may have been influenced by missionaries coming from Bahrain. He spoke of the kingdom of heaven, and taught belief in resurrection and the Judgement of the Last Day. For his followers he prescribed formal prayers three times a day, fasting, and abstinence from wine. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs,* pp. 285-86; W. Montgomery Watt, 'Musaylima', *EI*^{2} 7 (1993), pp. 664-65.

ed these Hanifa and broken the Tamim oppression.[336] One might therefore suggest that Siboht's damaging action against the Tamim may have incited the rebellion of the Tamim governor in Bahrain. After 628, the Hanifa also started negotiations with Muhammad. Their prince did not become a Muslim and would have demanded a share in the political control of Arabia. After his death in 630, one part of the Hanifa sided with the Muslims, but another part revolted under Musaylima who strove for independence from Persia, Byzantium and Medina. Abu Bakr, Muhammad's first successor, sent therefore a large army.[337]

Another battle took place in Bahrain around its capital city Hagar, residence of Siboht. The resistance here was broken and the survivors fled to Dairin and Hatta, which were also taken with the help of Khalid b. al-Walid.[338] According to Tabari, the *ridda* was suppressed in A.H. 12 or 13 (roughly between 633-34).[339] It took, however, still some time before all tribes in the region were subdued. Oman and Bahrain were fully conquered between 636-39 and the Archipelago between 634-40.[340]

The Arab resistance in Bahrain and Oman on the Persian Gulf is also of most interest because of the ties of these regions with Sasanian Hira.[341] One of the factors contributing to the opposition to Medina in Bahrain may be found in the death of governor al-Mundir b. Sawa, which reportedly took place within a few months after the Prophet died. Some groupings may have taken this as an opportunity to strengthen the bonds with Hira again.[342] These 'rebels' gathered in Qatif (a large oasis), Hagar and Hatta, and it seems that there were several plans to return the kingship to the family of al-Mundir, the former kings of Hira. Although the reports vary in details, they concur that this project was soon made void, possibly in 633.[343]

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[336] Caskel, 'Bakr b. Wāʾil', pp. 962-64; W. Montgomery Watt, 'Ḥanīfa b. Lu<u>dj</u>aym', *EI*^{2} 3 (1971), pp. 166-67.

[337] Montgomery Watt, 'Musaylima'. Ovidiu Ioan similarly holds that former representatives of the Sasanian Empire, who had lost prestige among the Arabs after Khosrau's defeat, now sought Muhammad's support in order to keep their position. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* p. 64.

[338] Donner, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia*, pp. 54, 134 and 139.

[339] Donner, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia*, p. 151.

[340] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, p. 99.

[341] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* p. 65.

[342] To these rebelling tribes would have belonged parts of the ʿAbd al-Qays, Qays b. Thaʿlaba and parts of the Bakr. But where the al-Qays would quickly have sided with the Muslims again and joined them in their fight against the 'rebels', the resistance of the Bakr increased. According to one account offered by Tabari, the Rabiʿa also participated. Here, the various reports which are often biased and selective, combined with the confusion in the names of the tribes, make it again very hard to reconstruct the events. See also Kindermann, 'Rabīʿa and Muḍar'.

[343] According to one report by Tabari, al-Mundir b. al-Numan b. al-Mundir was killed in Bahrain after he had reigned for eighth months until Khalid b. al-Walid marched on Hira. Mundir was further described as 'the last survivor of the house of Nasr b. Rabʿia'. C.E. Bosworth comments, however, that Mundir never reigned in Hira. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* pp. 64-65; Donner, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia,* pp. 134-40; Bosworth, *Ṭabari. The Sasanids,* pp. 372-73.

The proposal to raise a close relative of Nuʿman III as king may have corresponded with a current idea that Arab rule was in hands of the Lakhmids.[344] The *Chronicon Anonymum*, the East Syrian chronicle written around the 660s, also makes this connection when it describes the invading Arabs as 'sons of Ishmael' whose leader was Muhammad (ܡܚܡܕ),[345] and Hira as the former seat of 'King Mundir, surnamed the "warrior"; he was sixth in the line of the Ishmaelite kings'.[346] The connection being made between Arabs and 'Ishmaelites' seems moreover to be in line with common Christian practices.[347]

The suggestion that (some) Arabs preferred to establish a relationship with the Lakhmids may also be seen in a story about the Lakhmid princess Hind. After the Arab conquests, the governor of Kufa, al-Mugira b. Shuʿba is said to have proposed marriage to her. Hind, presumably ʿAdi's widow who lived as a nun in her monastery, is said to have declined, answering: 'You only would like to say: "I assumed the rule of Nuʿman b. al-Mundir and married his daughter"'.[348] The practice of taking a wife from respectable clans in order to foster loyalty was widely used and therefore this story—if historical—does not surprise. More remarkable, however, is Hind's claim that he aspired to the position of Lakhmid Kings. The rejected suitor is moreover reported to have confirmed an agreement between Ishoʿyahb II and ʿUmar (634-44), which is not impossible but contested.[349]

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344 Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, pp. 32 and 249; idem, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 188 and 141-42.
345 Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 30.
346 Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 38-39.
ܘܚܝܪܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܐܬܬܩܝܡܬ ܒܝܕ ܡܘܢܕܪ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܓܢܒܪܐ. ܘܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ ܫܬܝܬܝܐ ܡܢ ܕܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܐܝܫܡܥܝܠܝܐ܀
This description probably referred to Mundir I (418-62), Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 47-48.
347 Theresia Hainthaler examines the use of the term 'Ishmaelites' and concludes that there is no clear connection in the Bible between Arabs and 'Ishmaelites', but that it appears in Jewish sources of the second century before Christ. This was gradually taken up by the Christians. Jerome explained for instance at the beginning of the fifth century that the Ishmaelites (or Saracenes or Hagarenes) stemmed from Ishmael, son of Abraham and Hagar. Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 15-20, with references. See also Peter Schadler, 'Changing identities? Arabs and "Ishmaelites"', in Greg Fisher, *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, pp. 367-72.
348 Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Hira*, pp. 123-25. Tabari describes al-Mugira b. Shuʿba as one of the most prominent companions of the prophet and as governor of Basra. He also served as governor of Kufa in two terms: from 642-46 (or 640-44) and from 661-69/70. Gautier Juynboll (trans.), *The History of al-Ṭabari* 13. *The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, and Egypt. The Middle Years of ʿUmar's Caliphate A.D. 636 – 642 / A.H. 15 – 21* (New York, 1989), pp. 54-56. See also Chase F. Robinson, *Empire and Elites after the Muslim Conquest. The Transformation of Northern Mesopotamia* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 7, 59, 79 and 131-32; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 103, 56, 344, 471.
349 Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 344.

2.6. Ishoʿyahb II of Gdala (628-45)

2.6.1. Life and works

The death of Khosrau in 628 not only accelerated the changing balance of power among the Arab tribes, but also had an effect on the Church of the East. The new Persian emperor Sheroy granted the Church of the East a catholicos at last. After Babai had refused the position, Ishoʿyahb II was unanimously chosen in the same year.[350]

Several works have been attributed to Ishoʿyahb II: letters, *memre*, a hagiography, a commentary and three books: one against opponents of religion, another on synonyms and the last on sacraments. Only four works ascribed to him are preserved: a profession of faith, a possibly inauthentic letter to Barsauma; a liturgical hymn (‘Our Father’) preserved in Arabic; and an extensive Christological letter that belonged to the *Synodicon Orientale* but is not incorporated in the editions of either Jean Baptist Chabot or Oscar Braun. It was presumably written when he was bishop of Balad, but after 612.[351]

Ishoʿyahb II stemmed from Gdala in Bet ʿArabaye, situated about 60 km west of Nineveh. He belonged to the group that had left the school of Nisibis and he headed for Balad, another bishopric in Bet Arabaye dependent on Nisibis. The bishop of Balad made him professor in a new school in the vicinity and when the bishop died, Ishoʿyahb II succeeded him. This might have taken place around 610, but before the 612 debate in which he participated as bishop. He probably also had contributed to its profession of faith.[352]

As we have seen above, the *Chronicle of Seert* reports that Ishoʿyahb II suffered as bishop from attacks by local authorities and Miaphysites seeking for more influence. Khosrau is said to have driven Ishoʿyahb II into exile which ended in 628.[353] Subsequent to his election in 628, his installation took place in the same year in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Ishoʿyahb II founded many new schools and old ones were reopened, as the Church needed a well-trained clergy in order

[350] Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 93, p. 555; Budge (trans.), *The book of Governors*, Chapter 1.35, pp. 115-16.
[351] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 82-92 with a description of the manuscripts. Sako has edited (pp. 165-92) and translated (pp. 139-64) Vatican Syriac 599. His ‘édition critique’ actually consists of annotated copies of Vat. Syr. 599. This manuscript is not always easy to read. The use of diacritical signs has been mainly reduced in this study to those which may signify different meanings. References to either edition or translation will follow Sako’s verse numbers.
[352] Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 83, p. 529.
[353] Sako doubts the authenticity as no other source mentions this, but Morony accepts it. Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 93, pp. 554-55; Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 63-66; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 351.

to defend its position against the regime, Miaphysites and dissidents. Ishoʿyahb II also sought the good will of the local authorities.[354]

After the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius's (re)conquest of substantial parts of the Persian Empire starting in 622, with the fall of Mosul-Nineveh in the beginning of 628 and the death of Khosrau, the political situation in Persia deteriorated quickly, despite moments of relative stability. Queen Boran, Khosrau's already third successor reigning from c.629 to 630, asked Ishoʿyahb II to renew the truce with the Byzantine Emperor, following the practice of former kings. Ishoʿyahb II was accompanied by metropolitans and bishops: Cyriacus of Nisibis, Gabriel of Bet Garmai, Paul of Adiabene and Maruta of Gustra. In his report, Thomas of Marga added the names of the bishops John of Damascus, Ishoʿyahb of Nineveh (the next catholicos) and the latter's future opponent Sahdona, the bishop of Mahuze d-Ariwan.[355] Heraclius met Ishoʿyahb II in Aleppo in 630 where they had doctrinal discussions. The twelfth century *Chronicle of Seert* gives the following elaborate account of events around this embassy, which should be read with caution.[356]

According to this Chronicle, Ishoʿyahb II declared that his belief was the same as that of the 318 Holy Fathers in Nicaea, and he wrote out Nestorius' confession of faith for Heraclius. Heraclius is said to have been impressed by Ishoʿyahb II's wisdom and to have requested several times to celebrate mass and to take Communion together with him. Ishoʿyahb II would have insisted that the name of Cyril of Alexandria, 'the cause of the schism and master of the impious doctrine' would not be read. Heraclius consented.[357]

Ishoʿyahb II would further have given a profession of faith in writing, which has been preserved in an Arabic account of ʿAmr.[358] According to the *Chronicle of Seert*, Heraclius asked thereupon why they did not write 'Mary, Mother of God',[359] but 'Mary, Mother of Christ, who is God and Man'. Heraclius would have approved of Ishoʿyahb II's explanation and pro-

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[354] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* p. 67.
[355] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* p. 68, with references.
[356] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 93, pp. 557-60.
[357] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 45-49 (edition and French translation), quotation esp. p. 48.
[358] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 48 and 82-83. See also pp. 59-60 for the Arab version of the Creed with French translation in appendix 1; Henricus Gismondi (trans.), *Maris Amri et Slibae. De Patriarchis Nestorianorum Commentaria ex codicibus Vaticanis* 1. *Maris Ibn Salomonis* (Rome, 1899), p. 31.
[359] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 93, p. 559. Addai Scher comments that in the margin was written 'God forbid'. The context seems to indicate that the title 'Mother of Christ' was part of Ishoʿyahb II's creed, but this does not appear in Amr's version, which only calls Mary 'The Holy Virgin', see Sako, *Lettre christologique*, p. 59. This cast further doubt on the account of the *Chronicle of Seert*, which goes on to relate that the Catholicos answered: 'We do not rule out the truth or clear proof. When we say "Mary, Mother of Christ", we imply that the birth happened to Christ, in whom are united the humanity and the eternal Word, who has descended and lives in him. But if we would say "Mary, Mother of God", we would subtract the name of the humanity by removing its nature.'

fession as did a select group of his entourage that had received a copy. Then Heraclius gave magnificent presents and sent the embassy back in honour.[360]

The mission was successful in several aspects: there was peace for some years and the Church of the East expanded to China. More metropolitan sees were added officially to the Church: Hulwan (Iran), Herat (Afghanistan), Samarkand (Uzbekistan).[361] But at home Ishoʿyahb II is said to have been criticized for this embassy.

The *Chronicle of Seert* reports that the Eastern Fathers actually had learned that the Greeks had refused Ishoʿyahb II's condition that the name of Cyril be not read, but the names of Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius instead. Many of them rejected him as catholicos as they thought he had sold his faith out of love for money and presents. He was even attacked during the gathering organized for his return. Two letters attributed to Barsauma, Bishop of Shush, are included in the *Chronicle*. In the first letter Barsauma explained that there is a huge difference between them and the Greeks, with Chalcedon being the cause of the schism because it ratified Ephesus (that banned Nestorius) and united the two natures in one single *qnoma*. Ishoʿyahb II is then accused of accepting the definition of Mary as Mother of God (in his essence), abandoning the Creeds of Nicaea and Constantinople and even following Chalcedon because Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius were not mentioned. This conduct would foster heresy. Barsauma reminded Ishoʿyahb II of Paul of Nisibis who would have expressed his faith before Justinian: 'Christ has two natures and two *qnome*; this is the doctrine of my fathers, my doctors, my predecessors and my guides, the 318.'[362]

Barsauma's second letter emphasized that faith has to do with the 318 Fathers (Nicaea) and 150 Fathers (Constantinople) and not with the ambition to please emperors. Ishoʿyahb II should understand that he had been used by Heraclius, who cunningly had made Ishoʿyahb II's profession Chalcedonian. Barsauma also referred to the difficult times due to upheaval of the empires and the irruptions of invaders.[363] Ishoʿyahb II is said to have realized his faults and to have written a humble and remorseful letter, explaining that he always sought peace, stating his faith again and asking for absolution. He formulated his orthodox faith as follows:

> I never confessed or acknowledged in Jesus Christ other than two natures: the eternal nature, the new nature and two *qnome*, united, joined, equal, without separation, confusion, change and corruption.[364]

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[360] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 93, pp. 557-60.
[361] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 102.
[362] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 93-94, pp. 560-68, quotation esp. p. 568.
[363] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 94, p. 570-75.
[364] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 94, p. 578.

The *Chronicle* concluded that Barsauma praised him and thus the problem seems to have been solved.[365] Louis Sako treats this controversy between Ishoʿyahb II and Barsauma with caution and questions the authenticity of the letters. He also suggests that the *Chronicle of Seert* could have confounded this controversy with the one between Sahdona and Ishoʿyahb III.[366] These warnings should be taken seriously; nevertheless, one of Sako's arguments, that Ishoʿyahb III, a defender of orthodoxy, did not criticize Ishoʿyahb II and even wrote him three letters full of respect, can be countered by the fact that the same tradition reports that Ishoʿyahb II had already been rehabilitated.[367]

Ishoʿyahb II experienced the Arab invasions. He left Seleucia-Ctesiphon after its destruction by the Arabs in 637 and went to northern Karka d-Bet Slok (Kirkuk) which was not yet occupied and stayed there.[368] He died around 646. The *Chronicle of Seert* reports he fell ill in Gedan where he was buried and that the family of Yazdin took care of his funeral.[369]

The lengthy Christological letter, which Ishoʿyahb II presumably wrote before he was Catholicos but after 612, is addressed to Abraham of Bet Madaye, an abbot in the region of Nineveh.[370] Ishoʿyahb II answered questions concerning recent debates between Abraham, Elia and Henanishoʿ on the *mdabbranuta* and on the *parsopa* of Christ. When Ishoʿyahb II visited them at their monastery close to Nineveh, they had informed him that Abraham would accept Ishoʿyahb II's view given by letter. As we have seen, the Arab Elia who came from Hira and his nephew Henanishoʿ had worked closely together with Babai. They had assisted him when he came back to the Izla Monastery and wanted to restore discipline, but after this had caused too much resistance, they left and founded a new monastery.[371] The discussion of Abbot Abraham with Elia and Henanishoʿ might therefore be seen in the context of Babai's supervision of the northern monasteries that probably included their Christology.

Both Ishoʿyahb II and Henanishoʿ had contributed to the 612 debate. Ishoʿyahb II must have been regarded as an authority in these matters, because Abraham accepted Ishoʿyahb II's view, although he did not know him.[372] Apparently, the LU of Babai had not yet been completed or was considered insufficient. The letter might also have been a means to prove or propagate his own Christology, although there are no further indications substantiating this assumption. In his answer, he appealed to unity among believers, but encouraged discussions

[365] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 94, pp. 576-79.
[366] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 70-72.
[367] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 69-72.
[368] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 79-81; Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 31.
[369] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 105, p. 625.
[370] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* p. 93.
[371] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 142-43, with references.
[372] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* No. 22, p. 168.

to 'examine the approved discourse on faith and to be armed with the right words against the enemies of truth', and he also corrected the view of Abraham.[373]

2.6.2. Intellectual background. Theology and Philosophy

Ishoʿyahb II had studied at the School of Nisibis which he left out of protest against Henana. Sako recognizes several explicit sources in Ishoʿyahb II's letter: the Bible in the version of the Peshitta; the theological letters of Gregory of Nazianzus (105-106); the Nicene Creed (192-207) and the Acts of Chalcedon (42-48 and 87-88). Some sources are implicitly referred to: the Creed of Ishoʿyahb I; the Creed and debate of 612; the *Categories* of Aristotle (50-55) and—in the context of the Nicene Creed—the *Catechetical Homilies* of Theodore of Mopsuestia (193-95). Ishoʿyahb II used the same terminology as Babai without mentioning him. There are similar ideas expressed in the LU of Babai, but Sako cannot determine who is inspired by whom.[374] Ishoʿyahb II underpinned his Christology with philosophical-theological argumentation. He offered definitions of the main Christological terms (50-62) and elaborated them with philosophical arguments (64-106).[375]

2.6.3. Main challenges

Initially, Ishoʿyahb II faced challenges similar to those with which Babai had been confronted. He still had to fight deviant interpretations on Christology in his own Church.[376] But as seen in the reported reaction of Barsauma, his own Christology could also be questioned and he might have had to confirm that he adhered to the two natures - two *qnome* - one *parsopa* doctrine not long after his embassy in 630. Meanwhile, the position of the Miaphysites had improved since 628 when they were officially recognized and were allowed to appoint their own leader, the Maphrian. Maruta, who had become Maphrian in Tagrit between 628/29 and 649, campaigned against the Church of the East. He wrote a treatise to refute 'an impious pamphlet of him who is called Catholicos of the Nestorians'. This referred most probably to Ishoʿyahb II.[377]

Heraclius' conquest of important parts of the provinces where the Church of the East had developed under Sasanian rule, noted above, necessitated the Church accommodating to this situation. According to Morony it was preoccupied with Heraclius's attempts to win the sup-

[373] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 141-43; quotation esp. No. 17, p. 143 (cf. ed. p. 167).
[374] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 95-96.
[375] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 101-109.
[376] Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', p. 220.
[377] Nau, 'Histoires d'Aḥoudemmeh et de Marouta', p. 92.

port of these provinces by seeking a doctrinal reconciliation. After Ishoʿyahb II had reached an agreement with Heraclius one of the delegates in his embassy, Sahdona, defected and would have condemned the followers of Theodore before Heraclius at Jerusalem. Morony holds that the policy of Heraclius not only gave the Church of the East the impression that they shared their Dyophysite belief with the Church in the West (as he rightly notices in the work of Ishoʿyahb II's successors Ishoʿyahb III and George I): this impression would have also even reinforced their 'two natures and two *qnome* in one *parsopa*' doctrine, with Mary being called the Mother of Christ and not of God. As will become clearer later, however, this suggestion seems to be an oversimplification of the situation.[378]

Heraclius seems to have concentrated most on reconciliation with the Miaphysites, who had obtained key positions in the former Byzantine provinces during the decades Khosrau had reigned there. Christological formulas that would be acceptable to both Miaphysites and Chalcedonians were proposed. After 630, Heraclius started to promote in Syria a formula that was developed by Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople (610-38) and that Heraclius had already adopted in 622. This doctrine of Monenergism recognized two natures, but one energy or operation (ἐνέργεια). Each denomination could find confirmation for its own teachings, but unfortunately, the term 'energy' proved to be very ambiguous. When this resulted in strongly opposite and sometimes absurd conclusions, Heraclius promulgated the *Ekthesis* in 638 forbidding any further discussion on one or two energies in Christ. From now on, he promoted Monothelitism (the notion of one will).

Several Miaphysite circles were influenced by Heraclius's propaganda and some major monasteries in West Syria, like Bet Maron, Emesa, Mabbug and many in southern Syria rallied to Monenergism. However, many Miaphysites distrusted Heraclius's intentions and feared a restoration of the Chalcedonian hierarchy, especially after he had handed the Great Church of Edessa to the Chalcedonians and required acceptance of Chalcedon. In 632/33 the Monenergist compromise was also strengthened by the support of influential Persian Christians, but weakened again when the settlement between Rome and Persia was broken.[379] The Christological letter of Ishoʿyahb II (probably written before 628) may have been a reaction to discussions on the number of activities (or energies) because it mentioned two forms that 'act

[378] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest,* pp. 357-58. As we will see in section 4.2, it was the same Heraclius who would have supported Sahdona, the defender of one *qnoma.* Moreover, section 4.1 and 5.3.3 indicate that both Ishoʿyahb III and George I may have been aware of some recent theological developments in the Byzantine Empire, which gave them the impression (or hope) that it also accepted the doctrine of two natures and two *qnome.*

[379] Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement,* pp. 344-52; Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-700),* pp. 62-69.

everything in one *parsopa*’. It is highly doubtful that during his embassy to Heraclius in 638, Ishoʿyahb II would have acknowledged only one will and one activity in Christ.[380]

Heraclius also negotiated with several Persian kings whom he supported and ‘adopted’. This also seems to have been the case with Hormizd IV (630-32) who is reported to have sent his own infant son as ‘servant’ to Heraclius, in the eschatological hope he could become the saviour of the Empire after the ‘steel era’ of Khosrau II. This son, however, was murdered soon after Heraclius had recognized Hormizd IV as Persian King.[381]

The political situation became even more complicated with the start of the Arab conquests. The ‘irruptions of invaders’ Barsauma spoke of, most probably referred to these Arab invasions.[382] Syria was invaded in 633.[383] According to the *Chronicon Anonymum*, the Arabs destroyed every town in Syria.[384] The *Chronicle of Seert* reports negotiations of Ishoʿyahb II with the first Arab Caliph Abu Bakr (632-34).[385] Ishoʿyahb II would have sent a letter to Muhammad first, but after Muhammad’s death he would have sent Gabriel, bishop of Maishan, to Abu Bakr. Gabriel offered him a considerable sum of gold and informed him of the situation of the Christians in the Persian Empire and what they had to endure because of the Arab armies. This would have annoyed the Persian Emperor Yazdgard (632-51). After Ishoʿyahb II had defended his difficult situation, the Emperor would have commanded him to write to the Christians close to the Arabs that they should stay away from them and to reward those who combatted them.[386] Although Sako doubts this tradition, the possibility of such negotiations cannot be excluded. The distrust of Yazdgard is understandable; especially because many Christian Arabs did not resist the invading Arabs.

ʿUmar succeeded Abu Bakr in 634 and imposed new taxes.[387] There seem to have been some exceptions to these, such as the treaty Muhammad is supposed to have closed with Christians in Najran (in south Arabia) that guaranteed them some privileges, exempting

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[380] Although the *Chronicle of Seert* reports that Ishoʿyahb II’s profession acknowledged one will and one activity (فعل), and Morony states the same (he speaks of ‘one acting force’), the version preserved does not seem to justify this. Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 93, p. 560; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest,* p. 358; Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 49 and 59-60.
[381] Schilling, *Die Anbetung der Magier und die Taufe der Sāsāniden,* pp. 295-98.
[382] Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 94, p. 575.
[383] See section 3.4. for a more detailed description of the invasions.
[384] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 31.
[385] Fred Donner points out that although later tradition called all successors of Muhammad ‘caliph’ (*khalifa,* successor), this term is not attested before the end of the seventh century. Before that time, they bore the title ‘commander of the believers’ (أمير المؤمنين, *amir al-mu’minin*). Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers,* pp. 98-99. For sake of convenience, however, the present study sometimes follows the later tradition.
[386] Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 104, pp. 618-20; Gismondi (trans.), *Maris,* pp. 31-32.
[387] Scher, ‘Histoire nestorienne 2.2’, Chapter 104, p. 620.

priests and monks from capital taxes.[388] Many of the treaties that were claimed later by Christians were forgeries inspired by this story. It is therefore highly doubtful that Ishoʿyahb II really obtained from Muhammad similar privileges for the Church of the East or that they were confirmed by ʿUmar (634-44) or even expanded by ʿAli (656-61), because the Christians would have fed his troops.[389]

Towards the end of his life, Ishoʿyahb II tried to solve problems of the believers in Nisibis with their Metropolitan Cyriacus, his former ally in his elevation to the throne of catholicos. The Nisibenes are said to have despised Cyriacus for his greed and character and asked Ishoʿyahb II to give them a new metropolitan. Ishoʿyahb II went thereupon to Nisibis in vain. After Nisibis fell to the Arabs about 640 and Cyriacus died, his enemies brought charges against Cyriacus and his followers to the *amir* (ܐܡܝܪܐ) of the city, who allowed them to plunder the residence of the metropolitan. Ishoʿyahb II then consecrated Barsauma, the director of the school in Hira, as bishop, but he was not accepted either.[390]

2.6.4. Ishoʿyahb II of Gdala's Christology

Ishoʿyahb II's Christological letter is a systematic treatise on the *mdabbranuta* in the body of the Saviour in answer to a question on the *parsopa* by Abbot Abraham:

> How should we confess the fact of the union of Christ? If we say 'one *parsopa*', to whom belongs this one *parsopa* spoken of: to the divinity or to the humanity, or to these two natures together?[391]

To Ishoʿyahb II the real issue behind this question seems to have been the one-*qnoma* doctrine, which he rejected. Abraham held that the unique *parsopa* of Christ belonged to the divine nature because 'the human nature was elevated (ܐܬܥܠܝ) to the *parsopa* of God the Word by the union'. Consequently, the human nature of Christ would not suffer in its own *parsopa*, but in the (divine) *parsopa* that had assumed him.[392] Henanishoʿ and Elia on the other hand had argued that Christ has one common *parsopa* of two natures',[393] which was the traditional An-

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388 Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 101-103, pp. 601-18.
389 Winkler, 'Zeitalter der Sassaniden', p. 42; Baum, 'Zeitalter der Araber (650-1258)', also in Baum and Winkler, *Die Apostolische Kirche des Ostens*, p. 43.
390 Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 79-81; Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 31; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 354.
391 Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 18, p. 167. ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܠܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܡܘܕܝܘ ܚܝܘܬܗ ܕܐܬܚܝܕܘܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܐܢ ܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܢܐܡܪܝܘܗܝ، ܐܝܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܗܘ ܡܬܐܡܪ. ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ. ܐܘ ܠܬܪܬܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܟܚܕܐ.
392 Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 19, p. 167. ܐܝܟ ܗܿܝ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ. ܐܬܥܠܝ ܠܗ ܒܚܘܝܕܐ ܠܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ. ܘܒܗ ܡܬܚܫܢܐ ܘܣܒܪ ܥܠ ܘܡܬܥܠܠ. ܘܠܐ ܡܚܫ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܕܝܠܗ. ܡܬܚܫܚ. ܐܠܐ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܢܣܒܗ.
393 Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 20, p. 167. ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܠܚܘܝܐ ܕܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܡܫܘܬܦ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ.

tiochene point of view. Ishoʿyahb II agreed with the latter two and argued from the definition of the two natures and the two *qnome* being united in one unique *parsopa* of Christ.[394]

Without further argumentation Ishoʿyahb II stated that Abraham's view would imply that the human *qnoma* was also elevated to the divine *qnoma* and that consequently there would be one *qnoma* in Christ. He further argued that if the *parsopa* belonged only to God the Word, the humanity of Christ would be impaired and moreover that it would contradict the Biblical passages that spoke of God the Word coming down first to make himself human.[395] Ishoʿyahb II required therefore the acknowledgment of the right order: the 'inhomination' (ܡܬܒܪܢܫܘܬܐ) of God the Word precedes the 'deification' (ܡܬܐܠܗܘܬܐ) of man (No. 207). These concepts applied as such only to Christ. Sako points at similar expressions used by Gregory of Nazianzus, whom Ishoʿyahb II in verse 105 respectfully called 'the theologian' (ܬܐܘܠܘܓܘܣ).[396] Babai had presented a similar view that deification was only possible for Christ and that the term 'ascend' referred to Christ's humanity, while 'descend' referred to his divinity.[397]

The view that the one *parsopa* would belong only to the divinity, was already rejected by Nestorius, who held that he followed the Nicene Fathers in ascribing the *parsopa of the union* primarily to the two natures in Christ, and not only to God the Word as Cyril and the Miaphysites would have done. However, Ishoʿyahb II did not mention Nestorius in his argumentation. Referring to Phil. 2:5-7, he argued that it was not the human *qnoma* that was elevated to the divine, but that God the Word had lowered himself first to the form of a servant in order to be seen (146).

> The blessed Apostle did not elevate here the human *qnoma* so that he could be seen in the *parsopa* of the divinity, but he preached and showed that out of love God the Word went down towards the form of a servant, put it on and dwelt in it. And he assumed it so that he could be seen in his *parsopa*.[398]

Possibly, Ishoʿyahb II also emphasized this order as it would imply that the divine *qnoma* already must have formed a conjunction with Christ's human *qnoma* before he was elevated and that is was therefore another indication that Christ has two *qnome* in the common *parsopa*.

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[394] According to Sako and Winkler the leading thesis of the letter is 'One indeed is the only Son of God'. Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 104; Sako, *Lettre christologique*, pp. 97 and 168 (No. 26).
ܚܕ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ.
[395] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, Nos. 98-104, p. 176.
[396] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, Nos. 107, 186, 189 and 207, (cf. trans. pp. 152, 160, 162). No. 207:
ܒܚܠܘܦܝܢ ܡܬܝܕܥܐ ܗ̇ܝ، ܕܒܚܘܫܒܢܗ̇ ܡܬܒܪܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܠܬܐ: ܠܡܬܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܕܗ̇ܘ ܕܒܗ ܐܬܠܒܫ.
[397] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 6/20, p. 210 and *TV*, p. 299. See also above, section 2.2.2.
[398] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 146, p. 182 (cf. trans. p. 156).
ܗܐ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܥܠ ܒܡܠܬܗ ܠܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܥܠܝܐ: ܕܢܬܚܙܐ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܐܟܪܙ ܘܚܘܝ،.
ܕܐܬܢܚܬ ܒܚܘܒܗ ܥܠ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ. ܘܠܒܫܗ̇ ܘܥܡܪ ܒܗ̇. ܘܢܣܒܗ̇ ܠܘܬܗ، ܕܢܬܚܙܐ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܗ.

The whole discussion seems to be another expression of the logical and semantic difficulties in interpreting the concept of God the Word who had assumed the form of a man (servant). It seems feasible that some within the Church of the East, as for instance Abraham, interpreted 'assumed' as 'elevated', which seems to have allowed other conclusions. As we will see, Ishoʿyahb II's contemporary Bishop Sahdona, who propagated the one *qnoma* in Christ, also argued that 'everything is elevated to his assumer'. As it is not certain when exactly Sahdona wrote this, it is not sure whether or not Ishoʿyahb II was already fighting his ideas.

Very similarly to Babai, Ishoʿyahb II further explained that the Word assumed one concrete, individual human nature (*qnoma)* and not the abstract or general nature.[399] Sako seems to conclude that Ishoʿyahb II differed from Babai and other theologians of the Church of the East in admitting that not only the glory and power, but also all passions and weaknesses were related to the unique *parsopa* of Christ, because of the union (118-23).[400] Ishoʿyahb II actually stated that 'all passions and weaknesses which humanity endures according to nature are attributed to the divinity according to *parsopa*'.[401] This does not seem to differ from the view of his predecessors who also held that the exchange of the properties of both natures takes place at the level of the *parsopa*, while strictly distinguishing between what naturally belongs to each nature and what is according to the one *parsopa* (or *mdabbranuta*).[402]

In his description of former Christological positions, Ishoʿyahb II rejected those which were in his view heretical, in particular Severus's teaching of one nature and one *qnoma* (35-36), Paul of Samosata's assigning these to the humanity (38), and the party of Arius's teaching of one nature and one composite *qnoma* (ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܪܟܒܐ) (39). Interestingly, he confined himself to those theologians anathematized by the Byzantine Synods and did not mention Cyril here, although the *Chronicle of Seert* reports that he rejected Cyril. However, Ishoʿyahb II did criticize the formula 'one *qnoma*' of the Council of Chalcedon, because he considered it impossible that one *qnoma* has many natures (45-49). He did not completely reject its defenders though, which possibly had to do with prospects in the negotiations with Heraclius.

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[399] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, Nos. 78-79, p. 174 (cf. trans. pp. 149-50); cf. Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 10, pp. 207-208, see also section 2.2.6.
[400] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 122-24 and 135-36. Sako states on pp. 135-36 that Ishoʿyahb II 'admet (à la différence de Babai le Grand et des autres théologiens syro-orientaux qui émettent des réserves) que toutes les passions et les faiblesses, comme la gloire et la puissance, se rapportent à l'unique personne du Christ a cause de l'union'. Sako further remarks that Ishoʿyahb II remained silent in his Christological letter about Nestorius, Theodore of Mopsuestia and the term *theotokos*. It is not clear whether this is representative for his view as the references may have been made in other works which are no longer extant. As we have seen, the citing of these theologians was important in the discussions he is said to have had with Heraclius.
[401] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* No. 118, p. 178.
ܐܠܐ ܟܠ ܚܫܐ ܘܡܚܝܠܘܬܐ. ܕܣܒܠ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܒܟܝܢܐܝܬ: ܥܠ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܡܬܬܚܫܒܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐܝܬ.
[402] See for instance Babai, section 2.2.5.

> Although those who gathered at the Synod of Chalcedon were clothed with the intention of restoring the faith, yet they too slid away from the true faith: owing to their feeble phraseology they provided a stumbling block for many. Although, in accordance with the opinion of their own minds, they preserved the true faith with the confession of the two natures, yet by their formula of one *qnoma*, it seems, they tempted weak minds. As an outcome of the affair a contradiction occurred, for with the formula ‘one *qnoma*’ they corrupted the confession of ‘two natures’, while with the ‘two natures’ they rebuked and refuted the ‘one *qnoma*’. Thus they found themselves standing at a crossroads, and they wavered and turned aside from the blessed ranks of the orthodox (ܐܪ̈ܬܕܘܟܣܐ), yet they did not join the assemblies of the heretics; they both pulled down and built up, while lacking a sure foundation for their feet. On what side we should number them I do not know, for their terminology cannot stand up, as Nature and Scripture testify: for in them many *qnome* can be found in a single nature, but it has never been the case, and it has never been heard of, that there should be various natures (ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܡܫܚ̈ܠܦܐ) in a single *qnoma*.[403]

Sako holds that the creed Ishoʿyahb II is said to have written for his meeting with Heraclius in 630 is probably authentic because it does not deviate strongly from his Christological letter, and that it is moreover very close to the Creed of Constantinople, despite some differences.[404] However, Ishoʿyahb II’s creed also hints more or less at later creeds accepted in the West. It opens by stating that we believe in one single Trinity. One of its *qnome*[405] descended for our salvation and assumed a human nature, so that his divinity could be manifested. He is not an ordinary man, but perfect God in the nature of his Father and perfect man in his humanity. He is a single *parsopa* in an admirable and incomprehensible union, without confusion or division, in two true natures. In his divinity he is not subject to suffering. The creed does not mention *qnoma* in a Christological context, but Sako points out that the expression ‘two true natures’ may have referred to the two *qnome*, because his letter defines *qnoma* as a ‘true nature’.[406] It can further be noticed that while the Nicene term ‘Only-Begotten’ and the additional Antiochene term ‘First-Born’ do not appear in the creed, the letter applies both terms in Theodorian argumentation that the Nicene Fathers thus had acknowledged two natures.[407]

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403 Sako, *Lettre christologique,* Nos. 45-49, pp. 147 and 170-71; English translation with small adjustments after Brock, ‘Christology of the Church of the East’, p. 162.
404 Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 82-83. See also pp. 59-60 for the Arab version of the Creed with French translation; Gismondi (trans.), *Maris,* p. 31.
405 The Arabic version uses a cognate word: الأقانيم, *aqanim*.
406 Sako, *Lettre christologique,* pp. 59-60 and 82-83; Gismondi (trans.), *Maris,* p. 31.
407 Sako, *Lettre christologique,* Nos. 192-95, pp. 160-61 (cf. trans. pp. 187-88).

2.6.5. Ishoʿyahb II of Gdala's Christological terminology

2.6.5.1. Kyana

Kyana signified for Ishoʿyahb II the abstract nature. He defined it simply: 'Nature is this: something that exists naturally by itself.'[408] He referred to foreign experts who called it a common *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ ܟܘܠܢܝܬܐ) that exists as an image of the mind and has nothing by which it can be qualified.[409] Ishoʿyahb II further argued that the natures in Christ are not general, because this would imply the whole Trinity and all humanity. Instead, these natures are individual, which he identified with the individual *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ) and *qnoma*.[410]

2.6.5.2. Qnoma

Sako also holds that to East Syrians *qnoma* denotes substance and concrete reality, in contrast to something general and nominal. The *qnoma* particularizes the general nature. Therefore God the Word united himself with the concrete nature (*qnoma*) of Jesus and not with the general human nature.[411] This line of thought was similarly expressed by Babai and in the 612 debate. In verse 50-61, Ishoʿyahb II gave several definitions of *qnoma* starting with his own:

> The *qnoma* is the manifestation of *kyana*. And that which the *qnoma* is naturally, the very same the nature appears to be *qnomatically*. Many Greeks consider therefore *qnoma* the definition of nature.[412]

Ishoʿyahb II also gave other definitions for *qnoma* he was aware of, such as *bar adsha* (ܒܪ ܐܕܫܐ) and individual *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ) (52-53). He further referred to grammarians who speak of the 'true' (ܫܪܝܪܐ) and 'named' (ܡܫܡܗܐ). According to Ishoʿyahb II, 'true' is something that makes the nature known, which is *qnoma*, while 'named' makes the common *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ ܕܟܠܐ) known, which is nature.[413] Ishoʿyahb II concluded that all these definitions have in common that *qnoma* is nature with potentiality (ܚܝܠܐ),[414] without a definition of one or many. 'But in all these different compositions of one word comes forth the same mean-

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[408] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 51, p. 171, ܘܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ. ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܡܢܗ ܘܠܗ ܒܟܝܢܐܝܬ.
[409] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, Nos. 70-71, p. 173 (cf. trans. pp. 101-105).
[410] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 78, p. 174 (cf. trans. pp. 149-50).
[411] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, p. 103. An almost identical description appears in one of the quotations ascribed to Nestorius, with an addition in the margin. Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 11, p. 186 (cf. trans. eidem, pp. 110-111).
[412] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 50, p. 171. ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܘܬ ܓܠܝܘܬܗ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܕܟܝܢܐ. ܘܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܩܢܘܡܐ ܟܝܢܐܝܬ. ܗܘ ܗܘ ܒܗ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܟܝܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܐܝܬ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ: ܬܚܘܡܗ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܐܡܪܘܗܝ، ܠܩܢܘܡܐ.
[413] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 55, p. 171. ܠܘܬ ܓܪܡܛܝܩܘ ܡܬܐܡܪ: ܫܪܝܪܐ ܘܡܫܡܗܐ. ܫܪܝܪܐ ܗܘ ܡܘܕܥ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܕܡ ܕܡܘܕܥ ܠܗ ܠܟܝܢܐ. ܗܘ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܩܢܘܡܐ. ܡܫܡܗܐ ܕܝܢ: ܡܕܡ ܕܡܘܕܥ ܠܗ ܠܐܘܣܝܐ ܕܟܠܐ. ܗܢ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܟܝܢܐ.
[414] ܚܝܠܐ is mostly translated as 'power' in this study.

ing and from these all is seen that *qnoma* is nature with power (or: potentiality), without a definition of one or many.’[415]

The fact that Ishoʿyahb II interpreted the *qnoma* in relation to a potentiality or power of the nature seems to be in line with the transitive use of the word *qnoma* that was ascribed to Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius, but is also reminiscent of Ephrem who held that the true existence (*qnoma*) depended on its being active.[416] Ishoʿyahb II’s distinction between ‘true’ and ‘named’ (55, given above) also bears resemblance to that of Ephrem, as is the view that something needs a *qnoma* before it can be named (70).

Ishoʿyahb II explained that a *qnoma* must have a nature in order to receive accidents, because the *qnoma* cannot be separated from nature and is invisible by itself (67-69). Ishoʿyahb II also held that *qnoma*, the individual *ousia*, is the real (or ‘true’, ܫܪܝܪܐ) nature, because it is independent and that therefore, if the *qnoma* is one, the nature must be one also. He further held that the *qnoma* is necessary to perceive the nature, which is in line with the arguments of Paul of Nisibis given to Justinian.[417] He added that the ‘common *ousia* only exists as an image in the mind’ (71).

> (67) For a *qnoma* without a nature is unable to receive a good or bad accident (ܓܕܫܐ), because it cannot be separated from nature and be seen on its own, (68) because the true *qnoma* of humanity is invisible without a true (ܫܪܝܪܐ) nature of humanity, and no *qnoma* of the divinity can be understood without the true nature of divinity. (69) Similarly, no nature whatsoever can be united to knowledge or sensation unless in its *qnoma* or *qnome*. (70) This is why also the foreign experts say that this individual *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ ܗܕܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ), which is the *qnoma*, is more precious than the common (ܓܘܢܝܬܐ) *ousia*. For until this (sc. the individual *ousia*) is present, this common (*ousia*) does not have something to be named. (71) To say in truth, the proper *ousia* (ܐܘܣܝܐ ܕܝܠܢܝܬܐ) is also the individual, for this is the *qnoma*. Because the so-called common *ousia* cannot exist subsistingly (ܒܩܢܘܡܐܝܬ), but exists as an image of the mind; it is therefore only seen to exist when there are various *qnome*. (72) But once the connection with the various dissolves, then it ceases (to exist). As for the individual *ousia*, it truly subsists in itself (ܒܗܘܬܗ ܒܫܪܪܐ ܩܢܝܡܐ). (73) You have seen that the *qnoma* is the true nature. Therefore, if (there) is one *qnoma*, (there) also must be one nature.[418]

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[415] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, No. 56, p. 171. ܘܒܗܠܝܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܪ̈ܘܒܒܐ ܡܫܬܠܡܢܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܚܕ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܗܘ ܡܫܠܡܐ ܕܗܪܟ ܒܗܘܢ. ܘܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ. ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܥܡ ܚܝܠܐ. ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܬܚܘܡܐ ܕܚܕ ܘܣܓܝܐܐ.

[416] See above, section 1.2.2. and 1.4.4.

[417] According to the Miaphysite report, Paul would have stated that ‘any nature there is, is by its proper *qnoma* known and manifest to perception, vision and the contemplation of the intellect’. See also above, section 1.11.

[418] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, Nos. 67-73, pp. 172-73.

67 ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܨܝܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܐ. ܕܢܩܒܠ ܓܕܫܐ ܛܒܐ ܐܘ ܒܝܫܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦܠܐ ܕܢܬܦܪܫ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܡܨܥܝܐ: ܘܢܬܚܙܐ ܒܓܒܗ ܘܠܗ.

68 ܡܛܠ ܕܠܝܬ ܠܡܚܙܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ: ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܡܬܒܩܝܘ. ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ.

69 ܗܟܢܐ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗܘ: ܡܨܐ ܕܢܬܚܝܕ ܠܝܕܥܬܐ ܐܘ ܠܪܓܫܬܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ. ܐܘ ܒܩܢܘܡ̈ܘܗܝ.

As we have seen, Babai was similarly influenced by the distinction between 'common *ousia*' and 'individual *ousia*' that was introduced by the Cappadocian Fathers. Ishoʿyahb II's argumentation further resembles at least the close interdependency between nature and *qnoma* in their being known, as expressed by Babai in text X.[419] In comparison with Ephrem who also seems to have interpreted *qnoma* as indicative of some 'true' or 'real' existence, Ishoʿyahb II seems to be tautological in speaking of a 'true *qnoma*'.

Both Babai and Ishoʿyahb II held that the *qnoma* subsists in itself and moreover that it is the *qnoma* that receives accidents.[420] Their contemporary Henanishoʿ similarly formulated the relation between *qnome*, properties and accidents.[421] He argued that the humanity of Christ needed a *qnoma* to receive perfect knowledge and to partake in almighty power. Moreover, Christ must have had a *qnoma*, for he who has no *qnoma*, does not pay for guilt.[422] Henanishoʿ's many brief arguments were offered in the form of continuous series of questions ('if…., how…?') and statements ('if…., then…'). The same pattern appeared to a lesser degree in the debate and Ishoʿyahb II's letter.

Ishoʿyahb II's argumentation that the common nature exists only as an image of the mind as long as there are several *qnome*, which are subsistent in itself, raises the question whether he referred only to a philosophical principle current in his time or whether he also implied the more mystic meanings Babai had connected to the concept of *qnoma*. Although such mystic connotations of *qnoma* do not seem to reoccur in Ishoʿyahb II's letter, this particular connection between a nature that needs a *qnoma* in order to be temporarily visible in the mind, might be a reflection of Babai's notion of a temporary vision of the divine nature in the pure individual soul (also brought in connection with *qnoma*).

An answer to this question may be found in Ishoʿyahb II's exegesis of Heb. 1:2-3. The Peshitta uses here the word *qnoma* in relation to the purification of sins. As we have seen

70 ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܦ ܣܢܝܩܐ ܕܠܒܪ ܐܡܪܝܢ. ܐܘܣܝܐ ܗܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܩܢܘܡܐ: ܡܦܪܫܐ ܗܝ، ܦܫܝܛ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܟܝܢܝܬܐ. ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܗܢܐ ܐܬܬܠܒܫ. ܠܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܗ، ܟܝܢܝܬܐ: ܕܟܠ ܡܢ ܐܬܬܠܒܫܬܗ.
71 ܘܐܝܟ ܕܒܬܪܝܨܐ ܠܦܝܠܣܘܦܐ. ܐܘܣܝܐ ܫܠܝܛܬܐ ܗܢܐ ܗܝ، ܣܢܝܩܬܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܩܢܘܡܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܗܝ، ܕܡܬܚܙܝܢܘܬܐ ܟܝܢܝܬܐ. ܠܐ ܡܬܝܕܥܢܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܪܥܝܢܐ ܗܝ، ܕܙܒܢܐ. ܘܗܝܕܝܢ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ. ܐܡܬܝ، ܕܐܝܬ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ.
72 ܘܡܛܠ ܕܐܡܪܬ، ܒܗܘܢܐ ܕܡܬܝܕܥܢܐ. ܒܠܚܘܕ ܠܗ. ܐܘܣܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ. ܗ، ܒܝܬܗ. ܒܬܪܝܨܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ.
73 ܫܘܝܘܬ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܗܘܘ ܚܕܐ ܬܪܝܨܐ: ܡܕܡ ܐܝܟ ܚܕ ܗܘ ܩܢܘܡܐ: ܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܘ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܐܦ ܚܕܐ.

[419] See Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 10, pp. 207-208. See also above, section 2.2.4.

[420] Cf. Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/17, p. 159.

[421] Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 8, pp. 171-72 (cf. trans. eidem, p. 102). The discussion on the relation between *qnome*, properties (or attributes), and accidents also played an important role in the theology of the subsequent centuries. These discussions on *qnoma* show a considerable impact from Aristotelian and Neoplatonic concepts, which cannot be studied further here. Nevertheless the material offered in this study may assist a more in-depth investigation of the employment and development of these philosophical concepts within the Christology of the Church of the East and its possible influences on Islamic theology.

[422] Abramowski and Goodman (trans.), *Nestorian Collection*, 8, pp. 102-103.

above, *qnoma* can refer to the soul and ascetics may thus have laboured to purify their *qnoma* from all sins. It is therefore interesting to see how Ishoʿyahb II interpreted this verse (180).[423]

Ishoʿyahb II first quoted this verse almost identically to the Peshitta version (differing only in one preposition). He then explained that it indicates that there are not two Sons or Christs despite his two contrasting natures, because Christ is both equal to God's essence and to creation. Ishoʿyahb II then altered the wording of the verse, in order to emphasize that Christ is both the image of God's essence, and has a human *qnoma*. It is therefore not improbable that Ishoʿyahb II also meant to indicate that Christ had actually purified his human *qnoma*. Ishoʿyahb II might have been the first to explain Hebrews 1 in such a manner, as this does not appear in Babai's LU and CE.[424] Ishoʿyahb II commented:

> (178) (the Apostle) added: '*And through him he* made *the worlds, he is the radiance of his glory and the image of his essence*'. (179) By these is proclaimed his equality in essence and his equality in creation with his Father. (180) And while he again reminded us of his human suffering he said: '*After he had made* in himself (ܒܩܢܘܡܗ) *purification for our sins, he sat down at the right (hand) of the Majesty in heaven*'. [...] (182) (the Apostle) confesses that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is one. And he does not divide between two Sons or two Christs; but he is '*the radiance* of the Father and *the image of his essence*' and 'established heir and sacrified for sinners and *he sat down at the right (hand)* in the *qnoma* of his humanity'.[425]

Ishoʿyahb II further compared the unity of the Church, the body of Christ, to a composite *qnoma*. This can be seen in an indirect way. When he quoted Christ's words: 'Grant them to be one as we are one', he stated that Christ prayed for the establishment of the Church.[426] To Ishoʿyahb II this unity within the Church was marked by believers knowing the Son of God,

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[423] Heb. 1:2-3, Peshitta version: [...] ܕܠܗ ܣܡ ܝܪܬܐ ܕܟܠܡܕܡ. ܘܒܗ ܥܒܕ ܠܥܠܡܐ. (3) ܕܗܘܝܘ ܙܠܓܐ ܕܫܘܒܚܗ ܘܨܠܡܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܬܗ. ܘܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ ܒܚܝܠܐ ܕܡܠܬܗ. ܘܗܘ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܥܒܕ ܕܘܟܝܐ ܕܚܛܗܝܢ ܘܝܬܒ ܥܠ ܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܪܒܘܬܐ ܒܡܪ̈ܘܡܐ.
Cf. NRSV: 2. but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. 3. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

[424] Babai referred several times to these verses, especially to verse 3. In *Memre* 6 of the LU he argued that Paul called radiance 'image' and this in turn '*qnoma* of the Son' who is of the same substance (ܒܪ ܐܝܬܘܬܗ) as his Father.

[425] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* Nos. 178-180 and 182, trans. pp. 159-60 and ed. pp. 185-86.
178[...] ܐܘܣܦ ܡܫܠܡܐ. ܘܒܗ ܥܒܕ ܠܥܠܡܐ. ܕܗܘܝܘ ܙܠܓܐ ܕܫܘܒܚܗ ܘܨܠܡܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܬܗ.
179 ܕܒܗܠܝܢ ܐܬܟܪܙ ܫܘܝܘܬ ܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܘܫܘܝܘܬ ܒܪܝܘܬܗ ܕܥܡ ܐܒܘܗܝ.
180 ܘܟܕ ܬܘܒ ܡܥܗܕ ܥܠ ܚܫܗ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܐܡܪ. ܘܗܘ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܥܒܕ ܕܘܟܝܐ ܕܚܛܗܝܢ. ܝܬܒ ܒܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܪܒܘܬܐ ܒܡܪ̈ܘܡܐ.[...]
182 ܕܡܘܕܐ ܕܚܕ ܗܘ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܗ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܦܠܓ ܠܬܪܝܢ ܒܢܝܢ ܘܠܬܪܝܢ ܡܫܝܚܝܢ. ܐܠܐ ܗܘܝܘ ܙܠܓܐ ܕܐܒܐ ܘܨܠܡܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܬܗ. ܘܗܘܝܘ ܕܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܝܪܬܐ ܘܐܬܩܪܒ ܚܠܦ ܚܛܝܐ. ܘܝܬܒ ܒܝܡܝܢܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܗ.

[426] *Sako, Lettre christologique,* No. 2, p. 165.
ܗܝ ܕܒܐܘܣܝܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܒܘܗܝ، ܠܗܘܢ ܒܥܐ ܗܘܐ: ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܚܕ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܚܢܢ ܚܕ ܚܢܢ.

which made them part of the body of Christ, like 'one soul and one mind'.[427] He also compared this to the limbs of a body forming one *qnomatic* composition (ܪܘܟܒܐ ܩܢܘܡܝܐ) (4-5), or to husband and wife in marriage united into one composite *qnoma* (ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܪܟܒ) (8).

Babai had also used the last two examples, although he seems to have avoided the adjective 'composite' for these unions. Nestorius, however, had identified the *parsopa* as the unifying principle of the Christians with Christ, assigning an important role to its voluntary aspect.[428] Why Ishoʿyahb II did not use this term here is not clear.

Sako further sees resemblance with Babai and Ishoʿyahb III, who acknowledged that each individual *qnoma* has the same nature as its fellows, but is distinguished from them by the individual properties it possesses in its *parsopa*.[429]

2.6.5.3. Parsopa

The initial question that guided Ishoʿyahb II's letter was to whom the one *parsopa* belonged: was it the divinity, the humanity or both? Ishoʿyahb II emphasized the union of the two natures in one *parsopa*. He further denied that there are two Sons (86). The *parsopa* unites the two natures of Christ; it is a form uniting two forms. To what extent the formulation of two forms that 'act everything in one *parsopa*' is meant to accommodate to Monenergism, or is an echo of the letter of Pope Leo written in 449, which recognized two activities according to the two natures in Christ and which was accepted in Chalcedon, is difficult to see and remains speculative.[430]

> The *parsopa* is an appearance that was established by the wise *mdabbranuta* for the revelation of divinity in humanity and the salvation of humanity by the divinity. Thus (the *parsopa*) binds together and unites the two forms (ܕܡ̈ܘܬܐ) of the Lord and the servant in an inseparable manner. [...] In short: these two forms, which are kept separate (ܦܪ̈ܝܫܢ) in their natures, appear and act (ܥܒ̈ܕܢ) everything in one *parsopa*, without division and separation.[431]

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[427] *Sako, Lettre christologique*, No. 4, p. 165. ܚܕܐ ܢܦܫ ܘܚܕ ܪܥܝܢ; Cf. Acts 4:32.
[428] See above, section 1.5.3.
[429] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, p. 104, with references.
[430] On Pope Leo's letter, cf. Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 744-45.
[431] Sako, *Lettre christologique*, Nos. 150-51 and 154, pp. 182-83.
ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ܆ ܐܣܟܡܐ ܗܘ ܡܬܩܢܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܚܟܝܡܬܐ ܐܬܝܗܒ: ܠܓܠܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܒܐܢܫܘܬܐ: ܘܠܦܘܪܩܢܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܘܐܟܚܕ ܐܣܪ ܘܡܚܝܕ ܠܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ ܕܕ̈ܡܘܬܐ. ܕ ܡܪܐ ܘܕܥܒܕܐ. ܕܠܘܬ ܡܢ ܚܕ̈ܕܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܦܪ̈ܫܝܢ. [...] ܘܒܟܢܫܐܝܬ ܠܡܐܡܪ. ܕܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ ܕܕ̈ܡܘܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ. ܟܕ ܦܪ̈ܝܫܢ ܡܬܢܛܪ̈ܢ ܒܟܝ̈ܢܝܗܝܢ: ܒܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܘܥܒ̈ܕܢ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ. ܕܠܐ ܚܘܠܩܐ ܘܦܘܠܓܐ.

2.7. Maremmeh (646-49/50)

After the death of Ishoʿyahb II, Maremmeh was ordained patriarch despite his old age. The *Chronicle of Seert*, written in Arabic, is the main source for Maremmeh's biography. According to this chronicle, his father came from Arzun. After his studies at the school of Nisibis he became a monk in the monastery of Mar Abraham, where he hardly left his cell. Next he is said to have been bishop of Nineveh, succeeding Ishoʿyahb III. When the people of Gundeshapur wanted Maremmeh as metropolitan for their country Bet Huzaye (Khuzistan), Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II consecrated him Metropolitan and Ishoʿyahb III wrote a letter praising the virtues of Maremmeh. After the death of Ishoʿyahb II, Maremmeh is said to have governed with wisdom, to have been very virtuous, and active in increasing the number of scholars. He would have been the first to order the students to wear a belt, to distinguish themselves from other people. Three years after his ordination, when he was on his way to Karka d-Gedan, he fell ill because of exhaustion of the journey and the heat. He refused to take the prescribed remedies saying: 'The harvest is ripe'. As the same chronicle had mentioned before that Ishoʿyahb II died in Gedan when he was on his way to Nisibis, it is not clear whether the similarities are coincidental or due to some confusion. The chronicle further records that Maremmeh died in the days of ʿUthman (644-56), after a reign of three years and that the 'Muslims worked to make him Catholicos because he had brought them food during their invasion of the Mosul region, when he was bishop of Nineveh'.[432]

Nineveh was taken in 637 or 641 and Maremmeh probably became metropolitan after 642.[433] The generally more reliable *Chronicon Anonymum* does not mention that Maremmeh had been bishop. After reporting that he had been monk in the Izla Monastery, it states that he was highly praised as monk and metropolitan and that as Catholicos he was 'honoured by all the Ishmaelite rulers'. Maremmeh then rebuilt with splendour the Church of St. Sergius of Mabrakta in which martyr George was buried. He also anointed Sergius, bishop of Nhargul, Metropolitan of Bet Lapat and made Isaac, Bishop of Arzun, head of Nisibis. The Nisibenes accepted Isaac, who would not draw his income from the city. The *Chronicon Anonymum* further reports that during Maremmeh's catholicate a Jew from the town Palugta in Bet Aramaye stirred up a large crowd claiming that the Messiah had come. After they had burnt three churches and killed the governor of the land (ܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܐܬܪܐ), an army from Aqula (Kufa)

[432] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 105 and 108, pp. 625 and 629-30.
[433] Jean Maurice Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand: Vie du catholicos nestorien Īšōʿyaw III de Adiabène (580-659)', *OCP* 36 (1970), p. 15. See for the different dates suggested for the conquest of Nineveh, section 3.4.3.

killed the insurgents and their families and crucified the leader in his town.[434] As Kufa was a Muslim garrison town close to Hira, this relatively contemporary Christian chronicle seems to imply that a Muslim army defended not only its own authority but possibly also the Christians and their churches. The story is further indicative of strong Messianic expectations at that time, at least among Jews.

Maremmeh died c.649/50 and was buried in the church of St. Sergius which he had rebuilt.[435] Mari's claim that Maremmeh received a document from Caliph ʿAli (656-61)[436] seems therefore impossible, unless one accepted that ʿAli could have closed a treaty with Maremmeh when he was not yet in full power, but may already have exercised an influential role around Kufa.

Maremmeh's Christology is hardly known, as no writings by him are left. Most information comes from the letters of Ishoʿyahb III. They had sometimes cooperated, but their relationship fluctuated. There were not only several tensions between them, but Ishoʿyahb III also pointed to a schism among the leaders of the Church. Maremmeh had to resist challenges by Sahdona and his supporters who rejected the two-*qnome* doctrine and instead propagated the one *qnoma*. But after Sahdona's return from exile Maremmeh considered rehabilitating him as bishop. Ishoʿyahb III of Adiabene was alarmed by these messages and opposed this. Ishoʿyahb III succeeded Maremmeh and the following two central chapters are devoted to him.

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[434] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 31-33; Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 35-36.
[435] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 345.
[436] Gismondi (trans.), *Maris*, p. 32; idem, *Amri et Slibae*, p. 55.

CHAPTER THREE

ISHOʿYAHB III OF ADIABENE (c.649-c.659) AND HIS SECULAR LEADERS

3.1. Life and works

Ishoʿyahb III of Adiabene was witness to the last Persian-Byzantine wars, the invasions of the Arabs and the subsequent break down of the Persian Empire. He wrote a vast body of letters during the time he was monk in the monastery of Bet Abe, as bishop of Nineveh, as metropolitan of his home country Adiabene, and as catholicos.

Ishoʿyahb III was the third catholicos after Babai. Most of the key dates in his life are unknown or unclear and therefore disputable.[1] He was born in the period between roughly 578 and 590. His family was connected with the town Kuplana in Adiabene where his father Bastomag was a wealthy and prominent landowner with close contacts to the nearby monastery of Bet Abe. This monastery was founded in 595 by the monk Jacob who had left the Great Monastery due to Babai's disciplinary actions, but it still was allied with the reform monasteries. Thomas of Marga's *Book of Governors* is considered to have documented its history 'exceptionally well'.[2] Its editor, E.A.W. Budge, holds that Bastomag and Shamta, the son of the influential tax collector Yazdin, supported this monastery. Ishoʿyahb III joined it as a monk, endowed it later with land, precious gifts and a large church and died there as catholicos.[3] He entered it most probably after he had left the School of Nisibis, at a date which is also uncertain. He is mentioned as belonging to the group that left the school (probably around 596 or 600), and he strongly defended the two-*qnome* Christology.

Around 628, Ishoʿyahb III was officially appointed bishop of one of the sees of Adiabene, namely Nineveh (Mosul) where the growing group of Miaphysites caused him many difficul-

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[1] This section summarizes the events in Ishoʿyahb III's life, most of which will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections. The main information is taken from: Jean Maurice Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand: Vie du catholicos nestorien Īšōʿyaw III de Adiabène (580-659)', *OCP* 35 (1969), pp. 305-33 and idem, *OCP* 36 (1970), pp. 5-46; Sebastian Brock, 'Ishoʿyahb III of Adiabene (d.659)', *GEDSH*, pp. 218-19; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 5-18 and 42; Herman G.B. Teule, 'Ishoʿyahb III of Adiabene', in David Thomas and Barbara Roggema (eds.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History* 1 *(600–900)* (HCMR 11; Leiden, 2009), pp. 133-36; Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 109-10. The *memra* on Ishoʿyahb III, which has been ascribed to Catholicos Henanishoʿ I, is a rather superficial hagiography which does not add historical information. Its authenticity is moreover contested. Cf. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 308 and 45; Martin Tamcke, 'Gleich wie ein Vater, der seine Kinder aufzieht', in Van Bekkum, Drijvers and Klugkist, *Syriac Polemics*, pp. 151-58; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 5-6, with references.

[2] Sebastian Brock, 'Beth ʿAbe, Monastery of', *GEDSH*, p. 70.

[3] Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors*, p. lxxii.

ties. It is not impossible that he already had fulfilled this position unofficially before this time. The situation of Nineveh after its destruction in 627 is unclear, but seems to have remained turbulent and dangerous. As bishop of Nineveh, Ishoʿyahb III had fled the town, but he did so without the consent of the catholicos and he later had to excuse himself for this.[4] As the exact date is uncertain, it cannot be assessed what the circumstances were. It might already have been during the battle of Nineveh in 627, which led to the defeat of Khosrau II in 628 while Nineveh was destroyed and plundered, or a few years later during internal Persian wars in 630.[5] In both cases, Heraclius and the Persian general Shahrbaraz had been involved and had allied together, which resulted in Shahrbaraz being Persian emperor for a very short time until he was killed himself.[6] If connected to these wars, the flight could have taken place before the summer of 630 when Ishoʿyahb III is reported to have joined the embassy of Ishoʿyahb II to Heraclius at the order of the Persian Empress Boran (629-30), daughter of Khosrau II.

In 629, for sure, one year after the death of Babai, Ishoʿyahb III wrote to the monks on Mount Izla that he had gone to the 'chaos of Seleucia' where he had had to stay longer because of 'an increase of friends'.[7] Of which friends Ishoʿyahb III was boasting, or whether this was ironically meant, is not clear, but his remark may have had to do with the rapid successions of the Persian Emperors. With whom he might have allied is not clear either, although the fact that he accompanied the embassy to Heraclius in 630 may be an indication that he was trusted by Boran. The flight also may have had to do with his metropolitan, who sided with the Miaphysites and was accused of corruption. In letter E-25, Ishoʿyahb III complained to the catholicos about the dangerous situation caused by the Miaphysites and mentioned that he even considered fleeing.[8] This would allow a later date of the flight or could imply that Ishoʿyahb III might have fled another time.

Ishoʿyahb III might have left the see of Nineveh to become Metropolitan of Adiabene, with its seat in Arbela, around the time Nineveh was taken by the Arabs. Since the sources give two different years for this event (637 and 641),[9] it is not clear when exactly he replaced Makkika, the former metropolitan of Adiabene who had converted to Miaphysitism openly. As Metropolitan, Ishoʿyahb III started to combat Sahdona, bishop of Mahuze d-Ariwan, who had found substantial support. Ishoʿyahb III accused Sahdona of teaching the doctrine of one *qnoma* and

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[4] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-15, p. 20.
[5] Ovidiu Ioan connects this letter of excuse with letter E-9 in which Ishoʿyahb III spoke of his escape from wars and plunderers and he concludes that it was before 630, Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 17-18.
[6] See also below, section 3.2.
[7] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-12, pp. 16-17.
[8] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-25, pp. 46-47.
[9] See for further discussion section 3.4.3.

he wrote letters on this matter that are of high interest as they also inform us of his own Christology. When Ishoʿyahb III was appointed Catholicos, he excommunicated Sahdona. The election was, however, not uncontested and the sources give different years for this event, varying from 647 to 651. Generally, it is held that he became Catholicos in 649.[10]

Ishoʿyahb III founded new monastic schools and supervised the expansion of the East Syrian Church towards the East, thanks to its prospering missionary activities in these new regions, but had to deal with bishoprics around the Persian Gulf that converted to Islam or strove for independence. He is reported to have been respected by the local Arab leaders.[11] Where the former Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II had moved his seat to a safer place in Karka d-Bet Slok after the Arab conquest of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 637, Ishoʿyahb III probably resided in Ctesiphon again. Towards the end of his life, however, he was imprisoned by an Arab governor and then moved further north to the monastery of Bet Abe where he died in 659 and which became a centre of theological studies. According to his reputedly last letter, he might have been imprisoned in Nisibis first and then sent in exile to Edessa.

Many liturgical reforms are attributed to Ishoʿyahb III, which probably were made in cooperation with the monk ʿAnanishoʿ (ܥܢܢܝܫܘܥ),[12] while some of them may be of a later date. The new liturgy was intended to become the new standard and replaced several older versions. According to the *Chronicle of Seert*, for instance, Ishoʿyahb III also imposed this liturgy in Nisibis where the liturgy of Ephrem had been celebrated before.[13] The new liturgy was a practical means to familiarize the believers in words and music with the new Christology.[14] The new liturgical cycle expressed a mystical view which extended from the beginnings of time unto the end of the world, which would not be long. Fiey links this to the events in Ishoʿyahb III's own life.[15]

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[10] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 41, with references.

[11] Joannes B. Abbeloos and Thomas J. Lamy, *Gregorii Barhebraei. Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* 3 (Paris, 1877), pp. 130-32.

[12] Thomas of Marga informs us that the learned ʿAnanishoʿ and his brother Ishoʿyahb came from Adiabene, were trained in the School of Nisibis and belonged to the school and household of Ishoʿyahb III. When the latter had become Metropolitan of Arbela, ʿAnanishoʿ assisted him in writing a book of Canons which copies should be sent to every place in Adiabene. Later, he also wrote several works under George I. Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors*, Chapter 2.11 and 2.15, pp. 78-80 and 86-88 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 174-79 and 189-92). The name ʿAnanishoʿ does not appear in the letters of Ishoʿyahb III.

[13] Addai Scher (ed. and trans.), 'Histoire nestorienne inédite (Chronique de Séert) 1', (PO 4; Paris, 1907), Chapter 26, p. 295; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 12-13; Baby Varghese, 'East Syrian Liturgy during the Sasanid Period', *The Harp* 15 (2002), also in Mustafa, Tubach and Vashalomidze (eds.), *Inkulturation des Christentums im Sasanidenreich*, pp. 278-80.

[14] Payne, 'Persecuting Heresy', pp. 399-400.

[15] 'Pour lui, et il venait de le revivre tragiquement dans les événements de sa propre vie, le cycle doit être l'occasion de re-présenter l'économie du salut en s'y incorporant.' Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 11.

Ishoʿyahb III most probably wrote the hagiographic *Life of Ishoʿsabran*. The manuscript is preserved as *Vaticanus Syriacus* 161, and Anton Baumstark holds that it stems from the ninth century.[16] Ishoʿyahb III also wrote many letters of which 106 have been preserved in three manuscripts. Two manuscripts are copies of the one preserved as *Vaticanus Syriacus* 157, which most probably belongs to the tenth century.[17] It consists of three groups of letters: those written when Ishoʿyahb III was bishop (E), metropolitan (M) and catholicos (C). The letters are generally in chronological order and numbered accordingly, but the allocation of some must be incorrect or is disputed. The first letters probably were written before Ishoʿyahb III was bishop. He mentioned that he also had written a *Refutation of Opinions* (ܗܘܦܟ ܚܘܫܒܐ, *Huppak Hushshabe*), against error and heresy, which is unfortunately not preserved.[18] The letters cover altogether a period of about thirty years and are written to a variety of people. They give interesting hints at events taking place and his reactions thereto during the transition period from Sasanian to Arab rule. The many challenges Ishoʿyahb III encountered during this time confirmed for him that he must be living at the end times, and are described in the following sections.

3.2. Heraclius and the Chalcedonian doctrine

Especially in the North-Western part of the Persian Empire, the Byzantine proximity remained a very important factor until 636, the year Heraclius left Syria, and to a lesser degree some years thereafter. During and after the Persian-Byzantine wars, Heraclius allied with important Persian Christians and their families who provided him with valuable information. He allied moreover with the Persian general Shahrbaraz (also known as Farrukan, ܦܪܘܟܢ), who may have been the Farrukan mentioned by Babai as the chamberlain of Khosrau supporting Gabriel of Shigar during the 612 debate. This is not impossible since Shahrbaraz had occupied Damascus

[16] Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte* (Bonn, 1922), p. 197; J.-B. Chabot (ed. and trans.), 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran, écrite par Jésus-Yab d'Adiabène, publiée d'après le ms. syr. CLXI de la Bibliothèque Vaticane', *Nouvelles Archives des Missions Scientifiques et Littéraires* 7 (1897), pp. 485-584; Brock, 'Ishoʿyahb III of Adiabene (d.659)', p. 218.
[17] Rubens Duval (ed.), *Išōʿyahb Patriarchae III, Liber Epistularum* (CSCO 11, Scriptores Syri 11; Paris, 1904; repr. Leuven, 1962); trans. idem, *Išōʿyahb Patriarchae III, Liber Epistularum,* (CSCO 12, Scriptores Syri 12; Paris, 1905; repr. Leuven, 1962). Digital images of *Vaticanus Syriacus* 157 are available on DVD-ROM: Kristian S. Heal and Carl W. Griffin (eds.), *Syriac Manuscripts from the Vatican Library* 1 (Vatican City - Provo, 2005). For a discussion of the manuscripts preserved, see Ovidiu Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 3-4. An English summary of some selected letters has been provided by Philip Scott-Moncrieff (ed. and trans.), *The Book of Consolations or The Pastoral Epistles of Mar Isho Yahbh of Kuphlana in Adiabene* 1. *The Syriac Text* (London, 1904).
[18] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6 and M-7, pp. 130 and 133.

in 613 and conquered Palestine in 614 for Khosrau. Shahrbaraz changed sides, however, and provided Heraclius with strategic information during the battle of Nineveh in December 627 and had his daughter married to a son of Heraclius. His sons participated in the downfall of Khosrau, just as members of the family of Yazdin did. Both families allied thus with Heraclius, although they were mutually hostile. Walter Kaegi holds that it was expedient for Christians in the Persian Empire, especially in northern Iraq, to give heed to Heraclius, who kept parts of his army in Persia during the instable years after 628 when Persian emperors were succeeding each other rapidly. There also seem to have been Messianic hopes for a new golden age and people had high expectations after 628.[19]

Heraclius' armies that remained in Persia until 636 (for instance in Tagrit) were reinforced by allied Arabs.[20] Heraclius thus could have supported general Shahrbaraz in the internal Persian war early in 630, when the general attacked, killed and succeeded the Persian Emperor Ardashir III (c. Sept. 628 to April 630). Once Persian emperor, Shahrbaraz officially made peace with Heraclius and would return him the relic of the wood of the cross, but was killed himself within a few months.[21] A number of the subsequent Persian emperors also sought Heraclius' support and strengthened bonds by means of marriages and conversion to Christianity.[22] As mentioned above, Empress Boran also sent a delegation of the Church of the East to Heraclius in 630, which was joined by Ishoʿyahb III. According to Tabari, she restored the relic of the Cross to Heraclius through the intermediacy of 'the Catholicos called Ishoʿyahb', but Bosworth comments that this was probably already done under Sheroy.[23]

Heraclius not only fought the Persians with arms, but also attempted to win back or keep the support of his (former) eastern provinces by way of a doctrinal reconciliation. We have seen that this was effected with both Miaphysites and the Church of the East. Heraclius initially

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[19] Walter Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 148-52 and 182-83. See for a discussion on Farrukan: Reinink, 'Life of George', p. 179.

[20] Kaegi suggests that between 630-37, the Persian territory probably occupied by Byzantine and allied forces roughly covered an area between the rivers Khabur, Tigris (with Gozarte in the north and Tagrit in the south) and Euphrates (with Hit in the south). Heraclius may have kept a few troops here in order to maintain some influence while supporting a weak Sasanian government, and to provide a buffer for his own eastern frontier. His troops here consisted mainly of local friendly Arabs, who usually adhered to Miaphysitism. They moreover appear to have allowed local sheikhs to control the passage through the (semi-) desert. Walter Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge, 1992; repr. 2000), pp. 42, 49 (map) and 154-57.

[21] Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 169-77, 185-90, 219-20, 249-50 and 258-59.

[22] Several stories reflect these facts, but are rather biased since they had a propaganda function. Schilling, *Die Anbetung der Magier und die Taufe der Sāsāniden*, pp. 295-97 and 302-305.

[23] The Catholicos referred to must have been Ishoʿyahb II and not Ishoʿyahb III as Wilhelm Baum states. Bosworth, *Ṭabari. The Sasanids*, pp. 404-405; Baum, 'Zeitalter der Araber', p. 44.

promoted Monenergism from 622 until 638, and when this led to many problems he modified it to Monothelitism.[24]

After his conquests in 628, Heraclius' established a Byzantine governor in Tagrit, a Miaphysite stronghold. Fiey concludes that where Heraclius persecuted Miaphysites in his own territory, he favoured them in the annexed territories at the expense of the Church of the East which therefore lost its former pre-eminence.[25] Meanwhile, Heraclius might have subordinated Nineveh administratively to Tagrit, which was located south of Nineveh at the other (western) bank of the strategic river Tigris. Moreover, the Arab groups that had supported him and might have stayed here may have belonged to the Ghassanid confederates who were of Miaphysite denomination.[26] Tabari reports that before the Arabs took Tagrit in 637/38, they fought forces which consisted of Byzantine troops, Arab tribesmen from the Iyad, Taghlib and al-Namir, as well as some 'local dignitaries'.[27]

The growing Miaphysite supremacy around Nineveh after Heraclius' conquest in 628 further weakened the position of the Church of the East there. Ishoʿyahb III claimed that the Miaphysites were responsible for the difficult and agitated situation in Nineveh (E-44) and were supported by governors in Tagrit. According to Fiey, Ishoʿyahb III must have referred to Byzantine governors. Ishoʿyahb III called them the 'present governors' (ܫܠܝ̈ܛܢܐ ܕܗܫܐ) and 'heads and governors' (ܪ̈ܫܐ ܘܫܠܝ̈ܛܢܐ) as he also does in other letters, and he stated that they were prone to bribery.[28] However, as we will see later, Arabs may already have taken powerful positions.[29]

In another letter (E-39) on the problems in Nineveh, he deprecatingly spoke of 'barbarian leaders, who opposed us (because of) our sins' (ܫܠܝ̈ܛܢܐ ܒܪ̈ܒܪܝܐ ܕܐܬܚܡܣܘ ܠܢ ܚ̈ܛܗܝܢ). Fiey and Ioan hold that Byzantines are referred to, although Ioan also acknowledges the possible involvement of the Arab tribes employed by Heraclius, such as the Miaphysite Ghassanids.[30] This

[24] See also above, section 2.6.3.
[25] Fiey, 'Naṣārā', pp. 970-73.
[26] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 29; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 114 and 241-42.
[27] Juynboll, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Iraq*, p. 54; Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 26-27.
[28] E-44 will further be discussed in section 3.6.2. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-44, pp. 81-85; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 327. The term for secular leaders is often (43 times) ܫܠܝܛܐ (*shallita*, sometimes in combination with the term ܪܫܐ) or ܫܠܝܛܢܐ (*shallitana*) and is translated here mostly with 'governor', 'leader' or 'authority'. The word can also designate leaders in general or the devil, 'the leader of the air'. For ecclesiastical leaders, Ishoʿyahb III uses in his letters 27 times forms of ܩܝܘܡܐ (*qayuma)*. The literal meaning is 'upholder' (of the truth etc.) and is here consistently translated as 'protector' in order to distinguish it from secular leaders. Once, as bishop of Nineveh, he used ܡܕܒܪܢܐ referring to an unnamed leader of the community (ܠܐܚܝܕ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܘܡܕ̈ܒܪܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ), probably the catholicos. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-46, p. 90.
[29] See below, section 3.10.1.
[30] Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 333; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 29.

involvement of Arab tribes seems most probable, but other tribes such as the Iyad and Taghlib might also have been involved.[31]

3.3. The Persians and their nobility

After the death of Khosrau in 628, his succession was chaotic with a rapid change of leaders who sometimes were supported by Heraclius. In 632 the last Persian emperor, Yazdgard III, took hold of the throne but had to flee the Arabs in 637, from Seleucia-Ctesiphon to the more eastern Merw, where he finally was slain in 651. He probably could not exercise much influence anymore in the rest of his former Empire and the Christians living in the western parts had to deal with the Arab invaders after Heraclius also had withdrawn from Syria via Edessa in late 636.[32]

We have seen that Christian Persian nobility tried to consolidate their wealth in churches and monasteries. Morony holds that the aristocratic party successfully got hold of the office of catholicos in the person of Ishoʿyahb III, who appointed three aristocratic Persians as metropolitan bishops of Nisibis, Perat d-Maishan and Adiabene.[33] This suggestion, however, is hard to substantiate. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, the proposed dichotomy between clergy versus aristocrats does not seem to stand. Nevertheless, it does not seem impossible that such factors had some impact.[34]

Among the Persian rural aristocrats we find the *shaharijans*, who exercised administrative authority over the lower ranked *dahqane,* and were responsible for the tax collections in the late Sasanian period. They had helped to defend Tagrit at the time of conquests, but in 641 their strongholds at Tall al-Shaharija and Salaq in Adiabene were taken. They kept, however, their lands and exercised some administrative authority. In the North, they remained prominent land owners and village headmen until the early Abbasid periods levying taxes for the small Arab ruling class.[35] It has been suggested that *shaharijans* adhered to a deviant Christology and denied Christ's divine nature. It is unfortunately not clear whether this was the continuation of an already existing tradition, or a later adjustment in Islamic times.[36] Although such

[31] See also section 3.4.3.
[32] Kaegi, *Heraclius,* pp. 247-48.
[33] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest,* pp. 351-52.
[34] See also above, section 2.1.3.5.
[35] Robinson *Empire and Elites,* pp. 90-91; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest,* pp. 204-205; see also Peter Sarris, *Empires of Faith: The Fall of Rome to the Rise of Islam, 500-700* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 276-77.
[36] According to Thomas of Marga, the Church of the East combatted a distinctive Christology of the *shaharija* around 750-75. He called them 'Christians in name', who regarded Christ 'a mere man and as one of the proph-

terms for aristocrats do not occur in the letters of Ishoʿyahb III, they may correspond to the nobles of Nineveh and Nisibis whom he called ‘the Great’ (*rawrbane*, ܪܘܪܒܢܐ), as this was a frequent term for the members of the leading families of the late Sasanian period.[37]

Examples of the influence of Persian noblemen within the Church were the families of Yazdin and Shabor.[38] For some ecclesiastical functions, however, election seems to have been necessary. Letter E-20 shows how Yazdshabor, a mighty nobleman, argued that he should have been consecrated but had not been. He seemed to have accused Ishoʿyahb III of not having supported him enough. Ishoʿyahb III criticized and countered all the arguments of Yazdshabor, which had made ample use of dialectics. Payments in order to obtain the office seem to have been used, as the rival of Yazdshabor is said to have given all his wealth.[39]

The support of influential Persian families was very important. Letter E-43 provides an example of how Ishoʿyahb III tried to convince ‘our honoured and renowned leader Mar Yazdanan’, a member of an important Persian family, not to withdraw his support and not to turn to the heretics. The letter was handed over by Abbot Henanishoʿ who might clarify more. Ishoʿyahb III and Yazdanan do not seem to have had contact for a long time, during which Yazdanan must have changed and taken on unspecified ‘heretical opinions’, probably of a Miaphysite signature.[40] But now, after a letter of Yazdanan that gave him some hope and because the community seemed in danger, Ishoʿyahb III felt compelled to appeal to Yazdanan’s honour and the memory of his parents. Yazdanan’s fathers had protected the Church, while Yazdanan seemed more inclined to the enemy and to despise the clergymen who were responsible for his spiritual wellbeing. Ishoʿyahb III then asked why Yazdanan was deceived by the others and hated his former teachers. He guessed that Yazdanan was badly influenced by someone who did not belong to the house. He therefore urged Yazdanan to study the books of the Spirit, to pray and repent, and to receive the priests in his house for daily confession. Yazdanan should repeat the words of the tax collector (ܡܟܣܐ): ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner’ (Luke 18:13). This reference to the tax collector is perhaps no coincidence, and might signal the vocation of Yazdanan. Ishoʿyahb III feared that Yazdanan would give the region to the enemies and

ets’. Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors*, Chapter 3.7, pp. 151-52 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 309-312); Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 96-108.

[37] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-39, p. 65; C-3, p. 222; Payne, ‘Persecuting Heresy’, p. 401.

[38] Yazdin and a Shabor also figured in the *Life of Ishoʿsabran*. It shows Yazdin’s highly influential position, but it is not sure whether the Shabor here is identical to the one who was even worth a separate letter to the Patriarch, informing him of Shabor’s return to the Church. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-24, pp. 45-46. See also section 4.3.4.

[39] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-20, pp. 36-40.

[40] Whether or not Yazdanan may have adhered to a specific Christology within the Persian nobility described above is highly speculative.

warned that the defection (ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܗ) of Yazdanan would cause the ruin of the people and be the pleasure of the enemies.[41]

This authority to decide to which denomination a whole region should be given, the very name and possibly the position he held, suggest that Yazdanan belonged to Yazdin's family. Although Yazdin had lost favour with Khosrau, and Ishoʿyahb III had spoken in E-8 of the 'calamities after the death of Yazdin' and the subsequent difficult period for the Church,[42] this family is known for having regained their former status under Heraclius.[43] The letter to Yazdanan further signals that Persian aristocrats had the authority to decide to which Church a region would belong. This reminds us somewhat of the situation in Germany after the Reformation where the principle was '*cuius regio, eius religio*', 'whose region, his religion'.

Meanwhile, tensions with the (former) state religion, Zoroastrianism, remained. When Ishoʿyahb III was Catholicos he wrote to Jacob, bishop of Siarzur (in the eastern mountains of Bet Garmai), that the rule of the Magians (Zoroastrians) was over, although this does not seem to have been accepted by everyone. This must have been a period of transition and confusion, as Jacob seems to have claimed that he still was subject to the authority of the Magians. Ishoʿyahb III rebuked him for defending this view and not correcting others who shared it.

> I was highly surprised about two things, namely that the Magians (*magushe*) were instigated by an authority that is already dead against the Fear of God which lives eternally, and that although you are at this moment the protector of the Fear of God, you did not demonstrate at once and rapidly that the dead (authority) is powerless and lifeless.[44]

Richard Payne connects this letter to on-going conflicts between Zoroastrians and Christians in Siarzur, which were already frequent in the late Sasanian period. He suggests that certain Zoroastrians (*magushe*) tried to undermine the position of the Bishop after the Islamic conquest, but that the Catholicos reminded him that they had lost patronage by the state.[45] As the problems seemed easy to deal with, Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III advised the bishop to go to the 'authorities (ܫܠܝ̈ܛܐ) and then the royal authority (ܫܘܠܛܐ ܡܠܟܝܐ)' would care for him.[46] Why Ishoʿyahb III called the higher authority 'royal' is unclear. Ishoʿyahb III used this expression

[41] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-43, pp. 76-81.
[42] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-8, pp. 9-10; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 317-19.
[43] See also above, section 2.1.3.5.
[44] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-7, p. 237.
[45] Payne, 'Persecuting Heresy', pp. 402-403.
[46] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-7, p. 238.

three other times but these are not in specific contexts.[47] As he must have written this letter after 649, a Byzantine authority would be anachronistic and the Persian authority was already considered dead. This makes it most likely that Ishoʿyahb III referred to Arab rule in general and less likely to one of the (former) local Arab kingdoms,[48] especially because he stated somewhat later (C-14) that God had given the *Tayyaye* the power over the world.[49]

3.4. The Arab conquests in Byzantine and Persian lands

3.4.1. Introduction

We have seen that Arab tribes had fought each other in varying alliances for supremacy in the control over the trade routes (including the necessary wells) in which Hira had played a key role. A new balance had to be found after Lakhmid and Sasanian influence in Arabia declined or even disappeared. The Quraysh of Mecca became dominant but this was not uncontested. The Arab conquests outside of the Peninsula were carried out under four subsequent leaders, dubbed 'Rightly Guided Caliphs': Abu Bakr (أبو بكر, 632-34); ʿUmar (عمر, 634-44); ʿUthman (عثمان, 644-56) and ʿAli (علي, 656-61). This period is also known as the Rashidun Caliphate, which tends to be idealized in Islamic tradition.

It is not clear whether the Arabs invaded upper Mesopotamia from Syria or from Iraq, as no original documents survive and the Muslim historical traditions that stem from the ninth century or later contradict each other.[50] One reason for the contradictions in various dates, conquerors and localities offered by the reports is that many cities revolted after being taken and therefore had to be retaken.[51]

To put several events in a short (but still rather uncertain) chronological order, one can hold that Hira was the first to fall in 633 and that Seleucia-Ctesiphon was probably taken in 637/38. Battles in northern Mesopotamia lasted until 641/42, when Yazdgard III's army was finally defeated except for some local sporadic opposition.[52] Bet Huzaye was taken about 640

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[47] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-28, p. 203; C-20, p. 274; C-22, p. 284.

[48] Brock holds that perhaps after a decade the people became aware of the new, Arab empire (*malkuta*). Although the new rulers were initially incomparable to the Persian and Byzantine emperors, this term would have been used in correspondence with the predicted empires in the *Book of Daniel*. They further would have called the new leaders with general terms, such as *risha* (head) or the Arabic ones, such as *amir*. Sebastian Brock, 'Syriac Views of Emergent Islam', in G.H.A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale, 1982), p. 20, also in Brock, *Syriac Perspectives*, Chapter 8.

[49] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251, see also section 3.9.3.

[50] Kaegi, *Heraclius*, p. 248.

[51] Zarrinkub, 'The Arab Conquest of Iran and its Aftermath', p. 21.

[52] Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, pp. 127-29.

after strong resistance. Fars was invaded first in 640 but was finally occupied in 649-50 after the fall of Ishtakhr (Persepolis), its capital city which was situated more inland. Meanwhile, Rev Ardashir (nowadays Bushehr), the metropolitan city located on the coast, was taken in 644.[53] In 643 the Arabs had already reached the very borders of India.[54] Because the sources give various conflicting dates, Donner holds that one can only conclude that the conquest of southern Iraq took place between 635 and 642.[55] The date of conquest of Arbela in Adiabene (about 80 km. east-south-east of Mosul) has not been found.[56]

On the Byzantine side, it may have been in 632 or 633 that Heraclius realized the serious threat of the Arab tribes. In 634 the Arabs raided southern Palestine; in August 636 they defeated the Byzantines and in the same year Heraclius evacuated Syria. The Arabs expelled the Byzantines from Egypt in 641, while they also made further conquests from Syria into the Sasanian Empire.[57] Damascus, which was taken in 635, became the seat of the Umayyad dynasty of Muʿawiya (معاوية), until 750. Muʿawiya had succeeded the fourth Caliph ʿAli in 661 after inner-Arab wars.[58]

Patricia Crone describes some general characteristics of the time of the first invasions: initially, the caliph coordinated from Medina the first invasions of the eastern Roman and Sasanian empires by the semi-autonomous armies. The conquerors stayed together as soldiers in garrison cities and military districts, as probably ordered by ʿUmar (634-44). The soldiers including their families settling in these garrisons were offered a regular payment, which attracted many. The Arabs who had emigrated to these garrisons to become soldiers were *muhajirun* and these were considered true Muslims. Their stipends 'were not simply military pay in their view, but rather a right that every emigrant and his descendants could claim by way of reward for his participation in the conquests; the revenue from the conquered lands was their booty (*fay'*)'.[59]

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[53] Zarrinkub, 'The Arab Conquest of Iran and its Aftermath', p. 21.
[54] Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 157-58.
[55] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 174-78 and 215-17.
[56] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 71; D. Sourdel, 'Irbil', *EI*^{2} 4 (1978), pp. 76-77.
[57] Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 230 and 326-27.
[58] This Umayyad dynasty is generally divided in two periods. The Sufyanid period is dated from 661, when Muʿawiya became Caliph, although some take the year he was governor of Damascus (639) as its start. It is named after Abu Sufyan, the father of Muʿawiya. The Sufyanid period was followed in 684 by the Marwanid period, named after Marwan ibn al-Hakam.
[59] Patricia Crone, 'The early Islamic world', in K. Raaflaub and N. Rosenstein (eds.), *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Cambridge MA, 1999), pp. 309-313, quotation esp. p. 313, also in Patricia Crone, *From Arabian Tribes to Islamic Empire. Army, State and Society in the Near East c.600-850* (VCSS 895; Aldershot, 2008), Chapter 9.

3.4.2. Southern Iraq: Hira, Kufa, Basra and Bet Huzaye

After several inraids, Hira was taken in 633. Fred Donner holds that the conquest in southern and central Iraq under the leadership of Khalid b. al-Walid was initially mainly a continuation of the *ridda* wars intended to subdue the tribes living on the fringes of Iraq. Khalid's army consisted of loyal groups. Some had formed a fraction from tribes that had rejected Medina's hegemony at the beginning of the *ridda* but later had helped the Muslims to overpower the rest of their tribe. The Tayyaye and Tamim may have formed an important part of his army.[60] To this were added loyal tribes from Iraq, such as the Shayban. Donner acknowledges that the Shayban leader al-Muthanna played a significant role in the conquest of Iraq, but that it is difficult to assess to what extent.[61] When Khalid al-Walid had left Iraq, al-Muthanna went on to raid lower Mesopotamia (roughly from Tagrit to the Persian Gulf), but a new commander sent by Mecca seems to have contested his leadership. Al-Muthanna probably died somewhere between 635 and 637.[62]

Finally, ʿUmar sent more troops and put Saʿd b. Abi Waqqas in charge of the troops in Iraq. The new commander Saʿd married the widow of al-Muthanna, probably to win the loyalty of the Shayban. After Saʿd's troops had broken the heavy Persian resistance in central Iraq at the battle of al-Qadisiyya (southwest of Hira), the Arabs could seize the fertile lands of Iraq.[63] The battle is dated variously, ranging from March 635 until 637-38.[64]

After Seleucia-Ctesiphon fell in 637, Saʿd b. Abi Waqqas founded Kufa close to Hira in 638. It was a strategic Arab outpost on the west bank of the Euphrates controlling the fertile grounds which had belonged to the sphere of influence of Hira. The Arab conquerors did not settle in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, among other reasons because Caliph ʿUmar preferred to keep the incoming Arabs separated from the peoples and their lands. The incoming Arabs should not settle in the lands conquered, but concentrate on the conquest wars and on establishing an efficient fiscal system.[65] Another reason for this location may have been that it was easier here to control the various nomadic and independent tribes and to break their power. At this stage, this might have been more important than controlling the non-Arab population.[66]

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60 Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 176-78.
61 Donner, 'al-Mu<u>th</u>annā b. Ḥāri<u>th</u>a'.
62 According to some reports, he was simply replaced at the command of ʿUmar, according to other rather biased accounts he died after a heroic battle. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 195-201; idem, 'al-Mu<u>th</u>annā b. Ḥāri<u>th</u>a'.
63 Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 202-207.
64 Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, p. 212.
65 Hichem Djaït, 'al-Kūfa', *EI*^{2} 5 (1986), pp. 345-51.
66 Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 266-67.

In Kufa the many and heterogeneous tribes that had to fight the Sasanian armies lived separately. Kufa became the first great urban concentration of Arabs, who came from all parts of Arabia. Population grew fast until 673, although it soon was outnumbered by Basra, the other garrison city.[67] The Bakr and Tamim settled for a while in Basra and 'prepared the ground for the conquest of what later became the province of Basra'. The Bakr left it rather soon and lived for some time near Kufa.[68] Basra was established in 638 for the Arab troops that already had lived here since 635. Like Kufa, this camp was strategically situated. The warriors in Basra participated in the conquests of Fars, the more eastern Sagastan (nowadays Sistan, in South East Iran) and Khurasan (in Sasanian times this roughly included parts of present-day Iran and Afghanistan).[69]

From Basra and Kufa, the province of Bet Huzaye (Elam, the modern Khuzistan located north of the Persian Gulf) was invaded. The *Chronicon Anonymum* reports that the Muslim Arabs took Bet Lapat, Karka d-Ledan and the fortress Shushan. Only Shush (Susa) and Shustar (Tostar) offered resistance with the help of Emperor Yazdgard and his general Hormizdan. The latter would have promised to pay any amount of tribute requested and he involved Bishop George of Ulay (ܐܘܠܝ)[70] as negotiator with the Arabs. After two years, Hormizdan broke his word, killed the negotiators including George, and imprisoned Abraham the 'Metropolitan of Perat'.[71] The troops he sent to attack the Arabs (*Tayyaye,* ܛܝܝܐ), however, were all beaten and Shush was conquered. Shustar was taken two years later, followed by Hormizd Ardashir (in Bet Huzaye), where many people were killed, including its bishop and priests.[72]

It is remarkable that Bishop George of Ulay seems to have been acceptable as negotiator to both the Sasanians and the Arabs, but that once the Sasanians started to attack the Arabs, they treated George and Abraham of Perat as enemies. It is not clear what the role of these bishops may have been, but this account raises the question of whether the bishops leaned more to-

[67] In Kufa were many members of the Mudar and Qays (Tamim, Asad); clans from the Hijaz, but also a strong Yemeni minority from the south. Initially, during the time of ʿUmar (638-43), Kufa was a military camp consisting of tents, which successively developed into a settlement with larger buildings made of fired brick (since 670). Djaït, 'al-Kūfa', pp. 346-47.
[68] Caskel, 'Bakr b. Wāʾil', pp. 962-64.
[69] Ch. Pellat, 'al-Baṣra', *EI*^{2} 1 (1960), pp. 1087-88.
[70] As Ulay probably refers to the biblical name of the river of Susa, George may have been bishop of Susa. Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', p. 43.
[71] 'Perat' probably refers to Perat d-Maishan, with its metropolitan city Basra.
[72] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 35-37; Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', pp. 43-45. Another name for this incomplete and anonymous chronicle is *Khuzistan Chronicle*, after its 'most plausible geographical provenance (Beth Huzaye/Khuzistan)'. It was written after 659 and it is contested whether it is written by one author or more. In the latter case, the East Syrian Metropolitan Elias of Merw may have been the author of the main part to which some loose comments from other sources would have been added not later than the 660s. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 182. See also Herman G.B. Teule, 'The Chronicle of Khuzistan', in Thomas and Roggema (eds.), *A Bibliographical History* 1, pp. 130-32.

wards the Arabs and if so, for what reasons. Yazdgard and his general might have been suspicious about the leaders of the Church of the East; as we have seen that Yazdgard also would have suspected Ishoʿyahb II's negotiations with Abu Bakr.[73]

The chronicle further recognizes the role of Khalid, and states that 'after these events' (ܒܬܪܟܢ), Khalid went to the West, to Heraclius.[74] Donner holds that Khalid fought in Iraq from about late spring 633 to April 634, subduing the nomadic groups at the desert fringes of Iraq and the Arabized towns below the Euphrates. Khalid left in Hira a garrison under the command of al-Muthanna b. Haritha. Somewhere between 635 and 642 al-Muthanna's successors invaded the Ahwaz district (part of Bet Huzaye) and this was completed by Abu Musa al-Ashʿari, who probably had to retake some of the cities.[75]

3.4.3. Tagrit, Nineveh and Mosul

Nineveh is located on the eastern bank of the Tigris. During the later Sasanian period a monastic settlement on the western shore was founded, which might have gained some strategic and military importance when it was fortified and could offer shelter against local Arab raiders. It was of strategic importance as it not only controlled the Tigris but also the passageway through the desert to the Shigar mountains.[76]

It is not clear to what extent the fate of the older cities Tagrit and Nineveh and of the new garrison city Mosul was connected. Mosul was located very close to Nineveh, but replaced it during Islamic times, which may have led to confusions among later historians. It is therefore very difficult to reconstruct the events during the first decade of the Arab conquests. Because Ishoʿyahb III may have experienced the events around these conquests, the reports and their interpretation will be discussed here in more detail.

The chronicles differ on the year of the capitulation of Nineveh and scholars therefore opt for either 637/38 or 641/42. These dates correspond to those for the conquests of Tagrit. Saʿd b. Abi Waqqas, mentioned above, would have given orders for the first attacks on Tagrit which seems to have been captured in 637 and to have surrendered again in 641.[77]

Tabari reports that Arabs coming from Kufa/Hira took Tagrit in 637/38. As we have seen, they would have fought forces which consisted of Byzantine troops, several Arab tribes and some 'local dignitaries'. These Arab tribes chose the side of the invaders and were also assist-

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[73] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 105, pp. 618-20; Gismondi (trans.), *Amri et Slibae,* pp. 31-32. See also above, section 2.6.3.
[74] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 36-37.
[75] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 174-78 and 215-17.
[76] Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 66-72.
[77] J.H. Kramers and C.E. Bosworth, 'Takrīt', *EI*[2] 10 (2000), pp. 140-41.

ed by the Rabiʿa that had converted the previous night. Thereupon troops were sent to 'al-Hisnan' ('twin fortresses'), which some identify with Nineveh and Mosul.[78] Ovidiu Ioan questions, however, this identification and argues that Nineveh was not taken shortly after the fall of Tagrit in 637, and that another account, reported by Baladhuri, should be followed.[79]

According to Baladhuri, the conquest of Nineveh was made by ʿUtba b. Farqad in 641. He reports that the people of Nineveh fought ʿUtba, who forcefully seized a fortress, which Baladhuri explains as being the eastern one. ʿUtba thereupon went to the opposite fortress on the other side of the Tigris,[80] which is easy to cross here.[81] The people in the other fort are said to have surrendered peacefully while being obliged to pay the *jizya* and this also would apply to the inhabitants of some monasteries here.[82] Baladhuri's report seems to take the notion of a fort on each side of the river for granted and this may be an indication that Tabari actually refers to Nineveh and Mosul.

Morony recognizes the two conquests of Tagrit, but follows Baladhuri's report for the conquest of Nineveh in 641 and the subsequent foundation of Mosul in the same year. He describes how Arabs starting from Tagrit went north and reached Nisibis in 638, but he does not mention Nineveh. He does, however, imply that Mosul had already been founded as military camp by 638.[83]

It is not clear to what extent Iyad b. Ghanm played a role in the later conquest. He may have been in the area as he went on a campaign for Muʿawiya about 639-40 and is reported to have reached Mosul after he had taken Nisibis, Shigar (Sinjar) and Balad.[84] Baladhuri adds in this respect that it was claimed 'that Iyad ibn Ghanm, when he conquered Balad, went to Mosul and reduced one of the two forts. Allah knows best'.[85]

Although the possibility is not to be excluded that some reports were accommodating to later pragmatic objectives,[86] most of the conflicting data seem to reflect the chaotic situation of the early years. A tentative and summarizing reconstruction of these reports and interpretations is as follows: in the same year Kufa was founded close to Hira in 637/38, Arab troops

[78] Juynboll, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Iraq*, pp. 54-56. Fiey holds therefore that Nineveh was taken in 637. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 5 and 14-15; idem, *Jalons*, p. 140; See also Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 26-27.
[79] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 31, with references. E. Honigmann also restricts himself to Baladhuri's report on the conquest of Nineveh. E. Honigmann and C.E. Bosworth, 'al-Mawṣil', *EI*[2] 6 (1991), pp. 899-901.
[80] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 134-35, with references; Francis Clark Murgotten (trans.), *The Origins of the Islamic State. Kitâb Futûḥ Al-Budân of al-Imâm abu-l Abbâs Aḥmad ibn-Jâbir al-Balâdhuri* 2 (New York, 1924), p. 31; cf. Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, p. 69.
[81] M.E.J. Richardson, 'Nīnawā', *EI*[2] 8 (1995), pp. 50-51.
[82] Murgotten (trans.), *Balâdhuri*, p. 31. On *jizya*, see also section 5.2.
[83] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 134-35, with references.
[84] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 130-31.
[85] Murgotten (trans.), *Balâdhuri*, p. 34.
[86] See for instance Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 26-29.

from this military outpost took Tagrit, which was located on the western side of the Tigris. Possibly remaining on this western side they took the fortress overseeing Nineveh on the other side and founded a new military post, called Mosul. The Tigris thus may have formed a natural border for an unknown time. The second conquest of Tagrit was made in 641 and has been connected to that of Mosul and Nineveh. It is unclear whether Tagrit had broken its treaty and therefore had to be reconquered or whether it was taken by other Arab groupings, possibly supported by Umayyad forces. The same applies to Mosul, although it seems more probable that this military garrison was taken by rival Arab groups, who were able to keep it for a longer time, while Umayyad influences increased. It is moreover not clear whether Nineveh had also already been taken by 637 or could remain relatively safe for some time before 641 while the Kufan troops remained at the fortress on the other side of the Tigris. Given the obscure transition period until Arab rule was really established in this area, one might suggest that Nineveh was also taken (at least) twice by different groupings. Since 642 both the Euphrates subdistricts and the former Sasanian crown province of Kashkar remained under the authority of the governor at Kufa, but this changed again in 661 and 683 during the Arab civil wars.[87]

When the Arabs coming from Kufa took Tagrit in 637, it was already Arabized, as it had been the market-centre for nomad tribes for a long time. Moreover, from around 627 to 636, Heraclius had brought befriended Arab tribes to the region around Tagrit. One of the tribes already living here before Islam was the Arab Christian tribe of the Iyad. The Iyad were part of the confederation of the Tanukh and some of them settled at Hira and Christianised, if they had not been converted earlier. A section of the tribe had already occupied Tagrit for one period, but after the Persians had expelled them, they remained for a long time in the neighbourhood. Another part of the Iyad, however, which had remained in Hira, had to fight in the Persian army. During the first capture of Tagrit in 637, the Iyad in the garrison of Tagrit are said to have secretly assisted the new invaders. In 638, many Iyads of Iraq would have joined the Byzantine army which tried to regain Syria, but when this proved to be unsuccesfull, most of them became Muslim.[88]

Another tribe living in the vicinity were the predominantly Miaphysite Taghlib, whose territory was roughly between Mosul and Tagrit on the western side of the Tigris. Since 570,

[87] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 36. For these later developments, see section 3.9.2. and 5.1.
[88] J.W. Fück, 'Iyād', *EI*^{2} 4 (1978), p. 289.

their territory shifted towards Northern Mesopotamia, later known as the Diyar Rabiʿa.[89] This might suggest that at least during the turbulent transition period of the conquests they still exerted influence or were defending it. In early Islam, most Taghlib in the area had not settled and did not own estates, but had fields and cattle. It was one of the strongest and most numerous nomadic tribes, but their political importance declined after the Islamic conquests.[90] We have seen that around this time the tribes of the Bakr and Mudar also moved north and similarly occupied regions that subsequently were called 'Diyar Bakr' and 'Diyar Mudar'. Together, they were to form the new Islamic province 'Jazira' (North-West Mesopotamia, including Edessa and Nisibis). The Taghlib had come under the Miaphysite influence centred in Tagrit. Fasting and the giving of alms, especially to the monasteries, are considered typical traits of their religious practices. They had their own bishops, as for instance the learned George of the Arabs (c. 640-724). Many Taghlib clung to their (Miaphysite) Christian faith, but demanded—and got—a less disadvantageous tax regime, which was more similar to that of the Arab Muslims.[91] According to Tabari, the Taghlib were allowed to retain their Christianity under the condition that they would not Christianize their children, and paid a double *sadaqa*.[92] Most Taghlib also managed to keep their vast territories, although they were constantly threatened by massive military pressure from immigrating Arabian tribes.[93] Not only had most Taghlib remained Christian during the first century of Islam, but also the northern Syrian Tanukh.[94]

The Shayban, who had been active during the first conquests, settled like other Bakr for a while in Basra and thereafter in Kufa. Soon they migrated further to the area of Mosul and largely resumed their nomadic life on both banks of the Tigris. Half of the year they lived in an area below Kufa, and the other half east of the Tigris between the Upper and Lower Zab, an area which roughly corresponds with the Adiabene,[95] the homeland of Ishoʿyahb III.

Arab rule thus took some time to be established and differed by region with several rival tribes involved. Moreover, some tribes had affinity to the Church of the East while others op-

[89] Lecker, 'Tag̲h̲lib b. Wāʾil', pp. 89-93. Trimingham describes a similar but less extended territory of the Taghlib. This would be situated between the rivers Khabur, Euphrates and Tigris, with Shigar and Mosul/Nineveh on the northern border and Tagrit in the south. Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, pp. 153 and 174-75.
[90] Lecker, 'Tag̲h̲lib b. Wāʾil', pp. 89-93.
[91] Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, pp. 153 and 172-74; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 374; Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, pp. 106-109.
[92] Donner, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia*, p. 62.
[93] Lecker 'Tag̲h̲lib b. Wāʾil', pp. 89-93.
[94] Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 59-62.
[95] Caskel, 'Bakr b. Wāʾil', pp. 962-64.

posed this and adhered to Miaphysitism. They could, however, change their faith overnight to Islam.[96]

From circa 640-85, the Jazira and the Mosul/Nineveh area (which included the regions in which Byzantines had exerted influence for a longer time) retained its pastoral character because steppes and rivers hampered urbanization and settlement. The region was occupied by Arab tribes who allowed the Christians a considerable amount of authority in the role of *mdabbrane* (administrators or governors). Around Nineveh/Mosul, which offered a better potential for settlements and transportation on the Tigris, new Arab elites were founded who invested in land while their power was concentrated in the city. Meanwhile, however, the more northern cities in the Jazira, such as Edessa and Nisibis, became marginalized.[97]

3.4.4. Damascus, Edessa and Nisibis

After General Khalid b. al-Walid had taken Hira, Abu Bakr would have sent him to Syria to help the Arab troops there. Due to its relative vicinity, Damascus may have seemed more important to Medina and the Hijaz. Khalid’s journey is difficult to reconstruct due to the conflicting data and places reported. When he arrived, Khalid defeated the Christian forces of the Ghassanids close to Damascus on the Easter Sunday in 634 (April 24), and took more Byzantine lands.[98] Muʿawiya, the later governor of Syria and founder of the Umayyad-Dynasty, participated in the conquest of Western Syria. Damascus was taken in 635, before the Byzantines retreated in 636.[99]

According to the *Chronicon Anonymum,* Ishoʿdad the Bishop of Hira stayed with ʿAbd Mashih in the area where Khalid defeated Heraclius. At least one of the two was engaged in the negotiations between Arabs and Byzantines. The Arabs killed many Byzantines including their leaders, but also Ishoʿdad and ʿAbd Mashih.[100] The latter might be identified with ʿAbd al-Mashih b. ʿAmr, who, according to Arabic chronicles, had already negotiated with Khalid during the siege of Hira.[101]

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[96] Donner, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia*, pp. 134-40; Juynboll, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Iraq*, pp. 54-57.
[97] Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. viii-ix and 59-62.
[98] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 124-25.
[99] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 131-32.
[100] Guidi (ed.) *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 37.
ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܢܦܩ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܛܝܝܐ ܓܒܪܐ ܚܕ ܕܫܡܗ ܚܠܕ: ܘܐܙܠ ܠܡܥܪܒܐ ܘܟܒܫ ܐܬܪܘܬܐ ܘܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܚܠܒ. [...] ܘܐܦ ܠܝܫܘܥܕܕ
ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܚܝܪܬܐ: ܕܐܬܐܘܗܝ, ܬܡܢ ܠܘܬ ܥܒܕ ܡܫܝܚ. ܕܟܕ ܗܘܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܨܥܝܘܬܐ ܒܝܬ ܛܝܝܐ ܠܪܗܘܡܝܐ ܩܛܠܘ ܘܐܬܩܛܠܘ ܛܝܝܐ
ܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܗܘܪܡܝܐ ܘܕܦܠܫܛܝܢܐ.
[101] The *Chronicon Anonymum* does not specify where ʿAbd Mashih stayed. According to Nöldeke this must have been the battle of the Yarmuk. Guidi (ed.) *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 37; Nöldeke, ‘Die syrische Chronik’, p. 45; Bosworth, *Ṭabari. The Sasanids*, p. 286, with references.

Gradually Syria was conquered, but the exact dates are not sure, here again due to conflicting accounts. Many towns would have resisted for a while, but did not succeed without the help of the Byzantine army. Several Arab groupings, such as the Ghassanids, Tanukh, Iyad and Salih remained Christian and tried to follow Heraclius when he left Syria.[102]

According to several sources, Edessa was taken in the third year after Iyad b. Ghanm made a treaty with the Byzantines not to invade Byzantine Mesopotamia.[103] Robinson argues that Muslims invaded northern Mesopotamia from Syria, and that Edessa was the first major city to fall. He is critical of the accounts of this conquest which emphasize a rather smooth transition of power, as other accounts give a far less peaceful account.[104] Robinson further holds that accounts making Edessa paradigmatic for the entire region are anachronistic, and this would also apply to Nisibis.[105]

During the conquests, Nisibis had been attacked from two sides. It had already been taken in 638 by Kufan troops. Around 639-40, Iyad b. Ghanm took the region around Nisibis starting from the West in the process of the reduction of the cities of Byzantine Mesopotamia. His army went in reversed order, and moving from Nisibis it took Shigar (*Sinjar*) and Balad and then reached Mosul. The same tax arrangements that were made in the former Byzantine areas were imposed on Nisibis and its districts, which now formed an administrative part of the Jazira. According to Morony, Nisibis was its centre and the Diyar Rabiʿa emerged as an administrative division. Already in 644 Nisibis was governed by an *amir,* who in turn was subordinate to Muʿawiya, the governor of Syria. This situation lasted until 656.[106]

Nisibis would have agreed to the same conditions as Edessa had done. The churches and monasteries would not be destroyed as long as they paid the taxes and did not intrigue. It was

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[102] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests,* pp. 154-55.

[103] The date of this truce was ‘presumably 637 (unless there is confusion with 638)’. Iyad and the Muslims would not cross the Euphrates, as long as the Byzantines paid 100,000 gold *nomismata* (72 *nomismata* = 1 Roman pound) annually. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests,* p. 159. When 1 Roman pound is 328.9g and the current gold price is c. 37,000 Euro/kg, this annual payment would be equivalent to roughly 17 million Euro.

[104] Robinson argues that the favourable accounts presumably are based on Theophilus of Edessa (d.785), and seem to have been adjusted in order to serve the current interests of the people of Edessa. Like them, Theophilus may have written his version for pragmatic reasons. Since (alleged) history influenced the laws and conditions of the time present, it may have been more advantageous to give a harmonious version of the events than one mentioning a violent attack by the Muslims or even a strong resistance by the inhabitants. Robinson, *Empire and Elites,* pp. 19-20.

[105] Referring to a letter by ‘the Nestorian Patriarch’ Ishoʿyahb III, Robinson suggests that ‘probably a decade after the conquest of the north’ Islamic presence is still not felt in Ctesiphon. However, this suggestion rests on incorrect assumptions, as Robinson allocates this letter to the wrong time and place. Actually, letter M-28 was written when Ishoʿyahb III was Metropolitan in Arbela which may have lasted from 637 (but more probably from 641) until 649/50. Robinson, *Empire and Elites,* pp. 41-44; Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-28, pp. 202-206.

[106] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 130-31.

moreover not permitted to build new churches or places of worship, to strike the boards, to celebrate the *rogations*,[107] or to show the cross in public.[108]

When Nisibis and its districts were united administratively with the Jazira and had to pay tax in Byzantine coins, they were probably no longer a part of the Eastern part but were (again) more closely connected to the West.

3.4.5. The reactions of Christians to the Arab invasions and subsequent government

Most Christians considered the Arab invasions a disaster; they interpreted them in the light of the biblical books *Daniel*, *Judges* and Chapter 24 of *Matthew*, considering them a sign of the beginning of the End of the World, which fostered their hope for the coming of Christ. As we have seen, apocalyptic feelings were also common among Muslim and Jews, as well as among Zoroastrians who considered the death of Yazdgard III the end of a millennium.[109]

By the seventh century, most Christians understood the four kingdoms predicted in *Daniel* as follows: the Christians were the children of Israel and the four successive kingdoms were seen as those of the: 1) Babylonians/Medes/Persians; 2) Greeks; 3) Romans, and the fourth and last was interpreted as a Christian kingdom that would last until the Second Coming of Christ, while the Arabs played only a subsidiary role in this apocalyptic history. The Arabs in turn, would have considered themselves God's chosen people as proven by their military successes.[110] The Islamic belief in the Last Day may have fostered the military actions.[111]

The apocalyptical element already formed part of Christian thinking, but in the East it gained widespread intensity in the seventh century. Where Byzantine historiography had connected it with their own victory, Miaphysite texts emphasized the chastisement by God for the sins of other Christians.[112] People from the Church of the East also saw the invasions as a

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[107] This probably refers to 'the Rogation of the Ninevites', also known as the 'Fast of Nineveh'. It is brought in connection with the biblical story of the Ninevites (who after being warned by Jonah for God's wrath repented and fasted, and thus were saved). It was adopted some time between the late 560s and the middle of the seventh century as a formal festival of the Church of the East to celebrate the passing of the plague after the people had prayed and fasted. The Church still celebrates it during three days of fasting. Joel Walker, 'Nineveh. Ninwe' *GEDSH*, p. 309.

[108] Fiey, *Nisibe*, pp. 64-65. Referring to Scher's *Chronicle of Seert* 2, p. 306, Fiey moreover holds that Heraclius left Nisibis in 639, but this date cannot be found there. The year 636 seems more appropriate.

[109] Morony, 'Apocalyptic Expressions in the Early Islamic World', pp. 175-77. See also idem, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 302-305; Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 296-97; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 259.

[110] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 259.

[111] Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, pp. 80-81.

[112] See for instance Harald Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallende Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalyptik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt/Main, 1985), pp. 234-36; Jan J. van Ginkel, 'The End is near! Some remarks on the relationship between historiography, eschatology, and apocalyptic literature in the West-Syrian tradition', in Wout J. van Bekkum, Jan Willem Drijvers and Alex C. Klugkist (eds.), *Syriac Polemics: Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink* (OLA 170; Leuven, 2007), pp. 207-209.

punishment by God. Often they were considered as punishment for the hated Byzantines, or for what the respective parties considered a heresy.[113] Hoyland further points out that the Byzantine church leaders rather intensified their efforts to counter what they considered false beliefs, since they thought that God's wrath was directed against these. This pattern also appeared in the other Christian denominations.[114] In general one can hold that the apocalyptic literature, which arose in all four major religions towards the end of the seventh century, was the result of the increased tensions.[115] Reinink concludes that this rather polemical apocalyptic literature preceded the apologetical texts. Both genres had in common the intentions of their authors to reinforce their own religious community against the religion of the rulers.[116]

The *Chronicon Anonymum* explained that the victory of 'the sons of Ishmael' came from God.[117] As we have seen, it also acknowledged that Abraham is 'the father of the head of their people'. They worshipped God in the desert, just like Abraham had done. Their territory would have included Medina or Yathrib, the region on the Eastern coast of the peninsula and the adjacent hinterland in Yamama, Tawf (ܛܘܦ),[118] and Hira, the latter being closely associated with the Ishmaelite kings.[119]

Reinink describes how 'Syriac (and Armenian) sources from the seventh century testify that early Islam was not seen as a new religion which succeeded Judaism and Christianity, but rather a form of the Old Testament religion adopted by the "people of the desert" who converted from pagan polytheism to the monotheistic faith of Abraham'. Initially, this mainly would have been marked by circumcision and sacrifice. Early in the eighth century Christians would argue that this new religion of Abraham actually had already found its fulfilment in the truth of Christ.[120]

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113 Brock, 'Syriac Views of Emergent Islam', pp. 10-11; Hugh Goddard, *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Chicago, 2000), pp. 35-41.

114 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 68 and 524-31.

115 Sebastian Brock, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3 (1976), pp. 33-36, also in Brock, *Syriac Perspectives*, Chapter 7. See for some of these later developments also section 5.2.

116 Gerrit Jan Reinink, 'From Apocalyptics to Apologetics: Early Syriac Reactions to Islam', in Wolfram Brandes and Felicitas Schmieder (eds.), *Endzeiten: Eschatologie in den monotheistischen Weltreligionen*, (Berlin, 2008), pp. 86-87.

117 Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 38. As we have seen in section 2.5, Christians were already used to see the Arabs as descendants of Ishmael,

118 Probably Taif is meant. Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', p. 47.

119 Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 30-31 and 38-39; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 186-89.

120 Gerrit Jan Reinink, 'The Lamb on the Tree: Syriac Exegesis and Anti-Islamic Apologetics', in E. Noort and E. Tigchelaar (eds.), *The Sacrifice of Isaac. The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and its Interpretations* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 111 and 123-24, also in Reinink, *Syriac Christianity*, Chapter 15.

3.5. The Arabs and the Qurʾan

3.5.1. Christians in the Qurʾan

The Qurʾan[121] calls Christian 'Nazarenes' (النَّصارىٰ, *al-nasara*), a term which referred to Christians in general, and did not specify the different denominations.[122] The Qurʾan seems, however, to recognize that there are several rival Christian groupings, but asserts that they all do err.[123] Further statements about Jews and Christians seem to be rather superficially,[124] and it has been questioned whether Muhammad had an accurate view of the main Christian denominations or distorted it for polemical and rhetorical reasons.[125]

In the Qurʾan are several statements in which Christians appear in a positive light. Other statements are more negative and associate Christians with the rejected polytheism and idolatry (*shirk*) and unbelief (*kufr*). Christians and Jews are qualified as 'people of the book' (*ahl al-kitab*), which signals a not completely forbidden status, because they had received the divine truth in the Gospel (*ingil*) and Torah (*tawrat*), but had distorted them. The earlier suras would have implied that they still could achieve salvation by their own rites, because of their monotheism and the belief in the Day of Judgment,[126] but this attitude changed. G. Vajda holds that these two conditions were no longer sufficient and that Christians and Jews were later accused of polytheism in Sura 9:30, while the preceding verse summoned the believers to fight against those 'who do not believe in God or the Last Day'. It would be an error to adopt their religion or to affiliate with them.[127] Christians and Jews should be humbled until they 'pay the tribute (*jizya*) out of hand, degraded' and submit to Islam (9:29-34).[128]

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[121] This study follows the translation of the Qurʾan by Arberry with occasional modifications to update the language. Arthur John Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (London, 1955; repr. New York, 1996). Also available online (with adjusted numbering) via http://al-quran.info/default.aspx#1:1/11Nk.
[122] Before Islam, Nazarenes were distinguished from 'Christians', but that does not seem to be the case in the Qurʾan and it cannot be concluded that it referred to early Judeo-Christian sects. Fiey, 'Naṣārā', pp. 970-73.
[123] For instance in Sura 19:37-40.
[124] G. Vajda, 'Ahl al-Kitāb', *EI*^{2} 1 (1960), pp. 264-66.
[125] William Montgomery Watt, for instance, holds that the Qurʾan does not offer a correct depiction of the specific faith of most Christians. William Montgomery Watt, *Muslim-Christian Encounters. Perceptions and misperceptions* (London, 1991), p. 23. Sidney Griffith rejects such conclusions as they would ignore the polemically inspired rhetoric of the Qurʾan which critiques the major Christian doctrines. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 24 and 36.
[126] Sura 2:62 and 5:69 are highly similar: 'Surely they that believe, and those of Jewry, and the Christians, and those Sabaeans, whoso believes in God and the Last Day, and works righteousness—their wage awaits them with their Lord, and no fear shall be on them, neither shall they sorrow.'
[127] Vajda, 'Ahl al-Kitāb', pp. 264-66; see also Goddard, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, pp. 26-28, with references.
Sura 3:28 'Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends, rather than the believers—for whoso does that belongs not to God in anything—unless you have a fear of them.'
Sura 3:118: 'O believers, take not for your intimates outside yourselves; such men spare nothing to ruin you; they yearn for you to suffer. Hatred has already shown itself of their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is yet greater. Now we have made clear to you the signs, if you understand.'

3.5.2. Christology in the Qurʾan

The monotheistic view of the Qurʾan is very strict. It finds its expression in the Islamic creed, the *shahada*: 'There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God'.[129] It rejects any form of *shirk* (شرك, literally 'association'), the deification or worship of anything or anyone other than the singular and transcendent God.[130] Consequently, the concept of Christ being the son of God is not allowed, as stated in Sura 112:3: Say: 'He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to him is not any one'.[131]

The Qurʾan calls Jesus *Isa* and 93 verses are devoted to him, giving him several epithets: Messiah (المَسيحُ, *al-Masih*), which is similar to the Syriac name of Christ (ܡܫܝܚܐ, *mshiha*); prophet (*nabi*); messenger (*rasul*); 'among those who are close to God' (3:45), a term which is also used for angels and would be explained later by Christ's 'ascension';[132] 'worthy of esteem in this world and the next' (3:45); and 'blessed'. Christ has a special position in the Qurʾan, as he is also considered God's Word, God's messenger, and 'a Spirit from him', but he is definitely not the son of God.[133] In this respect, the Qurʾan is closer to Nestorius' concept of Mary being a *Christotokos*, than of being a *Theotokos*, which the Church of the East rejected. The Qurʾan probably underlined Christ's humanity by the often repeated addition 'son of Mary'.[134]

The Qurʾan also rejects those who say that 'God had taken unto himself a son'.[135] Verses 3:42-56 are very important with respect to Christology. They refer to the annunciation and Christ's birth and death, but explain these in a different way. Christ was born from the Virgin

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Sura 5:51: 'O believers, take not Jews and Christians as friends; they are friends of each other. Whoso of you makes them his friends is one of them. God guides not the people of the evildoers.'

[128] See also below, section 5.2.

[129] The first part stems from Sura 3:62. Archaeological evidence for the second part is found only after 685. The earliest attested version of the *Shahada* probably stems from Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr, the opponent of Muʿawiya. Hoyland suggests that after Zubayr was killed in 690 or 691, his sayings were taken by the Umayyad. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 550-54.

[130] The term *shirk* appears 2 out of 5 times in the Qurʾan in the sense of the act of 'associating' with God. Originally, it signifies 'association' in a passive sense. It is especially the *hadith* that imposed the religious sense of the term. D. Gimaret, 'Shirk', *EI*[2] 9 (1997), pp. 484-86. Compare also the affinity with the Syriac ܣܪܟ which generally means 'adhere' or 'join'. *Sarik* (ܣܪܝܟ) means 'fixed', 'adhering', 'conjoined', R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* 2, col. 2740-41.

[131] As we will see later in section 4.2.2, the expression he 'who has not begotten, and has not been begotten' (لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ, *lam yalid wa lam yulad*) reminds one of the earlier Christian discussions on the Trinity, and especially of Sahdona's rather contemporaneous definition of the Holy Spirit (*la yaluda w la yalida*).

[132] This also may be seen in Sura 3:55.

[133] Sura 4:171; 19:34-40 and 19:88-92.

[134] Anawati, 'ʿĪsā', pp. 81-86. Similar statements can be found in Sura 19:34-40 and 88-92.

[135] Sura 19:88. The Jews were also accused of ascribing a son to God, namely Ezra (9:30).

Mary after God had created him by simply saying ‘Be’ (3:45-47). These verses may be dependent on 19:34:[136]

> That is Jesus, son (أَبْنُ, *ibn*) of Mary, in word of truth, concerning which they are doubting. 35. It is not for God to take a son (وَلَدًا, *walad*) unto him. Glory be to him! When he decrees a thing, he but says to it ‘Be’, and it is.

The Christological debates seem to have found a reaction in Sura 5:17 and 5:72, which states: ‘They are unbelievers who say, “God is the Messiah (*allaha huwa l-masihu*), Mary’s son”’.[137] Muhammad may have reacted to the first part of almost any Christological statement claiming that Christ is perfect God and perfect man. This was stated for example in 612 by the bishops of the Church of the East: ‘Christ our Lord is (ܐܝܬܘܗܝ) perfect God and perfect man in one filiation and in one majesty’.[138] Griffith suggests that Muhammad would have reversed the traditional equation by putting God first and thus polemically would emphasize what is wrong about Christian faith.[139] This may have been a logical pun, but without having further context it is not certain whether this applied. Within the Church of the East at least, we find similar criticism. Babai rejected a longer variation of this equation, which partly sounds very similar in Syriac (ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܡܫܝܚܐ, *alaha(h)w mshiha*). According to him, Cyril and Henana would have said: ‘God is Christ and Christ is God and these appellations do not signify something different’.[140] A statement ascribed to (Ps.-) Nestorius that probably stemmed from the first part of the sixth century gave the following definition: ‘Christ is God, but God is not Christ’.[141]

Sura 5:116 has God asking Jesus whether he had said: ‘Take me and my mother as gods, apart from God’ and Jesus denying this. Muhammad may have been influenced here by the polemical propaganda of the Church of the East against the Chalcedonians and Miaphysites,

[136] Pohlmann argues that Sura 3:33-51 is the product of a redaction after Muhammad’s death, integrating older verses (such as Sura 19:34-35) in the interest of Christian groupings within the Qurʾanic community. Pohlmann, *Die Entstehung des Korans*, pp. 180-86 and 193-94.
[137] اللهُ هُوَ المَسِيحُ ابنُ مَريَمَ, *Allaha huwa l-masihu, bnu Maryama.*
[138] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 574. See above section 2.3.2.
[139] Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, p. 33. Without further notification, Griffith changes the term ‘Messiah’ (Christ) into ‘Jesus’ and states that Christians in the Qurʾan’s milieu ‘would never have said that God is Jesus; rather they would have said that Jesus is God’. However, this does not seem to apply to the East Syrians, who rather discerned the man Jesus from the divine nature in Christ. As we have seen in section 2.2.1, Babai explicitly reserved the name ‘Jesus’ for the human nature of Christ.
[140] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/12, pp. 137-38 (cf. trans. idem, p. 111). See also above, section 2.1.3.2.
[141] ܘܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘ. Abramowski and Goodman (ed.), *Nestorian Collection*, 9, p. 202 (cf. trans. eidem, p. 121, see also their discussion of this text on pp. xlvi-viii).

arguing that their definition of Mary as being a *Theotokos* necessarily meant that she is a goddess.[142] Babai, for instance argued this some time between 612 and 620.

Especially in Sura 5, the claimed divinity of Christ and the Trinity (or Tritheism) are rejected. Typically, while rejecting such statements, the Qurʾan does not enter into any metaphysical discussion. It may be noted here that the Qurʾan does not contain a term for *hypostasis/qnoma.* Sura 5 has: 'They are unbelievers who say, 'God is the Third of Three. No god is there but One God'.[143] The Christ of the Qurʾan personally rejects the 'Children of Israel', who claim to follow him when they make him equal to God. Instead, he is just one of the prophets whom God had sent to warn the people against any deviation of the strict Monotheism by association anything to God.[144]

The dogma of the divine Trinity and the incarnation, which unites man and God, cannot be considered symbolically, since people are not allowed to make symbols of God. This is expressed in Sura 16:74: 'So strike not any similitudes for God; surely God knows, and you know not'.[145]

G. Anawati holds that the epithet ʿAbd Allah ('Servant of God') should not be interpreted in a Judaeo-Christian sense, but that it would indicate only that Christ is created and subject to God.[146] Anawati's view, however, seems to reduce too far the influence of this strong biblical tradition, in which Christ was seen as the exemplary Servant. The term 'servant of God' appears in Sura 5:116-17 and 19:30-33 where Christ spoke as child and may have hinted at the resurrection:

> 19:30. He said, 'Lo, I am God's servant; God has given me the Book, and made me a Prophet. 31. Blessed he has made me, wherever I may be; and he has enjoined me to pray, and to give the alms (*zakat*), so long as I live, 32. and likewise to cherish my mother; he has not made me arrogant, unprosperous. 33. Peace be upon me, the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I am raised up alive (أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا, *ubʿathu hayya*)!'

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[142] Some scholars interpret this as an indication that the Qurʾan objects to the view that considers Mary a goddess and—in combination with Sura 5:73—even a part of the Trinity. The latter identification seems less likely. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 34-35.

[143] Sura 5:73. C. Jonn Block points out that the translation 'three' (ثَلاَثَةٌ, *thalatha*) in Sura 4:171 and 5:73 is sometimes incorrectly translated as 'trinity'. Muhammad would have rejected a 'Philoponian Monophysite doctrine, a tritheist sect of Christianity' in the Najran. The Qurʾan thus would criticize the Tritheism which was current at the time of Muhammad, but not the Trinity itself. C. Jonn Block, 'Philoponian Monophysitism in South Arabia at the Advent of Islam with Implications for the English Translation of "Thalātha" in Qurʾān 4. 171 and 5.73', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23.1 (2012), pp. 74-75. Griffith, however, holds that God is again polemically defined as Christ, since Syriac homiletic texts would refer to Christ as 'one of three' or similar expressions. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, p. 34.

[144] Sura 5:72-75.

[145] Sura 74: 'So strike not any similitudes for God' فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ *(fa-la tadribu li-llahi l-amthala*); Seppo Rissanen, *Theological Encounter of Oriental Christians during Early Abbasid Rule* (Abo, 1993), pp. 69-70.

[146] Anawati, 'ʿĪsā', pp. 82-83.

Christ being God's Word may reflect a fundamental Christian view, shared by all Christians. Abdel Haleem notes that the epithet 'a Word from God' may be explained by the Qurʾanic claim that Jesus was brought into being by God's command.[147]

> 4:171. People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to God but the truth. The Messiah (المَسِيحُ), Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and his Word (كَلِمَتُهُ, *kalimatuhu*) that he committed to Mary, and a Spirit from him. So believe in God and his Messengers, and say not, 'Three.' Refrain; better is it for you. God is only One God. Glory be to him—That he should have a son (وَلَدٌ)! To him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; God suffices for a guardian (وَكِيلًا).[148]

The crucifixion and resurrection are further touched upon in Sura 4:157-58, in which the Jews are accused of claiming to have crucified Christ. According to the Qurʾan, the Jews did not kill Christ, nor did they crucify him, 'but it was made to appear to them'.[149] This statement is problematic, especially because the next verse also hints to the ascension of Christ stating that 'God raised him up (رَفَعَهُ, *rafaʿahu*) to him'. It has been aligned with a kind of Docetism by both Islamic exegetes and western commentators, but it is not clear whether this was actually the case.[150] The following succession of events seems to have been referred to: apparent death, ascension, second coming, natural death, general resurrection.[151]

Although the epithet 'Messiah' (*al-Mashih*) for Christ seems to have been influenced by Syriac Christianity (the Syriac name for Christ is *mshiha*, which is closely related to the Hebrew term for the 'anointed' saviour), the Qurʾan ignores its messianic bearing.[152]

Moreover, Christ's death has no salvific importance.[153] Where the crucifixion is crucial for Christians, because they see in Christ a sinless saviour who took our sins upon himself by his death, the Qurʾan rejects this basic Christian tenet. Sura 35:18 declares that 'No soul laden

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[147] M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an. A new translation by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem* (Oxford, 2005), p. 37; Anawati distinguishes three other possible Muslim exegeses: Jesus is announced in the word of God as preached by earlier prophets; Jesus speaks on behalf of God and leads men in the right way; Jesus is in his own person a word of God, 'good tidings'. Anawati, 'ʿĪsā', p. 83.
[148] وَكِيلًا (*wakila)* also can mean 'trustee', 'defender', 'advocate', 'witness' or 'disposer of affairs'.
[149] وَلَٰكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ, *wa-lakin shubbiha lahum*.
[150] Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 36-39 and 88-89.
[151] Anawati, 'ʿĪsā', p. 84.
[152] Bosworth holds that neither in the Qurʾan nor in Eastern Christianity would the name ʿal-Mashih' have been associated with a messianic role. He approvingly refers to Trimingham's claim that 'there is no genuine messianism in the eastern versions of Christianity', and that therefore no 'eschatological interpretation could possibly have been current in Arabia in reference to Jesus'. This remark on eschatology does not concur at all with our earlier findings: already Theodore of Mopsuestia had elaborated the theme. A.J. Wensinck and C.E. Bosworth, 'al-Masīḥ', *EI*[2] 6 (1991), p. 726; Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, p. 267.
[153] Neal Robinson, 'Jesus', in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* (Brill Online, accessed 18 Aug. 2013).

bears the load of another; and if one heavy-burdened calls for its load to be carried, not a thing of it will be carried, though he be a near kinsman. […] and whosoever purifies himself, purifies himself only for his own soul's good. To God is the homecoming.'[154]

3.5.3. Influences from the Church of the East in the Qurʾan?

The *Qurʾan* contains numerous allusions to biblical stories. Most of the religious terminology comes from Aramaic dialects, especially Syriac and Christian Palestinian Aramaic. For instance the vocabulary, syntax and imagery used in the Qurʾan for the warnings of the apocalypse would 'suggest a particular relationship with Syriac literature'.[155] However, we should bear in mind that despite the numerous allusions in the Qurʾan to biblical stories (sometimes even using the same words), they cannot simply be taken as evidence of specific Christian or Jewish influences. These stories have been reshaped and put in a completely new structure and form. Still, a comparison which takes linguistic, historical and theological questions current at that time into account may add to our understanding.[156]

The very name of the Qurʾan has been taken to indicate some Aramaic/Syriac influence.[157] The Arab *Qurʾan* (القرآن) and the Syriac *qeryana* (ܩܪܝܢܐ) stem from the same root *qry*, meaning 'read' or 'call'.[158] Syrian Christians used to read the holy books aloud in a melodic way, aimed at reaching the heart. Muhammad's followers considered the Qurʾan 'the voice' of God, which had been called out to all nations and had found its final summation in Arabic.[159] They

[154] Some Biblical references are: Matt. 20:28; 26:28; Luke 22:37; John 3:16; 10:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:9-10. Another Qurʾanic reference is Sura 17:15.

[155] Emran El-Badawi and Gabriel Said Reynolds, 'The Qurʾan and the Syriac Bible' (Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed 13 Nov. 2013). An impression of the acclaimed influences of the Judeo-Christian literature on the Qurʾan can be obtained in the index of Heinrich Speyer's *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran* (Gräfenhainichen, 1931; repr. Hildesheim, 1988), pp. 502-505.

[156] Cf. Nicolai Sinai and Angelika Neuwirth, 'Introduction', in Neuwirth, Sinai and Marx, *The Qur'ān in Context*, pp. 12-15; El-Badawi and Reynolds, 'The Qur'an and the Syriac Bible'.

[157] The controversial hypothesis of Luxenberg that the Qurʾan was originally a 'Christian lectionary' has been discussed by many scholars. Daniel King examines Luxenberg's findings from the standpoint of Syriac philology. He values some of these but rejects the hypothesis as a whole. Christoph Luxenberg, *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran. Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache* (Berlin, 2000); Daniel King, 'A Christian Qur'ān? A Study in the Syriac Background to the Language of the Qurʾān as Presented in the Work of Christoph Luxenberg', *The Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture* 3 (2009), pp. 44 and 71-74. Another controversial theory is that of Ohlig, who speculates that Islam derives from a pre-Nicene theology that Arabs would have adhered to at an early stage. Karl-Heinz Ohlig, 'Das syrische und arabische Christentum' in idem and Gerd-R. Puin (eds.), *Die dunklen Anfänge. Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und frühen Geschichte des Islam* (Berlin, 2005), pp. 398-403.

[158] Possible translations for ܩܪܝܢܐ are: 1. Call, invocation, appeal; 2. Reading; 3. Study, listening; 4. Learning; 5. Holy scripture, Old Testament. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, p. 1409.

[159] Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 281-82 and 290-91. El-Badawi and Reynolds similarly hold that 'the literary and rhetorical form of Qurʿanic exhortation functions like that of Syriac religious exhortation'. El-Badawi and Reynolds, 'The Qurʿan and the Syriac Bible'.

opposed 'Arabic recitation' or even 'Arabic discernment' to the 'foreign recitation' of Jews and Christians.[160]

The interpretation in the Qurʾan of Christ as an exemplary servant had appeared already in the Old Testament and resembles an important aspect of the Christology of the Church of the East, although the Qurʾan denies Christ's divine origin. The previous chapters have shown that the form of God (the Word) assuming the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6-7) was a fundamental theme in Antiochene Christology which was adopted by the Church of the East. Nestorius had connected it with exemplary obedience and the concept was still being used in the Synod of 605 and by Babai and Ishoʿyahb II. It seems therefore feasible that the Qurʾan could have adopted the servant theme that still was current at that time and was known to Christian Arabs. The importance of the concept 'servant' may further be inferred from the fact that an important group of Arabs in Hira derived their name (*ʿIbad*) from the word *ʿabd* (servant) and this even may have signified their adherence to the Church of the East and an awareness of being the 'only genuine worshipers of God'.[161]

An influence from circles within the Church of the East or Miaphysitism might further be discerned in a completely different field. This concerns the debated meaning of the mysterious seven letters (*alif, mim, nun, sin, lam, ta* and *ra*), which precede many suras in various combinations. According to Muslim tradition, they would show the divine character of the Qurʾan, but a more specific explanation has not been found.[162] However, they remind us of the system used in Babai's commentary on the Sentences of Evagrius, and a similar system may have been applied in the Qurʾan.[163] This is difficult to assess since the letters do not appear before each individual verse, but only before the very beginning of the Suras, which can be very long and of a highly varied content. It is nevertheless remarkable that elements of such a mystical work may have found entrance in the Qurʾan and one may assume that they have been transmitted by monks.

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[160] Heribert Busse, *Die theologischen Beziehungen des Islams zu Judentum und Christentum. Grundlagen des Dialogs im Koran und die gegenwärtige Situation* (Darmstadt, 1991), pp. 30-31.

[161] See above, section 1.14.3. The practice of being called the servant of (a) God may also have reflected a more widespread respectable tradition which also was popular among other Arabs, such as the ʿAbd al-Qays. On the other hand, the term 'servant' could have negative associations and—as we have seen in section 3.5.2—could be used to emphasize that Christ was merely a creature.

[162] Montgomery Watt and Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'an*, pp. 61-65.

[163] The introduction to Babai's commentary explained that each sentence of Evagrius was provided with the letter(s) which designated in short form its main content in order to facilitate reading. Six Syriac letters were being used and each letter formed the beginning of the word designating the content (God, angels, soul, devil, bodies, book). It is remarkable that both systems used four corresponding letters out of six or seven. One might therefore suggest that these letters expressed similar meanings as well. The characteristics or subject of each part are designated as follows in the commentary: ܐ (*alap*) for God (ܐܠܗܐ, *Alaha*); ܡ (*mim*) for angels (ܡܠܐܟܐ, *malake*); ܢ (*nun*) for soul and reason (ܢܦܫܐ, *napsha* and ܡܕܥܐ); ܫ (*shin*) for devils (ܫܐܕܐ, *shede*); ܓ (*gamal*) for bodies (ܓܘܫܡܐ, *gushme*) and ܟ (*kap*) for Scriptures (ܟܬܒܐ, *katbe*). Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus*, pp. 46-49.

3.6. Danger in Nineveh/Mosul

It was probably in Nineveh that Ishoʿyahb III had to cope with the fall of the Sasanians and the subsequent rule by Byzantines and Arabs. In 628, he officially had become bishop of Nineveh, possibly after already serving it unofficially some time before. In 627-28, Nineveh had been the scene of the decisive battles between the troops of Heraclius and Khosrau and had been destroyed. The situation in Nineveh was very difficult: not only was Miaphysitism favoured here by Heraclius at the expense of the Church of the East, but Ishoʿyahb III also encountered heavy resistance from within his own Church.

After Arabs coming from Kufa conquered Tagrit in 637, they quickly developed an already existing settlement close to Nineveh on the other side of the Tigris into the new town of Mosul. In several letters probably written towards the end of his episcopate, Ishoʿyahb III described the great problems he encountered but also some improvements. The changed attitude of the leaders of the day towards the Church of the East may have reflected a change in power among Arab tribes.

Ishoʿyahb III probably experienced the Arab conquests towards the end of his episcopacy. It is not known exactly when his episcopacy ended. According to some scholars it was before 637, while others hold it was some time before 641. These estimates are based on the conflicting reports mentioned above on the fall of Nineveh and affect the interpretation of some of Ishoʿyahb III's letters. An alternative chronology and subsequent interpretation of some of Ishoʿyahb III's letters will be proposed in section 3.6.3.

3.6.1. Growing influence of Miaphysites within the Church of the East

In E-25, Ishoʿyahb III wrote to the Catholicos about the problems of the time and his fear for 'a great worm that a bad overseer (ܦܩܘܕܐ) brought forth from the body of the community' which had already conquered many who 'crept together to the head of the community'. Ishoʿyahb III feared that this infiltration, which corrupted the tradition of the people, would consume the rest as well and that it would perish only after everything else had perished. Ishoʿyahb III asked the Catholicos to be relieved from his difficult position and he even considered fleeing.[164] This would have been the second time Ishoʿyahb III was in a very dangerous

[164] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* E-25, pp. 46-47.

situation, as he had already excused himself for a flight in letter E-15 in which he referred to an earlier letter to the Catholicos that would explain the flight expected.[165]

The problems got even worse before they changed for the better. In letter E-39 Ishoʿyahb III reported to his Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II of the growing tensions and hardships in Nineveh which seemed to him the ruin of the world. Ishoʿyahb III could perform the service of the Church of God only with a 'moderate liturgy' (ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܡܟܝܟܬܐ), in an attempt to resist this ruin, stirred up by Satan. Ishoʿyahb III then described in a highly stylized way disturbing events that had taken place during the Easter Ceremonies on Holy Thursday and which resembled those on the first day of Passover (*Pasha*, ܦܨܚܐ) of the Lord (cf. Matt. 26:17-56). Similarly, the people of the Church of the East were betrayed by their own leaders, especially by one unnamed famous head.[166]

> (Satan) prepared a Passover for us in which we must do what resembles the Passover of our Lord in everything: on the same day, moment, in like manner and in the complete procedure of the acts.
> Instead of Herodes and Pilatus: heads and governors (ܪ̈ܫܢܐ ܘܫܠ̈ܝܛܢܐ) of our land; instead of the high priest of the Jews and the elders of their people: heretics and princes (ܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܘܪ̈ܘܪܒܢܐ) of our people;
> […] instead of swords and clubs (ܣ̈ܦܣܪܐ ܘܚܘܛ̈ܪܐ, cf. Matt. 26:47): those swords and clubs; […] instead of Judas the betrayer: a famous and honoured head (ܪܫܐ) who is in our gatherings. While he still (ܥܕܟܠ) had the oblation between his lips, he showed greater zeal than Judas. For he neither waited for us, as even Judas waited, so that we could not sing praise and go out to the Mount of Olives (Matt. 26:30, Mark 14:26), nor did he come to us with a kiss as he (i.e. Judas) had done, but with spear and shield (cf. I Sam. 17:45).[167]

Ioan further sees in the oblation a reference to Ishoʿyahb II taking the Communion together with Heraclius in 630.[168] This oblation, however, seems more likely to be a culmination of the depicted parallel with the events on Golgotha: faster than Judas had kissed and betrayed the

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[165] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-15, p. 20.
ܗܟܡ ܒܥܘܬܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܡܘܬܠܡܬܐ ܥܠ ܐܦܪ̈ ܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܒܥܘܪܩܐ܀ ܠܡܕܝܢ ܒܟܠ ܐܟܘܢ ܢܩܫܐ ܗܪ، ܢܡܟܚܫܗ ܡܘܬܠܡܬܐ ܦܘܪ̈ܕܟܡܗ
The possibility is not to be excluded that letter E-25 might have been the very letter he referred to when hoping for some understanding for his flight (E-15). In this case, however, letter E-15 must have been written after E-25 and would therefore be misplaced. See on this (first) flight, section 3.1.

[166] In the East-Syrian Church *pasha* denotes Holy Thursday, which fully applies to Ishoʿyahb III's description here. Cf. J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*. p. 454. It is further remarkable that a decisive conquest had taken place at Easter as well. This was during Easter 634, when Khalid b. Walid is reported to have defeated the Christian forces of the Ghassanids close to Damascus. See above section 3.4.4. It is not clear whether this was coincidental; whether Easter was a favourable day to attack the Christians, possibly because baptisms were often being administered on Easter Sunday; to what extent this had a symbolic meaning; or whether Ishoʿyahb III might have alluded to this event, which presumably had happened some years before.

[167] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-39, pp. 65-66 (cf. trans. idem, p. 52).

[168] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 28-29.

real Christ, the anonymous leader had already touched with his lips the representation of Christ's body.

The letter turned then into a positive account of what happened further and what was seen as God's work. The comparison with the Easter events continued, because Ishoʿyahb III now spoke of the salvation of the Church which took place. The heretics went away to the 'barbarian leaders, who opposed us (because of) our sins', and although the heretics threatened Ishoʿyahb III daily with murder, the barbarians seem to have started to favour the Church of the East at the expense of the Miaphysites.

> And as they (the heretics) were broken from their strength of hope by the wound of the Lord, they departed to barbarian leaders (ܫܠ̈ܛܢܐ ܒܪ̈ܒܪܝܐ), who opposed us (because of) our sins. […] But the spirit of God with his usual wonder turned the violence of the barbarians (ܒܪ̈ܒܪܝܐ) little by little to peacefulness for us and they (the heretics) were disappointed by them as they were disappointed by Atur.[169]

The next letter to Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II (E-40), probably gives a suggestion for the identity of that 'famous and honoured head' who had disrupted the Easter ceremonies, and who also might have been the same as the 'bad overseer' mentioned in E-25. Ishoʿyahb III now might have alluded to his name: Makkika, when referring to 'our humble (*makkika*) Father Mar Metropolitan (ܐܒܘܢ ܡܟܝܟܐ ܡܪܝ ܡܝܛܪܦܘܠܝܛܐ ܕܝܠܢ)'. He held this metropolitan responsible for many problems and accused him of being involved in the consecration of a complete stranger as bishop by two illegal bishops. The stranger had to pay money and was sent away, but he probably was killed. There was more to report about this metropolitan, but Ishoʿyahb III preferred to tell this in a private meeting. Apparently, this information was controversial and had to remain confidential. Ishoʿyahb III further wrote that such conduct had caused so many problems in Nineveh that he had even wanted to resign, which he did not do, after being persuaded by the Catholicos.[170]

3.6.2. Miaphysites supported by 'barbarian leaders' and Persian nobles who changed sides

The expression 'barbarian leaders' in the previously discussed letter E-39 might have referred to Arab tribes that were powerful in this area by now. This could have been the predominantly

[169] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-39, p. 66. The comparison with Atur (Assyria) is possibly a reference to God's judgment of Israel which had left him and allied instead with kingdoms. Because God rejected those kingdoms, Israel perished (Jerem. 2:36).

[170] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-40, pp. 67-68. Referring to E-25, 39 and 40, Fiey also identifies Makkika as Metropolitan of Arbela. Fiey, *Jalons*, p. 140; idem, 'Īšō 'yaw le Grand', pp. 332-33; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 30.

Miaphysite Taghlib. Until c.637 this also could have been Miaphysite Arabs around Tagrit who supported Heraclius in this area. This latter hypothesis might be confirmed by Ovidiu Ioan's suggestion (referring to Kaegi) that the weapons being used during the disruption of the Passover possibly point in the Byzantine direction, since Persians would prefer bows.[171]

The 'barbarian leaders' might have imposed their own taxes. This can be inferred from a letter to Nisibis, during the time that Nisibis suffered from famine and many refugees went to Nineveh (E-41). This probably happened in the second half of Ishoʿyahb III's episcopate, the exact year unfortunately being unknown.[172] The situation in Nineveh must have been more stable and improved, although Ishoʿyahb III claimed that the many taxes (ܬܒ̈ܥܬܐ) he had to pay had the effect that there was hardly anything left with which to pay them. It is not clear to what extent the tax regime in Nineveh differed from that in Nisibis.[173]

Letter E-43 shows that Nineveh also suffered from many adversities and distressing changes and sufferings. The 'impious' in Nineveh had become quite powerful and they provoked daily disorder among the people and the governors (ܫܠ̈ܝܛܢܐ) of the region. Ishoʿyahb III went therefore on a mission to them and sent a letter to the 'highest position' (ܪܫܢܘܬܐ): this probably meant the Catholicos.[174]

Ishoʿyahb III wrote about the problems in Nineveh not only to the Catholicos, but also to Gabriel, the metropolitan of Bet Garmai (E-44). It is not clear why Ishoʿyahb III wrote to Gabriel. Possibly, he had to be informed because Ishoʿyahb III had to travel through Bet Garmai on his way to Tagrit. Another suggestion is that Gabriel might have been responsible for ecclesiastical affairs in Tagrit.[175] It is not clear whether or not this changed in 637, when the Arabs took Tagrit. Whatever the case, Ishoʿyahb III could probably expect no help from his own Metropolitan Makkika, from whom he even might have considered fleeing. He informed Metropolitan Gabriel about the problems with heretics (Miaphysites) and the leaders of the day. This probably referred to the same events and the (temporary) change in the position of the

[171] See also above, sections 3.2. and 3.6.1. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 28-29; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, p. 161. However, another interpretation is also possible. If Duval's suggestion in his translation is right that the phrase 'with spear and shield' referred to 1 Sam. 17:45 (in which David expressed his confidence that he would conquer Goliath the Philistine who came 'with sword and spear and shield', while David came in the name of God), Ishoʿyahb III may merely have alluded to the positive outcome of the difficult situation. Although it remains highly speculative, the implicit reference to Philistines might also have formed a rough indication from which side the enemies came, which again would concur with the suggestion that Miaphysite Ghassanids and their allies were involved.

[172] The first letter mentioning famine in Nisibis is E-27. See also section on Nisibis, 3.7.2.

[173] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-41, p. 70.

[174] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-43, pp. 79-80.

[175] According to Fiey, Heraclius would have put Tagrit under the jurisdiction of Bet Garmai. However, Fiey also acknowledges that there was no East Syrian church in Tagrit until 767. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 330, idem, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, p. 137; see also Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 29

Church of the East in Nineveh as those mentioned in letter E-39. Ishoʿyahb III reported that his own people had turned frustrated and aggressive. Comparing the Miaphysites vividly to biblical serpents and basilisks who had their 'Satan's nest' nearby (probably the Miaphysite monastery Mar Mattai), he summarized how the Miaphysites had become powerful. First, because of the present governors (ܫܠܝܛܢܐ) who were prone to bribery; secondly, the support of many 'who long ago belonged to their heresy'. It is not clear to whom Ishoʿyahb III might have referred. Could it have been Miaphysites who had converted nominally to the Church of the East, Zoroastrians, adherents of an early stage of Islam or some rather local grouping? The third reason was the success of the people of Tagrit before the leaders and governors there. The fourth reason was Satan supporting the inobedient.

> First and for all: the easy accessibility of the present governors for those who approach them with silver incantations and golden petitions. Second: the multitude of bad helpers who long ago (belonged) to their heresy, but now belong to the number of those who govern. Third: the reception and success of the people of Tagrit before the leaders and governors there. And fourth with these: Satan's work which is powerful in the disobedient, who do not persevere in the love of truth by which they might live. […]. For they found also a governor from there, who fully helped them.[176]

While the increasing influence and number of the Miaphysites was probably at the expense of the Church of the East, the loss of support from influential noblemen weakened its position further. Ishoʿyahb III gave in E-44 the example of a distinguished person who changed faith several times. Starting with the 'heretical Christianity' (probably Miaphysitism) of his mother, he moved to the 'orthodox' faith of his father and continued with paganism, 'the companion of heretics'. After he had returned for a while to the Church of the East, 'out of conscience and fear of death due to the suspicion of the governors (ܫܠܝܛܢܐ)', he finally joined the Miaphysites again and appeared to have supported them morally and materially. This 'fear of death' raises the question whether it referred to a spiritual death or to a physical death, the latter implying that governors had the right to kill someone if his belief was not considered orthodox.[177] The

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[176] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-44, p. 82.
ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܘܩܕܡܝܬܐ: ܕܠܠܘܬ ܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܠܝܛܢܐ ܕܗܫܐ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܒܠܚܫܬܐ ܕܟܣܦܐ. ܘܒܒܥܘܬܐ ܕܕܗ̈ܒܐ ܡܬܩܪܒܝܢ ܠܘܬܗܘܢ. ܕܬܪܬܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܣܓܝܐܘܬܐ ܕܡܥܕܪ̈ܢܐ ܒܝܫ̈ܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܩܕܝܡ ܡܢ ܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܗܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܫܠܝܛܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܕܬܠܬ ܬܘܒ ܡܬܩܒܠܢܘܬܐ ܘܡܨܠܚܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܢ̈ܝ ܬܓܪܝܬ ܩܕܡ ܪ̈ܝܫܢܐ ܘܫܠܝܛܢܐ ܕܬܡܢ. ܘܕܐܪܒܥ ܥܡ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܗ ܕܣܛܢܐ ܕܡܬܚܝܠܐ ܒܒ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣܘܬܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܪܝܢ ܒܚܘܒܐ ܕܩܘܫܬܐ ܕܒܗ ܢܚܘܢ. [...] ܐܫܟܚܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܠܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܬܡܢ ܕܡܠܐܝܬ ܡܥܕܪ ܠܗܘܢ.

[177] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-44, p. 83.
ܘܒܪ ܡܢ ܣܘܪܕܐ ܠܡܒܥܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܡܘܦܣܐ ܕܬܐܪܬܐ ܐܬܟܒܝ:، ܡܛܠ ܠܘܬ ܒܝܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܦܢܝ. ܒܕܡܟܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܘܡܢ ܚܫܕܐ ܕܫܠܝܛܢܐ ܐ ܒܢ̈ܝ. ܗܫܐ ܡܢ ܕܢܦܩ ܐܝܟ ܠܒܟܐ ܚܠ ܬܘܒܗ ܠܘܬ ܒܥܪܐ ܕܚܙܝܪ̈ܐ ܕܢܚܘܡ ܒܗ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܥܢܝܕ. ܐܬܗܦܟ ܒܟܐܦܐ ܕܪܘܚܡܬܐ ܘܠܡܣܩܒܠܢܘܬܐ ܕܪܫܝܥܐ ܡܘܡܐ ܗܘ ܕܬܘܒܠܝܢ ܘܡܥܕܪܢܐ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܗܠܟܝܢ.

anonymous person described might have been the influential Yazdanan, whom Ishoʿyahb III had tried to keep within his Church in his former letter (E-43).[178]

Ishoʿyahb III described the Miaphysites in Nineveh as stupid and uneducated, but because they had found a governor (ܫܠܝܛܐ) in Tagrit who helped them fully, they could succeed in getting what they wanted and they caused a lot of problems. There was for instance a watch tower (ܕܘܩܐ) nearby hindering Ishoʿyahb III's view. Ishoʿyahb III even stated that because of this tower everyone had been forced to save their lives with all their might. This suggests that the people of Nineveh were attacked from this tower. The whole situation strengthened Ishoʿyahb III's conviction that he was living at the end times and he wrote Gabriel:[179]

> The world therefore, O our God loving Father, reached its end, as you know. And it came already and seized everything: that rebellion (ܡܪܘܕܘܬܐ) that had been predicted by the spirit of God (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3) and that had to go along with the revealing of Satan. Or it (the rebellion) is perhaps soon at hand, that is to say, it has already began truly to take an end. '*When the son of man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?*' (Luke 18:8).[180]

Whether the watch tower from which the people of Nineveh were attacked formed part of a siege by Arab tribes is not clear. Apart from the highly dangerous tower, the people of the Church of the East became irritated by the continuous insults and they lamented heavily and detested the impure sign (ܐܬܐ ܛܢܦܬܐ) Satan had put at the gate of their city. Ishoʿyahb III concluded his sad report by stating that 'our people are poor in power and in want of wealth, but abundantly lacking authority and recognition in the world.' The situation had become so tense and explosive that people wanted to revolt, even up to the danger of death. For all these reasons Ishoʿyahb III had decided to go to the secular governors, but except for a certain Kabab (ܟܒܒ) he found no support in the hostile majority. Ishoʿyahb III asked Gabriel for help, so that he could return to his city without the disorder and the conflicts caused by the 'impious'. He wrote that he sent Abbot Henanishoʿ to give further information.[181]

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[178] See also section 3.3.

[179] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-44, p. 81.

[180] Other letters to Gabriel are E-49 and E-52. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-44, pp. 81-82.
ܫܠܡܬ ܗܟܝܠ ܥܠ ܥܠܡܐ ܐܒܘܢ ܪܚܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܫܬܘܕܥܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܕܥ ܐܢܬ. ܘܐܬܬ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܟܕܘ ܘܐܚܕܬ ܟܠ. ܡܪܘܕܘܬܐ ܗܝ
ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܐܡܝܪܐ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܕܥܡ ܗܘ ܓܠܝܢܘܬܗ ܕܣܛܢܐ ܐܬܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܬܗܘܐ. ܐܘ ܩܪܝܒܐ [82] ܗܝ ܠܟܝ. ܐܘ ܟܒܪ ܫܪܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢ
ܟܕܘ ܠܡܣܒ ܫܘܠܡܐ ܒܫܪܪܐ: ܗܝ ܕܐܬܬܐ ܠܡ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܘܫܟܚ ܟܝ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܐܪܥܐ.

[181] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-44, pp. 81-85. The name Kabab is otherwise unknown. Referring to this letter, Margoliouth states that he is a 'Monophysite', Margoliouth, *Supplement to the Thesaurus Syriacus*, p. 159. The name Henanishoʿ (ܚܢܢܝܫܘܥ) appears in seven letters. E-10 and M-3 refer to the famous monk Henanishoʿ who also participated in the 612 debate and E-4 may have been addressed to him. E-48 (see below section 3.10.1) probably refers to someone further unknown. In E-44 as well in E-43, Henanishoʿ is called an abbot and is clearly a highly trusted associate; he is therefore probably the same as in E-13, where he is the only associate of Bish-

In a later letter (E-49), Ishoʿyahb III informed Gabriel on the progress being made. Soon after Ishoʿyahb III had written his former letter to Gabriel and went to Tagrit, everything had turned out well. Some of the impious were driven far away, or hid in the caves. Ishoʿyahb III also sent a copy of his former letter written in the middle of distress.[182] Why he did so and whether he had actually sent it or had reason to believe that it had not arrived is not known. It is moreover not impossible that he successfully bribed the governors with gold himself. According to the Miaphysite Bar Hebraeus at least, Ishoʿyahb III had obstructed the building of a Miaphysite church by giving large sums of money to the judges (ܕܝ̈ܢܐ).[183]

Fiey suggests that Tagrit also figured in a letter written when Ishoʿyahb III was metropolitan (M-17). Ishoʿyahb III commended Bishop Abba for all his efforts to correct and control certain men and informed him that one of them had ‘crossed the western borders of the *politeia* of the orthodox’ (ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ) and was received in the ‘great city of the heretics’. Fiey holds that this city was Tagrit, that the ‘*politeia* of the orthodox’ signified the ‘province of the Nestorians’, and that the man was a priest who was excommunicated because he had fallen to heresy. Ishoʿyahb III still hoped the priest could be won back for the Church.[184]

If the sphere of influence of the Church of the East ended now close to Tagrit, which was a Miaphysite enclave and bulwark, one still could question to whom the whole area on the other side of the Tigris belonged, and who had organized it this way and for what reasons. Richard Payne connects the ‘*politeia* of the orthodox’ to Arab rule in general and suggests that this might have indicated a new administrative order or a new self definition. He argues that initially the borders of the Sasanian state had defined the territory and jurisdiction of the Church of the East, but when this fell away after the Islamic rule was established, a new binding element had to be found. This would be the reason why Ishoʿyahb III spoke of the ‘*politeia* of the orthodox’ and it also would have fostered the formulation of a distinctive common doctrine.[185] If, however, this *politeia* corresponded with the lands conquered by the Arabs, as Payne seems to indicate, we might suggest that it ended more towards the West. In that case it was not necessarily Tagrit, but maybe Edessa or Antioch (taken in 638 and 637 respectively) where the exiled priest (ܟܗܢܐ) went and then it is not impossible that Sahdona

op Ishoʿyahb III who is called by name. Fiey holds that this trustee was identical to the later Catholicos Henanishoʿ I. Fiey, ‘Īšōʿyaw le Grand’, pp. 308 and 45.

[182] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-49, pp. 97-98.

[183] Abbeloos and Lamy, *Gregorii Barhebraei*, pp. 127-28.

[184] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-17, p. 165; Fiey, ‘Īšōʿyaw le Grand’, p. 329.

[185] Payne, ‘Persecuting Heresy’, p. 400. See also Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 42-43.

was implied. In this case, Ishoʿyahb III might have called him priest, since he was no longer a bishop.

Whether the expression '*politeia* of the orthodox' is an indication of a new self-identity is difficult to assess. As it was the first time Ishoʿyahb III used this expression, it might have had to do indeed with a new geographical description of the Church after the Persian Empire had ceased to exist.[186] The boundaries of this *politeia* in M-17 were, however, not well defined and might have reflected a momentary situation in which different tribes, belonging to various Christian streams, played a role. During the time Ishoʿyahb III still was bishop of Nineveh, the situation might have been somewhat different. In the discussion of the conquest of Nineveh, I suggested that for some time the Tigris might have formed a natural border between the territories of different groupings. It is moreover not improbable that the Byzantine allies (especially Miaphysite Arabs) who had controlled an important part of this area until 637, continued to do so for some time after Heraclius had left Syria.

3.6.3. The unknown years: Ishoʿyahb III's strife for a better career

Not much is known precisely of Ishoʿyahb III's situation during the Arab conquest(s) of Nineveh which took place between 637 and 641. It is not sure which position he took towards them, when he left Nineveh, under what circumstances and for what reasons and eventually, when he became metropolitan of Adiabene. Fiey's influential work bases several conclusions on reports that Maremmeh had been bishop of Nineveh when the Arabs took it. As he moreover holds that this took place in 637, he concludes that Ishoʿyahb III must have left Nineveh before 637, experiencing the Arab conquests as Metropolitan in Arbela. Fiey explains data from the letters conflicting to this view by suggesting that the letters have been misplaced.[187] Ioan follows most of Fiey's conclusions but sets the invasion of Nineveh in the year 641.[188]

Interestingly, the generally reliable *Chronicon Anonymum* does not mention Maremmeh's episcopate at all.[189] If this is more accurate also here, some of Fiey's conclusions on other events and dates should be adjusted. This would affect some interpretations of the five subse-

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[186] The term *politeia* was furthermore connected with faith; with 'our' in contrast to people coming from Jerusalem (M-32); 'of the Romans' and in C-8 even with 'the kingdom of the Persians (ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܣܝܐ)', which might have been an anachronism, were it not that Ishoʿyahb III referred to his accomplishments in former days. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-17, 21, 28, 30, 31, 32 and C-9, pp. 165, 170, 202, 210, 211, 213, 216 and 238.

[187] Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 5 and 14-15; idem, *Jalons*, p. 140; Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 108, pp. 629-30; Gismondi (trans.), *Maris*, p. 55.

[188] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 31.

[189] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 31-34. See also above, section 2.7.

quent letters on the election of Metropolitans (E-50-52 and M-1-2), but also of E-48 which Fiey concluded to be misplaced as it dealt with Arab governors.[190]

In E-50, Ishoʿyahb III discusses the position as metropolitan in Adiabene with its seat in Arbela, which was offered to him, but which he courteously declined. He explained his choice to the people in Arbela who had invited him, by stating that all the challenges in Nineveh demanded diligence and strengthening in the constant struggle with heretics and pagans (ܗܪ̈ܣܝܘܬܐ ܘܚܢ̈ܦܐ).[191] Whether this was the real reason for his refusal; whether Ishoʿyahb III had to refuse under the pressure of the Catholicos; or whether he wanted to wait for a more important position, is only something to speculate. Unfortunately, there are no direct clues indicating when this letter was written. Fiey and Ioan hold that Ishoʿyahb III had been offered this position after the death of Metropolitan Paul, who had joined the embassy to Heraclius in 630 and reigned before Makkika, but they do not substantiate this. As we have seen that Makkika already may have figured as metropolitan in three earlier letters, either E-50 is misplaced or Ishoʿyahb III was actually invited after Makkika had been dismissed.[192]

E-51, written to the monks of the Izla Monastery including Narsai and a Maremmeh, shows Ishoʿyahb III's disappointment that he was not chosen metropolitan of Bet Huzaye. This had been his first choice, but Maremmeh was elected instead.[193] He immediately had understood this from 'the outward superscription on the things you wrote me'. The possibility that Maremmeh had not been a bishop before this time is strengthened by the very address in E-52:

> To my kind and honoured Father, Mar Gabriel, bishop metropolitan, and to my dear brother Mar Hormizd, bishop and—if it be understood that he wrote to me together with you—the bishop of Bet Lapat, who was to me our honoured brother Mar Maremmeh up to now.[194]

Where Ishoʿyahb III appeared to be very sensitive to the titles given and took care to address each correctly, it is remarkable that he did not describe Maremmeh's former position as bishop, if that would have applied. Moreover, in an earlier short letter (E-30), Maremmeh probably had been monk in the Izla Monastery. Ishoʿyahb III addressed him here together with Narsai,

[190] Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 331 and 31; idem, *Jalons*, p. 140.
[191] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-50, pp. 98-99.
[192] Fiey referred to E-25, 39 and 40. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 332-33; idem, *Jalons*, p. 140; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 30. See above section 3.6.1.
[193] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-51, p. 100. Although very probable, it is not sure whether the Maremmeh in the Izala Monastery (E-51) was the same as the new Metropolitan in E-52 and M-1.
[194] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-52, p. 101.
ܠܐܒܝ ܒܣܝܡܐ ܘܡܝܩܪܐ ܡܪܝ، ܓܒܪܐܝܠ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܡܝܛܪܘܦܘܠܝܛܐ. ܘܐܚܝ ܚܒܝܒܐ ܘܡܝܩܪܐ ܡܪܝ، ܗܘܪܡܝܙܕ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ. ܘܐܢ ܪ ܟܬܒ
ܕܥܡܟܘܢ ܟܬܒ ܠܝ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܠܦܛ. ܗ̇ܘ ܕܠܝ ܒܕܒܝܠ ܐܚܘܢ ܝܩܝܪܐ ܡܪܝ، ܡܪܥܡܗ. ܢܥܒܝܡܗ ܐܫܠܡܘܢ ܒܡܪܢ ܫܠܡ ❖

and tried to restore communication which had become withheld due to his weakness, and the scandal and contempt he suffered. No details are given.[195] If Maremmeh had not been bishop of Nineveh and if Ishoʿyahb III was therefore still (nominally) its bishop, letter E-52 could still have been written during his episcopate and not thereafter as Fiey suggests.

In E-52, Ishoʿyahb III further indicated that he had sent Maremmeh a while ago as his negotiator (ܡܦܝܣܢܐ ܕܝܠܝ) to the Father of the community. The others knew that Ishoʿyahb III could not come himself, due to ‘chains, as it were, of impossibility’ (ܒܝ ܐܣܘܖ̈ܐ ܐܟܡܬ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܡܨܝܢܘܬܐ). They also knew his transgression, disobedience and ‘the rest of the hard habits of my idiocy’.[196] Could this have had to do with the scandal briefly mentioned to Maremmeh and Narsai in E-30?

Ishoʿyahb III must have had to face facts and his letter M-1 was a letter of commendation for Maremmeh written to the clergy and the people of Bet Lapat in Bet Huzaye. He confessed that the fact that Maremmeh was chosen deserved envy and that this was a loss to his own region. His flowery and opaque language here is difficult to follow and seems to contain some hidden criticism as well.[197] M-2 was a letter written to Maremmeh in an attempt to restore their personal relations, especially now that the Church was weakened and divided.[198]

If the five letters concerning the election of the metropolitans for Adiabene and Bet Huzaye are correctly placed in the *Liber Epistularum*, the following might be suggested: after Makkika was sent away, Ishoʿyahb III was invited to succeed him. He refused, maybe because he favoured the more influential Bet Huzaye and might have proposed Maremmeh instead, whom he sent to negotiate for him in the Izla monastery. It turned out differently from what Ishoʿyahb III might have expected: Maremmeh was given Bet Huzaye and Ishoʿyahb III was given Adiabene. As Maremmeh probably became metropolitan of Bet Huzaye after it was conquered by the Arabs between 640-42, these events might have taken place around this time.

3.7. Problems in Nisibis

Early in his life, Ishoʿyahb III had experienced the conflicts in the School of Nisibis and he is said to have belonged to those leaving out of protest. Later, he wrote several letters to people in Nisibis, which indicate many problems there. Meanwhile, some parties allied with him and

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[195] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-30, p. 56.
[196] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-52, pp. 101-103.
[197] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-1, pp. 105-107
[198] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-2, pp. 109-111.

others were hostile. Towards the end of his life, he was imprisoned there for a while. The problems discussed in his letters centred on its Metropolitan Cyriacus, wars, famine, pestilence, and the growing influence of Miaphysitism, which will be discussed in the following sections.

3.7.1. Ecclesiastical authority contested: Cyriacus and Moshe

As we have seen in Chapter 2, groupings within Nisibis detested their Metropolitan Cyriacus and wanted another leader. Cyriacus was among other matters accused of Chalcedonian sympathies. Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II already had tried unsuccessfully to solve these problems. Cyriacus died around 645, before he could be condemned. Ishoʿyahb II then consecrated Barsauma, the interpreter of the school in Hira, just before his own death in 645. Maremmeh's attempts to persuade the Nisibenes to accept Barsauma failed as well. Thereupon Isaac, the bishop of Arzun, was nominated. Fiey holds that the sympathies for the Chalcedonian position Cyriacus was accused of might date from some time between 640 and 645.[199] Furthermore, the possibility that the accusation of Chalcedonian sympathies was made to incriminate Cyriacus in the eyes of the Arabs is not to be excluded.

Before that time, Ishoʿyahb III—when still bishop of Nineveh—humbly wrote to Metropolitan Cyriacus in order to mediate for the people of Balad. He explained that they had come to him because of his good ties with Cyriacus hoping that Ishoʿyahb III might convince their metropolitan to have them choose the bishop they preferred. This was Maruzan, who already had been a metropolitan twice. Ishoʿyahb III tried to influence Cyriacus by warning, persuasion and promises. He warned that scandal might arise if Cyriacus refused; discussed possible reasons to reject Maruzan and refuted them; and finally promised that he might be of help in the future as well and that Cyriacus would be famous in the Church.[200] Ishoʿyahb III also mediated with the Catholicos and in the end Maruzan was fully accepted as bishop.[201] These letters raise some questions: why did Ishoʿyahb III advocate for Maruzan and did Cyriacus reject him; what was the reason Maruzan had already been metropolitan twice and where did he come from; did Cyriacus have another candidate? Concerning the last question, one might suggest that this was Sahdona, as he probably had allied with Cyriacus.[202]

Some of Ishoʿyahb III's later letters indicate that Cyriacus probably was involved in a synod in Nisibis organized by the teachers Gurya and Meskena, condemning Ishoʿyahb III when

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[199] Fiey, *Nisibe*, pp. 66-67, with references; idem, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, pp. 116-17; Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 31; Nöldeke,'Die syrische Chronik', p. 34.
[200] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-42, pp. 71-75.
[201] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-45, pp. 85-87.
[202] See on Sahdona below, section 4.2.

he was metropolitan of Adiabene (M-8). Ishoʿyahb III did not mention Cyriacus, but the latter's consent must have been necessary. Ishoʿyahb III stated moreover that this Synod opted for the 'Chalcedonian error' (M-9).[203] Gurya seems to have been a trustee of Ishoʿyahb III before, who recently had written an anonymous letter full of accusations. Ishoʿyahb III replied that he knew it was written by Gurya and had found out that Gurya had pretended to have been far away, although he was nearby. He concluded that Gurya had left him and even had contributed to the organization of the council against him. Concerning the style of Gurya's letter, Ishoʿyahb III ironically wrote that no one needed to teach 'who fills his frivolous conversation with learning' and he gave some absurd examples. Ishoʿyahb III considered Gurya, however, a clear example of the change in many people during this time and therefore he wanted reconciliation. He asked Gurya to visit him together with 'our brother Meskena, son of Poverty' (ܐܚܘܢ ܡܣܟܢܐ ܒܪ ܡܣܟܢܘܬܐ).[204] This might have referred to Meskena-ʿArbaya, who had been one of the disciples of Henana, and also reported to have been in the School of Balad.[205]

The other letter on this Synod in Nisibis against Ishoʿyahb III was a reply to people on his side from the clergy and believers in Nisibis, 'mother of life-bringing teachings' (ܐܡܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܡܚܝܢܐ). Fiey suggests that they belonged to a party opposing Cyriacus that asked Ishoʿyahb III for help.[206] All four persons addressed to were called 'NN' (ܦܠܢ). Ishoʿyahb III had received their letter on his way on the Tigris from Seleucia where another synod had taken place without the Nisibenes. Ishoʿyahb III claimed that they had been invited but that the messenger only came as far as Balad, as the situation had been too dangerous. Ishoʿyahb III was therefore well pleased with their expression of the orthodox confession (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܐ), especially after the recent Synod in Nisibis. The Synod in Seleucia was overshadowed by the disturbing reports from Nisibis and 'by the terrible reports of the ruin of the world'. The outcome seems to have been unclear due to the many different opinions. Ishoʿyahb III further discussed their former letter which informed him about the schisms in Nisibis. He stated that their single pain was swallowed up by the universal pains. The overall situation was so bad, with almost everything being destroyed, that the end of the community might be speeded up. He compared the situation to that of the Egyptians where there was 'no house where not someone was dead', and he concluded that 'all of us revolt like that Pharaoh and it was right that we are forsaken'. He finally asked them to take care of the weak and to make new companions.[207]

[203] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-8, p. 140; M-9, p. 142.
[204] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-8, pp. 138-141.
[205] Chediath, *The Christology of Mar Babai*, p. 30; Vööbus, *History of the School of Nisibis*, p. 277, n. 15.
[206] Fiey, *Nisibe*, p. 65.
[207] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-9, pp. 141-44. Cf. Exodus 12:30.

The fact that after the Arab conquests Nisibis became part of the new province Jazira, which also included Edessa and other districts that had previously belonged to Byzantium, might have fostered Cyriacus' Chalcedonian sympathies. One can wonder whether or not Cyriacus and others expected help from the Byzantines and affiliated with them for these reasons. Kaegi discusses possible contacts and holds that the 'Muslim conquest of upper Mesopotamia in 639' made Byzantine and Sasanian contacts almost impossible, except by some dangerous routes. Heraclius' hopes to convert the Christians in Iraq for collaboration had started therefore to 'fade quickly in the 630s, especially by the late 630s'. One of the few contacts was with a member of Yazdin's family visiting the court in 639, but this could not help to solve the crisis. The former Sasanian areas adjacent to Byzantium suffered from monetary confusion and chaos.[208] It is not known to what extent this influential family acted on behalf of the Church of the East.

We have seen that after Cyriacus died (around 645), the *amir* allowed Cyriacus' enemies to plunder his treasury and that he imprisoned his followers.[209] Richard Payne holds that this opposition was inspired by a competition for resources. He concludes that 'competing efforts to profit from the post-Sasanian fiscal infrastructure had aggravated relations between lay nobles and clerics in early Islamic Mesopotamia'.[210]

Meanwhile, a priest called Moshe appears twice in Ishoʿyahb III's letters and he seems to have conspired to have another catholicos towards the end of Ishoʿyahb III's episcopacy. This must have been done very cautiously. In E-41, during the time of famine, Ishoʿyahb III considered Moshe's request for food a cover-up for another goal. The real request seems to have to do with the position of the Catholicos being threatened. Ishoʿyahb III expressed his doubts concerning the gifts Moshe had claimed to have received from several people, since their names were unfamiliar to him. He further accused Moshe of the imagination of a false future with an imaginary catholicos, which had deluded several people. One might suggest that Ishoʿyahb III himself was the subject of such rumours, as Moshe had mentioned Ishoʿyahb III's name to others and Moshe's work had struck Ishoʿyahb III with acute fear. Ishoʿyahb III did not want to write anymore about it, as Moshe should have read with more care earlier instructions on how to move a nobleman (ܠܒܪܐ ܒܪ ܚܐܪ̈ܐ).[211]

[208] Kaegi, *Heraclius*, pp. 258-59.
[209] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, pp. 31-33.
[210] Payne, 'Persecuting Heresy', pp. 406-407.
[211] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-41, p. 70.

Letter M-14 was again to a priest Moshe (who now also was addressed as notary).[212] Moshe had written many petitions to Ishoʿyahb III and ‘to the blessed man, who is well positioned for the work of your Charity’, but had to wait for an answer for a long time due to the absence of carriers. Ishoʿyahb III wrote Moshe that he was pleased to inform him that the petitions were not necessary anymore and he reassured him of the health of the Catholicos whose works prospered with signs and various miracles. Personally, Ishoʿyahb III was now in peace and in ‘utmost freedom from the tyranny of the time and from the level of my sins’. More details were not given.[213] If this was the same Moshe as the one accused of proposing a new catholicos, his many petitions might be understood as attempts to be forgiven, while the reference to the wellbeing of Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II presumably was intended to confirm his position.

This whole episode took place during the Catholicate of Ishoʿyahb II, which means between 628 and 645/46. The date of the synod is not given, but seems to have taken place in the first years Ishoʿyahb III was Metropolitan. As we have seen above, this probably began in 641/42, but some time before 637 has also been advocated.[214] The fact mentioned in M-9 that a messenger from the south only could make it up to Balad where it was very dangerous—combined with the general sense of destruction—might point to the Muʿawiyan conquests starting from the West in 639-40. Muʿawiya’s troops might have fought (among others) those Arabs that had conquered this region before. However, this would contradict the assumption that Ishoʿyahb III still was bishop during such wars; unless one accepts prolonged wars after 641/42, which is not impossible since the whole area remained contested for decades. Therefore I suggest that the synods might have taken place somewhere between 641 and 645 but do not exclude that it was some years before.

One gets the impression that during the ongoing wars and the subsequent famine, communication between Nisibis and the rest of the Church in more south-eastern parts was hampered, which fostered rumours and impaired the position of the Catholicos. The fact that Nisibis held its own synod apart from the general synod might actually have been caused by these wars, but could also reflect a schism within the Church. Maybe the different situation in Nisibis enticed some parties there to gain more autonomy in ecclesiastical or fiscal matters, with some opposing Cyriacus and allying with Ishoʿyahb III and others vice versa. The role of Ishoʿyahb III in this cannot be inferred from his letters.

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[212] ܢܘܛܪܐ, νωτάριος, *notarius*, a Byzantine official. Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, p. 898.

[213] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-14, pp. 158-59.

[214] See also section 3.6.3.

3.7.2. Wars, famine, pestilence and poverty

The help promised by Ishoʿyahb III to Cyriacus might have had to do with the famine in Nisibis at that time, and if so, this could have strengthened his position. Several requests were sent to Ishoʿyahb III to help the hungry in Nisibis. They came not only from the priest Moshe, but also from Cyriacus. In E-27, Ishoʿyahb III initially refused to send food to Moshe because he doubted the urgency, and he stated that the Nisibenes always had been rich and had too many wishes. Moreover, many refugees had come to the church of Nineveh and had to be fed.[215] After a second request from Moshe, which as already noted Ishoʿyahb III interpreted as a cover up for another request, Ishoʿyahb III reluctantly sent only a limited amount of food to Nisibis. A part was a gift; the rest had to be paid for. As we have seen above, he explained that Nineveh suffered from the same problems as Nisibis, on a lesser scale, but that it could not even pay the multitude of taxes anymore which had cut them short, and he repeated that he had to take care of the many refugees.[216] After the request from Cyriacus (E-47), Ishoʿyahb III sent him measured amounts of barley and dates from the lower regions, which had arrived recently. He was shocked realizing that the once rich and fertile region of Nisibis suffered from famine and was in distress because of the 'devastation of Atur' (Assyria).[217] These shared problems probably had to do with the wars that raged at the time Ishoʿyahb III was bishop.

In one of his last letters as metropolitan, Ishoʿyahb III wrote about the pestilence by which Nisibis was afflicted. He warned the Nisibenes that they should not try to avoid death, but sin, which to him was the cause of it. He considered death and pestilence a 'chastisement (ܡܪܕܘܬܗ) filled with unspeakable mercy' in which God showed his guidance (ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܗ), and Ishoʿyahb III advised the Nisibenes therefore to ask God for mercy.[218]

It must have been easier now to travel and send letters than before, as can be seen from a letter to Isaac, Cyriacus' successor. Ishoʿyahb III mentioned that his earlier letters had not been answered, due to the adversities of the time. Now, he wrote, he could use passing carriers of whom there happened to be more. These messengers even came from Jerusalem to 'our *politeia*' after they had gone to 'the borders of the deserts of this jurisdiction (ܐܘܚܕܢܐ), which is Hirta (Hira) of the Arabs (*Tayyaye*)'. They had visited the Catholicos in the hope to be relieved from their poverty. There must have been new practices, which are not specified, giving rise to such expectations. The Catholicos, however, only gave them a letter certifying they were mendicants (ܟܬܒܬܐ ܟܠܚܘܕ ܕܚܙܘܪܐ). Ishoʿyahb III was ashamed that he could not help

[215] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-27, pp. 52-53.
[216] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-41, p. 70.
[217] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-47, pp. 90-91.
[218] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-31, pp. 214-15.

them either and was not ‘even able to warm them with futile twigs’. He barely supplied them with this letter and sent them to Nisibis. Their hopes were therefore hardly fulfilled.[219]

3.7.3. Growing influence of Miaphysitism

After Ishoʿyahb III was elected Catholicos, he sent Isaac a letter (C-1) confirming his own new position as Catholicos and asking him to pray for his *qnoma*.[220] In Nisibis itself, problems with Miaphysites seem meanwhile to have become acute. Ishoʿyahb III wrote several letters to various groups of the Church of the East in Nisibis. The first was to its noblemen (ܪ̈ܘܪܒܢܐ). Ishoʿyahb III started by praising them because they had demolished a heretic chapel, but he quickly took a different tone and warned them that they seemed to have become negligent because they were so accustomed to this beautiful state of blessing that they might lose it. Ishoʿyahb III tried to mobilize the noblemen for the ‘glory of orthodoxy’. This meant that they should take the impure sign (ܐܬܐ) from the holy place and should avoid contact with the impious, especially from the ‘recent heretic demons’, who were the worst.

> Stir up the anger of zeal against the blaspheming demons quickly, without being weary because of the daily defeat. Turn the rise of (heretic) zeal from the territory of your jurisdiction (ܦܢ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܐܘܚܕܢܟܘܢ) and wipe out the impure sign from the holy place! Guard the freedom of your faith in purity from all contamination of the evil company of evil impious people!
>
> And know, as you do know well, that when it comes to corrupting the souls of those who correctly believe in the mysteries of our salvation, neither the pagan demons nor others (are) like those: they have more success in impiety than those two![221] This is clear, because in appearance, name, words and symbols they seem to be Christians. And on account of such a harmonious appearance, they easily pour out the bitterness of their blasphemies into the soul of the simple, and they readily prepare a quick and easy death out of the life of faith, the life for which the holy blood was shed that vitalizes the world.[222]

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[219] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-32, pp. 215-17. As Catholicos, Ishoʿyahb III expressed again his deep regret about Jerusalem’s situation, Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-13, pp. 245-47.

[220] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-1, pp. 219-20. On this use of *qnoma*, see also section 4.3.1.

[221] This sentence is difficult to translate as it is unclear to which part the expression ܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ is connected. An alternative—but less understandable—translation could be: ‘[…] our salvation, because of these two things, neither the pagan demons, nor others like them are as successful in impiety as those recent heretic demons!’ Duval notes that something seems to be missing here in the text. His translation is as follows: ‘et scitote bene, sicut et bene scitis, quod neque diaboli pagani neque alii tantum ad corrumpendas animas recte confitentium mysteria redemptionis nostrae quantum diaboli haeretici isti hodierni duabus istis [Aliquid deesse videtur] impietate proficiunt.’ Duval (trans.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-3, p. 162. Despite these difficulties, the meaning of each translation given seems to be roughly the same.

[222] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-3, p. 223.
ܘܐܙܝܥܘ ܥܓܠ ܚܡܬܐ ܕܛܢܢܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܫܐܕܐ ܡܓܕ̈ܦܢܐ܆ ܕܠܐ ܡܡܐܢܝܢ ܒܡܙܕܟܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܠܝܘܡ. ܘܗܦܟܘ ܡܣܩܬܐ ܕܛܢܢܐ ܡܢ ܦܢ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܐܘܚܕܢܟܘܢ܆ ܘܠܐܬܐ ܛܢܦܬܐ ܓܪܘܦܘ ܡܢ ܐܬܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܘܛܪܘ ܚܐܪܘܬܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܟܘܢ ܒܕܟܝܘ܆ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܛܘܠܫܬܐ ܕܒܝܫܘܬ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܒܝܫ ܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ ܒܝ̈ܫܐ܆ ܘܕܥܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܠܫܦܝܪܘܬ. ܕܠܐ[ܘܕܠܐ] ܕܝܘ̈ܐ ܚܢ̈ܦܐ ܘܠܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ܆ ܐܦ ܚܒܠ ܠܡܚܒܠܘ ܢܦ̈ܫܬܐ ܕܡܘ̈ܕܝܢ ܬܪܝܨ ܒܐ̈ܪܙܐ ܕܦܘܪܩܢܢ܆ ܐܝܟ ܕܕܝܘ̈ܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܕܗܫܐ܆ ܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܨܠܚܝܢ ܒܪܘܫܥܐ. ܘܗܕܐ

Because their appearances were much alike, people could be confused easily, and lose the life of faith. Ishoʿyahb III's further description of the impious centred much on Christology and especially on the *qnoma*. He probably referred to the Miaphysites, but he also might have referred to circles around Sahdona, his rival within the Church of the East. To which habits Ishoʿyahb III referred is not clear. Did it for instance have to do with the Eucharist, where bread and wine represented to Miaphysites the real unity with the Word, while the East Syrians emphasized the inhabitation of God in them, or did they still share the same liturgy of Ephrem?[223]

Using a polemical quotation of Chrysostom,[224] Ishoʿyahb III urged the nobility to expel the heretics and purify the city. He closed his letter urging them to keep themselves holy, so that the 'spirit of Christ' and 'our adorable God' may live in them. They should be good examples in the whole world, so that when Christ came, he could show wonders in his believers.

> To say it more vehemently (ܒܚܝܢܐܝܬ), according to the word of the Golden Mouth (Chrysostom), the illustrious tongue of the Church of Christ: Who should not sanctify his hands by their wounds? Who should not cut off their lips? Who should not strike their jaws? Who should not tear apart the impure clothes on their defiled bodies?
>
> So expel, O illustrious men, expel those blaspheming demons from the territory of your city, and purify the defilement of their impiety from the holy place in which you live. Keep yourself holy and incorrupt, so that the spirit of Christ, the hope of our life and the origin of our salvation and the Lord of our glory and our adorable God, may live in you. […] Be the prototypes of the virtues for the holy Church in all the regions of the world, until the celebrated revelations of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven; so that when he comes, he will be glorified by his saints and he will show his wonders in his believers.[225]

The second letter was to the clergy of Nisibis who were to be mobilized in a similar way (C-4). Ishoʿyahb III gave them the example of young Israel and its first priests, who even killed their

ܟܠܢܫܐ ܗܘ، ܕܟܠ ܕܠܓܘ ܡܢ ܐܘܡܬܐ ܘܥܡܐ ܘܫ̈ܠܐ ܘܦܠܩ̈ܣܐ ܕܪܘܡܦܝܘܬܐ ܡܫܬܥܒܕܝܢ ܕܐܘܚܕܢܗܘܢ. ܘܡܢ ܥܘܡܪܬ ܡܫܝܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ
ܗܪܐ: ܒܬܪܗ ܕ ܟܕܪܘܫܘܗܝ ܐܚܪܝܢ ܦܫܝܡܘܬܐ ܟܦܫܐ ܕܦܫܝܓܐ. ܘܡܦܬܐ ܡܠܠܐ ܘܦܫܝܡܐ ܕܡܢ ܣܢܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܡܟܬܪܝܢ ܕܠܠܐܬܐ:
ܠܣܢܐ ܕܐܬܐܫܪ ܠܠܦܘܗܝ ܕܗܢܐ ܡܕܫܐ ܡܫܝܚܗ ܕܥܠܡܐ.
The words between brackets (ܘܕܠܐ) in sentence 16 appear in *Vaticanus Syriacus* 157 folio 96 r., but are left out in Duval's edition, possibly because they are considered an erroneous reduplication. The Christology of C-3 will be discussed in section 4.3.3.

[223] On the Eucharist, see also section 1.4.6; on liturgy, see section 4.1.

[224] It is remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III quoted Chrysostom here, as it has been disputed in recent literature whether he belonged to the officially acknowledged tradition of the Church as collected in the *Synodicon Orientale*. This would be another indication that he was, at least for Ishoʿyahb III. See Reinink's discussion above, section 2.1.3.2.

[225] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-3, p. 225.

own brothers for the Lord.[226] Ishoʿyahb III urged the clergy to fight the enemies of the divinity and humanity and the blasphemers of the adorable mystery of the salvation of the world. They of all should be very angry about the (further unspecified) impure sign (ܐܬܐ ܠܛܘܡܐܬܐ) near the gate of the city. Ishoʿyahb III described how the foot of the impious was already on their necks, but that the clergy did not realize this. They should purify the city immediately and not wait for further exposure and destructive contacts, in order to prevent the people becoming lost. They should fight for the sake of the future world and the honour in this world. The giver of power would help and clothe them with praise in his eternal kingdom. They would join those who were an example of the spiritual world for this world and brought in their *qnoma* the participation of the glory of Christ.[227]

The third letter was to an anonymous teacher of the school of Nisibis (C-10). Ishoʿyahb III mentioned a shortage of good ministers reporting to him during 'these days of temptation' in which many people erred and doubted God's providence. The teacher should therefore, as a spiritual worker, set a good example for the erring. Ishoʿyahb III explained that the intellect could see spiritually how faith could change things and that one could see with the pure eyes of the heart. This way, the discerning could see God's hidden *mdabbranuta* in the Church, while the others could not and erred consequently. On Judgement Day, each would receive his reward. Ishoʿyahb III finally sent his greetings to the former fellow students of 'the common mother, our holy school' (ܐܡܐ ܕܟܠܢ ܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܝܠܢ).[228]

The last letter to Nisibis was to a fervent believer (ܐܚܝ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܚܝܠܢܐ), who should not worry, but inform others that Ishoʿyahb III began a journey to 'the city of the catholic throne' and that the ecclesiastic tasks were managed well. Concerning his own performances he stated that 'we have something that is like the will of God, thanks to the grace of God and we also have something else that is like the will of evil: and this we are'.[229] Apparently, the whole position of the Church seemed to have been at stake and there were doubts and accusations on Ishoʿyahb III's functioning in this matter. Here, Ishoʿyahb III seems to have admitted in veiled terms that he might have made mistakes, but that only a few could discern well. While these letters had already indicated that Ishoʿyahb III had encountered criticism and opposition in Nisibis, the last letter in the *Liber Epistularum* speaks of Ishoʿyahb III's imprisonment in Nisibis by 'his dear

[226] Cf. Exod. 32:26-29.
[227] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-4, pp. 225-29.
[228] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-10, pp. 241-42.
[229] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-11, pp. 242-43.
ܘܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܫܡܥܝܢ ܠܡܕܒܪ ܡܢܢ ܐܡܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܠܢ ܐܘܪܒ ܐܝܟ܂ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܨܒܝܢܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ܆ ܘܗܕܐ
ܡܢ ܛܝܒܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܐܝܬ ܠܢ ܕܝܢ ܬܘܒ [243] ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܝܢ܆ ܕܐܝܟ ܨܒܝܢܗ ܕܒܝܫܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ܆ ܘܗܕܐ ܚܢܢ.

sons', where he had been given only water and bread 'of distress'. Thereafter he lived in exile in Edessa which then was a relief to him.[230]

Letters C-3 and C-4 led Richard Payne to several interpretations of the situation of the Church of the East after the Arab conquest. He interprets them in the light of the contested collection of taxes by the noblemen and clergy, which would signal Ishoʿyahb III's intention 'to instantiate a new relationship between the clergy and nobles of Nisibis and the catholicate under the banner of orthodoxy, by having the nobles purge the city'. The clergy would need the leadership of laymen but the clergy remained important. 'If it is the laymen who hold the power, it is the clergy who are to guide them in its exercise.' Payne thus places acceptance of the religious orthodoxy in a social context, whereby the relation between the clergy and the lay aristocracy was redefined.[231] When addressing the nobility, Ishoʿyahb III used language meant to appeal to their honour, aristocratic status and authority, which in the end, would depend on their orthodoxy. Payne holds that this would be reassuring to them as their social identity was challenged in the post-conquest period when it was no longer defined by the Sasanian state, but by the '*politeia* of the orthodox'.[232]

According to Payne, the Catholicos would have claimed to be the best patron for the Christians and highly equipped to mediate with the Muslim authorities, because they favoured him. Ishoʿyahb III's definition of orthodoxy combined with his negotiating capacities would have been aimed at strengthening his authority. Payne supports this hypothesis with a reference to the letter to the Qataris (C-18), in which Ishoʿyahb III would have claimed that the Muslim authorities had entrusted him with collecting the poll tax and tribute.[233] This interpretation, however, does not seem to stand as it probably derives from a different reading of the text.[234]

Most of Payne's findings are thus based on the situation in Nisibis, which cannot be generalized to all the other provinces of the Church of the East. He further seems to follow Morony, in seeing nobility and clergy as two different and opposing groups, whereas this does not seem to have been the case. Conflicts on who was to levy taxes might indeed have increased under the new rulers and the exemption from taxes—which some of the clergy are said to have enjoyed—might have played a role as well. Payne's hypothesis that Ishoʿyahb III propagated the two-*qnome* Christology primarily as a bonding element providing self-identity in changing times, neglects moreover some other strong factors: one was his rivalry with Sahdona and the

230 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-22, pp. 283-84.
231 Payne, 'Persecuting Heresy', pp. 406-409.
232 Payne, 'Persecuting Heresy', pp. 400 and 405-406.
233 Payne, 'Persecuting Heresy', pp. 400-401 and 408-409.
234 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-18, pp. 268-69. For Payne's and my translation, see below, section 3.9.4.

other the older feud with Miaphysitism, which nevertheless could be very attractive to individuals of both clergy and nobility. The new self-definition sought for might therefore have been a side-effect, but not the objective.

3.8. Conflicts in Arbela

The role of lay people could be very great within the Church and extended to the appointment of metropolitans, while taking the theology of the candidates into account. They moreover could obstruct their work, including that of the Catholicos. This becomes clear from two letters that belong together. Ishoʿyahb III wrote them to two influential persons when he was Metropolitan in Arbela. One was the unbaptized believer Sheroy, who had accused him of being too ambitious and opportunistic (M-22). Without giving many details, Ishoʿyahb III retorted that once Sheroy himself had given him false promises that he might become metropolitan. He admitted, however, that he had wanted that function and had been jealous when someone else was appointed. This most probably referred to Maremmeh being appointed metropolitan of Bet Huzaye (Elam). Now, Sheroy seemed to go on making the same (false) promises to Ishoʿyahb III and others as well. Sheroy also had accused Ishoʿyahb III of showing contempt for a former Father, which Ishoʿyahb III admitted as well, but he held that this was something for Judgment Day. The name of this Father is not given.

Ishoʿyahb III referred explicitly to the other letter (M-23) written to John, calling him 'the son of your mother'.[235] Such names belonged to a Persian custom to signal family relations and it probably indicated that Sheroy and John were brothers. This would be another sign of the intertwined relations between the Church and lay people, because John was the priest and archdeacon (ܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܐܪܟܕܝܩܘܢ) of Arbela. He once had invited Ishoʿyahb III to become the bishop of this city and thus the metropolitan of Adiabene.[236] John also had turned hostile and even refused both Catholicos Maremmeh and Metropolitan Ishoʿyahb III permission to enter the city.[237]

Ishoʿyahb III was annoyed that Sheroy had replied to his criticism with written accusations in 'immortal material of words', instead of giving his reaction orally by a messenger as Ishoʿyahb III himself had done. Because it had taken a full year until he had received Sheroy's reply, some accusations might not have been applicable anymore. Ishoʿyahb III stated that

[235] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-22, pp. 171-75.
[236] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-50, pp. 98-99.
[237] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, pp. 176, 182 and 186.

Sheroy's accusations were based on opinions he no longer held, by which he had been carried away at the time. Ishoʿyahb III thus seems to have admitted that he had made mistakes himself.[238]

Meanwhile the conflict seems to have escalated. The letter to John speaks of a delay of many days before Ishoʿyahb III received a reply to his small list of accusations.[239] John's reply was an extensive letter with many charges. He had put his accusations in the form of five main errors according to the rules of formal logic. With some sarcasm, Ishoʿyahb III was keen to show that John's accusations were full of inconsistencies and mere opinions, but lacked truth. He depicted John as a gifted young man who was fond of philosophy, albeit in the wrong way, and he scorned in this respect the 'opinion of the present Athenian youth'.

The exact content of the accusations in this long and complicated letter is not easy to reconstruct. Similarly to what he had written to Sheroy, Ishoʿyahb III mentioned John's older (vain) promises in a time of trial when John had helped him, but for which John now demanded recompense. Ishoʿyahb III refused to repay and he held that the other accusations were false: 'their treacheries are revealed to all and are rejected by reasoning.'[240] Fiey assumes that John rebelled because Ishoʿyahb III and Maremmeh had rejected his request.[241] Ishoʿyahb III was shocked by John's straightforward opposition which culminated in withholding them 'dishonourably from the entrance to the city, from the honour of a welcome and from the completion of useful deeds'. He wondered about John's renewed admiration of the recently deceased Makkika, whom John had supported but eventually had expelled. Ishoʿyahb III ironically wrote:

> We really do acknowledge that you supported and made prosperous not only us, your present enemies, but also him who preceded us (Makkika), your great friend, whom you brought forward in your present letter to us with holy memories of righteousness. And we thank you for this, although you did this to make us jealous. For we rejoice only about this, although you expelled him during his life with the honour of contempt from your city, together with the protector (ܦܘܪܐ) who had anointed you: the one to a death from distress and the other to death by sword. But after the death of the one and the expulsion of the other, you call the former holy and deserving a good remembrance, and the latter you describe as Father and protector (ܦܘܪܐ). Because of this we also have the hope that when we are dead or removed, you will remember us with good memories.[242]

[238] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-22, pp. 171-72.
[239] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, p. 176.
[240] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, p. 185.
[241] Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 17.
[242] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, p. 187.

With a lot of rhetoric Ishoʿyahb III concluded that John considered those his enemies who were actually the Fathers of the Church and his helpers. He trusted that with coming to the age of discernment, John would gain some better insight and would understand that he had instigated the rebellion due to his careless thoughts. At the end of the letter Ishoʿyahb III threatened that if John did not change, he would curse him bitterly, and that all who backed him would become his enemies as well. He finally expressed his hope that John was convinced, and would convince 'the man, son of your mother (ܒܪܢܫܐ ܒܪ ܐܡܟ), who wrote us together with you' and from whom Ishoʿyahb III thereupon would be willing to ask forgiveness.[243]

Ishoʿyahb III stated that John had suspected him of badly influencing some decisions of Catholicos Maremmeh, which therefore were questioned. Interestingly, these decisions of the Catholicos seem to have to do with the question whether all people might call the almighty God. John seems to have belonged to a group questioning that God could be called God by all, claiming God (*Alaha*) for themselves only. This fragment is however difficult to interpret, as it is intertwined with comments on the Catholicos whom Ishoʿyahb III also seems to have called 'Almighty'.

> Your letter demanded an excessive distance for some and an excessive proximity for others with respect to the heart of the Catholicos. You demanded, this rather means you insulted, that the Almighty (ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ) would not rightly be (the one) who is called by the name 'Almighty' by all, but only partially and for some.[244] […] He (probably the Catholicos) compares what is unchangeable in every respect with every changeable analogy in conformity to the Gospel of Paul, even if you and if some of your men demand that God is yours only. And not only (this), you are angry in the shape of the carnal Israel, because God is also called by the gentiles.[245]

Ishoʿyahb III emphasized the difficult role of the Catholicos who needed the help 'of many hands and countless eyes' in fulfilling his task. He continued admonishing John to be a father

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[243] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, p. 189.

[244] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, p. 182. ܘܬܒܥܬ ܗܦܟܬ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܨܥܪܬ ܗܦܟܬ܆ ܕܠܘ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܩܪܐ ܐܚܝܕܘܬܗ܆ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܒܥܕܬܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ ܠ ܡܬܩܪܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢܬܢܝܐ ܘܠܐܢܫܝܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ. Duval suggests that one should read ʿalmighty in the church of God' and that the catholicos was meant, because this expression was explicitly explained in C-18 as meaning 'catholicos'. Duval (trans.), *Liber Epistularum*, pp. 134 and 190. The text is ambiguous. Although both the preceding and subsequent sentences imply the catholicos and therefore justify Duval's suggestion, the rest of the text seems rather to indicate that God—who is called 'almighty' elsewhere as well—is also implied.

[245] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, pp. 182-83.
ܡܪܚܩܘܬܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܠܐܢܫܝܢ: ܘܡܩܪܒܘܬܐ ܝܬܝܪܬܐ ܕܠܐܢܫܝܢ܆ ܬܒܥܐ ܗܘܬ ܐܓܪܬܟ ܡܢ ܠܒܐ ܩܬܘܠܝܩܘܣ. ܘܬܒܥܬ ܗܦܟܬ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܨܥܪܬ ܗܦܟܬ܆ ܕܠܘ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܩܪܐ ܐܚܝܕܘܬܗ܆ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܒܥܕܬܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ ܠ ܡܬܩܪܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢܬܢܝܐ ܘܠܐܢܫܝܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ.[…] ܗܘ ܠܡܦܚܡ ܥܠ ܦܢܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܡܫܬܚܠܦܐ ܠܟ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܟܠ܆ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܬܘܕܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܦܘܠܘܣ. ܐܦ ܐܢܬ. ܐܦ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܠܘܬܟܘܢ: ܕܠܟܘܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܬܒܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܠܡܗܘܐ. ܘܠܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܐܠܐ ܘܪܓܙܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܒܕܡܘܬ ܝܣܪܝܠ ܒܣܪܢܐ: ܥܠ ܕܐܦ ܕܥܡܡܐ ܡܬܩܪܐ ܐܠܗܐ.
Duval notes that the Paris codex has ܒܥܡܡܐ instead of ܕܥܡܡܐ.

and leader of peace for the whole city and to accept the help offered by him and the Catholicos. In this context Ishoʿyahb III reminded John of the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah and in the Gospel and warned him not to be reproachful. It is probably useful to summarize these stories here in order to estimate whether this parable contained some implications about the actual situation. In *Isaiah*, the vineyard symbolizes Israel which God would destroy if it did not bring forth good fruit. In the New Testament, it symbolizes the kingdom of God. Its tenants (the Jewish leaders), however, did not give the fruits to those whom God sent to collect them and even killed his son. The vineyard would therefore be taken from them and given to a people that produced the fruits of the kingdom.[246] Though not stated explicitly, Ishoʿyahb III probably implied that John might lose this city. More implications cannot be inferred from the context, but some questions can be raised, for instance: was the 'fruit' interpreted spiritually or did it foremost represent taxes, and was the conflict therefore mainly a fight for revenues; did he compare himself and the Catholicos to those being sent by God; was it a warning that Christians could be driven out from the city while another people (the Arabs?) would possess it fully?

Another question raised by this fragment is what implications this claim on the name God (*Alaha*) might have in connection to the Muslims, who openly called his name. In this respect it should be noted that this very designation for God does not seem to have been problematic before, although the name *Alaha* also had been used by other Syriac speaking Christians, who belonged to denominations rejected by the Church of the East. Probably this was because one stayed within the same biblical tradition, whereby mainly interpretations on the exact position of Christ were highly controversial. The whole fragment thus seems to imply that Ishoʿyahb III and Maremmeh acted in closer relationship with Islamic groupings than was acceptable to others within the Church of the East.

As the letter to John was written when Maremmeh was Catholicos, the events must have taken place between 646-649/50. What kind of retribution John expected and what promises he had made to Ishoʿyahb III is not explicitly stated in this letter. If the promises were similar to those made before, as Ishoʿyahb III did write, this could imply that Sheroy and John had promised Ishoʿyahb III again that he might become metropolitan of Bet Lapat, which was a desirable position as it might facilitate one to become catholicos. This is not entirely impossible since Maremmeh sought a successor for this now vacant position. He actually proposed this to Ishoʿyahb III in letters received on Wednesday, February 1st, probably in the year 646. Ishoʿyahb III's answer was ambiguous. He refused, discussed some alternatives while warning

[246] Isa. 5:1-7; Matt. 21:33-45; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19.

against Sahdona, and finally advised Maremmeh to wait instead of making a bad choice.[247] Maremmeh thereupon designated Sergis as his successor.[248] It was also to a bishop Sergis that Ishoʿyahb III wrote briefly about his gladness that he now was able to give a small recompense in the form of a short salutation and he informed him about the wellbeing of the Catholicos.[249] Was this meant as a positive signal to Sergis? It is not improbable and another letter (M-24) might, with some caution, be interpreted in the same context of this desirable vacant position. If so, the recompense John requested also might have implied that John, Sheroy or someone else should now become the new metropolitan of Bet Lapat or of Adiabene.

The suggestion that the appointment of a new metropolitan played an important role in letters M-22-23 is also inferred from the subsequent letter M-24, titled 'to the man who was called by himself and by the Catholicos and when he thought that he was required for the episcopate, was withheld to go and wrote an excuse in vain'. The addressee was deliberately not named. Ovidiu Ioan sees in this title a proof that it was difficult to find good church leaders after the Arab conquests and that the monk invited rejected this position as it would be too dangerous to stand between two frontiers.[250] The letter, however, does not speak of a monk and its content rather seems to indicate that the addressee had higher ambitions, considered an episcopate not good enough and attacked Ishoʿyahb III and the Catholicos, whereas Ishoʿyahb III replied that the addressee was not qualified for the job. The argumentation and tone thus suggest that the addressee already was in conflict with Ishoʿyahb III and the Catholicos. As in many other letters, the language of Ishoʿyahb III is sometimes ambiguous, covert and ironical. It is therefore difficult to assess what he actually meant.

> You are not able, O excellent one, not able for what you are thought (by others) or you (yourself) think you are able for. Not only are you not able in comparison to the job, but also in comparison to those who are not able for the job (themselves), this means us. If it pleases you thus, then you must not labour in vain anymore to profess to be a philosopher in such matters, as you even did, and you must not err and think that confirmation is from demonstration, or manifestation from refusal.[251]

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[247] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-26, pp. 197-200; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 15.

[248] Fiey, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, p. 84; Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 32; Nöldeke, 'Die syrische Chronik', p. 36.

[249] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-20, pp. 168-69.

[250] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 73; Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-24, p. 190. ܠܘܬ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܬܩܪܝ، ܡܢܗ ܘܡܢ ܩܬܘܠܝܩܐ. ܘܟܕ ܣܒܪ ܕܐܬܒܥܝ ܠܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܘܬܐ ܡܬܟܠܝܐ. ܐܬܟܠܝ ܡܢ ܕܠܡܐܙܠ. ܘܟܬܒ ܡܦܩܬ ܥܠܬܐ. ܣܪܝܩܬܐ܀

[251] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-24, p. 192.
ܠܐ ܫܟܝܚ ܐܢܬ ܐܘ ܡܝܬܪܐ ܠܐ ܫܟܝܚ ܐܢܬ ܠܗܝ ܕܐܣܬܒܪܬ ܐܘ ܐܣܬܒܪܬ ܕܫܟܝܚ ܐܢܬ. ܘܠܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܢ ܦܘܫܟܗ ܕܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܠܐ ܫܟܝܚ ܐܢܬ. ܐܠܐ ܘܡܢ ܦܘܫܟܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܫܟܝܚܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܣܘܥܪܢܐ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܚܢܢ. ܐܢ ܗܟܢܐ ܫܦܪ ܠܟ. ܘܠܐ ܬܡܚܠ ܬܘܒ ܠܡܬܦܠܣܦܘ ܒܨܒܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ: ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܐܬܦܠܣܦܬ. ܘܠܐ ܬܛܥܐ ܘܬܣܒܪ: ܕܡܢ ܡܚܘܝܢܘܬܐ ܗܘ ܫܘܪܪܐ: ܐܘ ܡܢ ܡܬܟܠܝܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܡܬܚܘܝܢܘܬܐ.

Ishoʿyahb III criticized both the inobedience and the 'supposed wisdom' with the stupid (philosophical) ordering. He also defended the accusations against the Catholicos, who 'is never set free from the constant bulk of humiliating insults'. To these critics now had joined the 'supposed wise, who oracles from afar the condition of things he has not seen or proven', and who had been condemned but had reacted with a 'barbarian condemnation'. Ishoʿyahb III was indignant because this person 'only made a pile of incautious complaints and sent a humble scribe instead of a petition for a friendly meeting'. This, together with the comments on the pretentious philosophy by someone who had been regarded highly, bears resemblance to the picture of John and Sheroy given in the preceding letters. But it also might refer to other opponents.

> Today (the Catholicos is insulted) by the supposed wise, who foretells from afar the condition of things he has not seen or proven yet (and who) deserves an unrelenting condemnation. With a barbaric anathema (ܚܪܡܐ, *herma*) he scorns again the official and canonical anathema: he is justly celebrated with the remembrance of the barbarian anathema.
>
> It is astonishing, when the supposed and famous wise (ܚܟܝܡܐ ܡܣܒܪܐ ܘܡܫܡܗܐ) also could not discern the barbarian from the legitimate in his whole attack of incautious accusations, but only made a pile of incautious complaints and sent a humble scribe instead of a petition for a friendly meeting. From this was suitably composed for you at the right time a refutation in many words of the error, (the recognition of) which for a long time I had sought in vain to impress in the virtue-loving mind of the Catholicos (ܪܝܫܐ ܕܩܬܘܠܝܩܘܬܐ).[252]

Ishoʿyahb III seemed here to admit that he had made some errors, while protecting thus the Catholicos from any blame. The inconclusive information about the one who had prepared the sophistic letter with accusations for the addressee shows him being considered famous, excommunicated, living far away and apparently with the authority given by 'barbarians' to condemn decisions of the Church of the East. This, including the possible hint to Sahdona's name (ܘܡܫܡܗܐ), reminds one again of the powerful Sahdona, whom Ishoʿyahb III accused of being the source of an uproar against the Church and himself and moreover of desiring to become metropolitan of Adiabene.[253] Ishoʿyahb III made these accusations in M-6. If this letter was

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[252] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-24, pp. 190-91.
ܘܝܘܡܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܬܚܟܡܢܐ ܡܣܒܪܐ. ܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܪܘܚܩܐ ܡܢܒܐ ܐܝܟܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܚܙܐ ܐܘ ܠܐ ܒܚܪ: ܠܚܘܝܒܐ ܕܠܐ ܪܚܡܐ ܡܫܬܘܐ: ܘܒܒܪܒܪܘܬ ܚܪܡܐ ܬܘܒ ܡܒܨܪ ܠܚܪܡܐ ܡܫܠܛܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܢܝܐ: ܒܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܕܚܪܡܐ ܒܪܒܪܝܐ [191] ܕܟܐܢܐܝܬ ܐܫܬܒܚ. ܘܬܕܡܘܪܬܐ ܗܝ ܐܢ ܐܦ ܒܟܠܗ ܡܚܘܬܐ ܕܪܫܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܙܗܝܪܐ: ܐܦܠܐ ܠܒܪܒܪܝܐ ܡܢ ܢܡܘܣܝܐ ܐܬܦܪܫ, ܠܡܦܪܫ: ܚܟܝܡܐ ܡܣܒܪܐ ܘܡܫܡܗܐ. ܐܠܐ ܚܕܐ ܟܢܫܘܬ ܕܡܥܒܕ ܕܪܛܢܬܐ ܠܐ ܙܗܝܪܬܐ: ܘܫܕܪ ܠܣܦܪܐ ܡܟܝܟܐ ܚܠܦ ܒܥܘܬܐ ܕܦܓܥܐ ܪܚܡܬܢܐ. ܕܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܥܒܝܕ ܐܬܚܒܪ ܠܟ ܒܥܕܢܐ ܕܙܕܩ: ܣܘܓܐܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܡܦܢܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܛܥܝܘܬܐ: ܗܝ ܕܐܢܐ ܒܗ ܙܒܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܢ ܩܕܝܡ ܪܩܝܩܐ: ܒܡܕܥܐ ܪܚܡ ܠܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܪܝܫܐ ܕܩܬܘܠܝܩܘܬܐ.

[253] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, p. 130.

related with M-22 and M-23, the fact that they have been allocated a higher number in his *Liber Epistularum* might be explained by the mentioned delay of one year.

In a letter to Bishop Barsauma (M-21), Ishoʿyahb III wrote with relief of the improved situation 'at the end of this era'. The 'rebelling protectors' (ܡܥܘ̈ܕܪܐ ܡܪ̈ܘܕܐ) did not pose a problem anymore. Some died (probably Cyriacus of Nisibis, which would imply that the letter was written shortly after 645), others were punished by death, 'expelled to the western borders of the *politeia* of the wrong faith' (probably referring to Sahdona), or were defamed and silenced.[254] The doctrine of the unity of the *qnoma* in the Lord was not to be published anymore. Ishoʿyahb III described it thus:

> But now I inform your Paternity—before my personal health—about the holy corporeal health of the true faith of Orthodoxy, which was shortly before afflicted by a dangerous sickness because of rebelling protectors. When, however, the Lord showed himself from heaven above the destroyers of the true faith, some of them were set free from the hurtful life by a quiet death; but others he cast out from the struggling life by the blow of capital punishment; others again he drove away and expelled to the western borders of the *politeia* of the wrong faith; and still others he defamed and silenced because of the fall from the highest hope, but he gave the faith of his truth the glory it deserved. And since then neither in book nor in words is the unity of *qnoma* in our Lord Christ made public among us any more.[255]

Ishoʿyahb III ascribed these events to 'Christ our Lord, who avenged the oppression of his truth' when the Catholicos ordained a new head of the Church in the 'very sanctuary of the Cross of the Lord in Karka Seleucia' (ܒܪܬܐ ܕܨܠܘ̈ܒܝܐ), while lifting the Cross of the Lord and demanding the consent of all the bishops congregated there that corrupters of the faith should be punished. The Catholicos was probably Maremmeh and the person ordained was probably Sabrishoʿ, the new metropolitan of Bet Garmai residing in Karka d-Bet Slok, which also would explain the location.[256] The problems with Sahdona, however, did not stop despite this claimed

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[254] Fiey also suggests that Cyriacus and Sahdona were meant. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 23. Cf. M-17, in which Ishoʿyahb III mentioned someone (possibly Sahdona) who had 'crossed the western borders of the Orthodox', see above, section 3.6.2

[255] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-21, p. 170.

[256] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-21, pp. 170-71. Both Fiey and Ioan hold that Maremmeh ordained Sabrishoʿ. His name is on the Diptychs during the time Maremmeh was Catholicos and in M-18, Ishoʿyahb III addressed Sabrishoʿ as 'bishop metropolitan'. Correcting Duval, Fiey also holds that the place was Karka d-Bet Slok. Ioan, however, holds that the place was Seleucia-Ctesiphon, since the sanctuary of the Holy Cross was there. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 23; idem, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, p. 63; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 37. It might be noted that Ishoʿyahb III had written before to a Sabrishoʿ, abbot of the monastery of the Holy Cross, which might also have been in Karka d-Bet Slok, although not much is known about it. See Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 24. Abbot Sabrishoʿ seems to have been instrumental in the election of Ishoʿyahb III as bishop. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-8, p. 10.

success, as might be inferred from other letters Ishoʿyahb III wrote as Metropolitan, which will be discussed in section 4.2.

3.9. The rebellion in the provinces at the Persian Gulf and the first civil war

3.9.1. Introduction

The Church of the East in the regions around the Persian Gulf was also affected by the Arab conquests.[257] The turmoil and taxes caused rebellion and apostasy in Fars, Qatar and other areas here. Fars (ܦܪܣ), which is located north-east of the Persian Gulf, has been considered the heartland of the Iranians, having a long tradition of seeking independence from Seleucia-Ctesiphon since the early fourth century. As we have seen above, Fars was invaded around 640, but was only completely subdued in 649/50. It is not clear when its metropolitan city, Rev Ardashir, became subject to Arab taxation.

Qatar is located on the Western side of the Persian Gulf on the Arabian Peninsula. Here, Muslim rule probably had already begun to take shape, especially after Bahrain including Oman was finally conquered between 636 and 639. Qatar was connected with other bishoprics on the Peninsula and some islands. Although the exact ecclesiastical position of these bishoprics has not yet been cleared, Qatar seems to have belonged officially to Fars until 676 when it gained metropolitan status itself.[258]

After Seleucia-Ctesiphon fell in 637 to the Arabs and Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II had moved north, he must have lost some contact with the southern dioceses. These strove again for independence from the Church of the East, which had already been weakened here due to conversions to Islam and attacks on its churches. In letters C-14 up to C-21, Ishoʿyahb III responded to this situation.[259] Because they probably were written during a short time span and are placed before Ishoʿyahb III's last preserved letter, they may have been written at the end of his reign, which would have coincided with the first years of the first civil war.

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[257] See also Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 55-67.

[258] Contradictory documents from the early fourth century suggest that when Seleucia-Ctesiphon strove for primacy among the bishoprics, others like Fars preferred their own independence. Brock, 'The Church of the East in the Sasanian Empire, p. 71; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 111-12; Van Rompay, 'Beth Qaṭraye', pp. 72-73.

[259] For the English translation of some fragments of these letters, I also looked at the translation by Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 178-81.

3.9.2. The first civil war

Towards the end of Ishoʿyahb III's catholicate, the internal rivalries between the Arabs escalated and resulted in the first civil war (656-61). This was followed by a second war (680-92) and a third (744-50). Already under the caliphate of ʿUthman (644-56) internal conflicts had worsened and after he was assassinated in 656, he was succeeded by Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (656-61), who resided in Kufa. His position was challenged by another branch of the Quraysh headed by Muʿawiya, the governor of Damascus. This led to a schism between Shiʿites and Sunnites. Most of Kufa's inhabitants adhered to the party of ʿAli (the Shiʿites) and Kufa remained a Shiʿi centre.[260] Soon, a group of fanatical warriors that consisted mainly of Tamim left ʿAli and formed another party in the conflicts. They were called 'Kharajites' and were involved in the assassination of ʿAli in 661.[261] The warriors of Basra, including many Tamim, also fought for the party of ʿAli. Muʿawiya suppressed these uprisings in 662 and from that date the Umayyads were in control of Basra until 683.[262] Although the Tamim had fought Muʿawiya, the Umayyads gave them government positions in Iraq (especially in the south), Oman, Bahrain and throughout the east, since their support was indispensable for any governmental control in these regions.[263]

The civil wars had a strong religious element. This applied especially to the belligerent Kharajites who had left the Shiʿites in 658 because they held that 'judgment belongs to God alone' and demanded therefore a divine sign (the outcome of a war) instead of a human tribunal. Another name for 'Kharajites' is *al-shurat*, 'the vendors' as they demanded a rigorous personal commitment and propagated martyrdom by 'selling' their soul for the cause of God.[264] They rejected absolutely the doctrine of justification by faith without works and therefore considered anyone not living according to their views an apostate who had to be killed. The Kharajites had influenced the development of Islamic theology considerably in their wish to return to the time before ʿUthman, when the Qurʾan would have been almost exclusively

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[260] Djaït, 'al-Kūfa', pp. 348-50.
[261] Giorgio Levi Della Vida, 'K̲h̲āridjites', *EI*[2] 4 (1978), pp. 1074-77.
[262] Pellat, 'al-Baṣra', pp. 1087-88.
[263] Lecker, 'Tamīm b. Murr', pp. 172-76.
[264] This term appears in Sura 4:74: 'So let them fight in the way of God who sell the present life for the world to come; and whosoever fights in the way of God and is slain, or conquers, we shall bring him a mighty wage'; Sura 2:207: 'But other men there are that sell themselves (نَفْسَهُ, *nafas-hu*) desiring God's good pleasure; and God is gentle with his servants'; Sura 9:111: God has bought from the believers their selves (أَنْفُسَهُمْ, ʾ*anfus-hum*) and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of God; they kill, and are killed; that is a promise binding upon God in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Koran; and who fulfils his covenant truer than God? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with him; that is the mighty triumph'. The singular of the plural *anfus(hum)* is *nafs*, which is equivalent to the Syriac *napsha* (ܢܦܫܐ).

normative for the way of life.[265] It does not seem unlikely that these wars somehow affected the position of the Church of the East.

3.9.3. The rebellion of Simon, metropolitan of Fars

The first three of Ishoʿyahb III's letters concerning the situation on the Persian Gulf are sent separately to two persons in Rev Ardashir, the metropolitan city of Fars. C-14 is a reply to a letter from Metropolitan Simon.[266] Ishoʿyahb III expressed his ambivalent reactions. Although he was pleased that Simon had written him, he understood that the latter had not solved the problems in his region, but rather interpreted these as being full of (false) promises. Ishoʿyahb III's apocalyptic view of history is apparent again in his statement that these events were rather the symptoms of old age and ruin of the world. One of the problems of the region was—according to Ishoʿyahb III—that the community was ruined, because of the apostasy of the 'people of *Marawnaye'* (ܡ̈ܪܘܢܝܐ) for financial reasons. Some other regions were lost as well. Ishoʿyahb III exclaimed:

> Where are your sons, O bereaved Father? Where are your sanctuaries, O unfortunate priest? Where is that great people of the *Marawnaye*, those who even though they did not see sword, fire or torments, —as insane ones—were caught only by the love for half of their possessions; and the underworld of apostasy (ܟܦܘܪܘܬܐ) swallowed them up straightaway and they were lost forever. […] Out of so many thousand humans called Christians, not one small offering was consecrated for God in a personal (ܦܘܡܝܐ) sacrifice for the true faith.[267]

The description *Marawnaye*, which occurs nine times in four letters, has puzzled many scholars. Most scholars identify it with the inhabitants of Oman.[268] This seems most plausible since this description reappeared in the Synod of George (676), signed only by bishops from the

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[265] Nagel, *Geschichte der islamischen Theologie. Von Mohammed bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1994), pp. 50-55; Levi Della Vida, 'Kẖāriḏjites', pp. 1074-77.

[266] Simon the Metropolitan of Rev Ardashir, to whom Ishoʿyahb III was writing, has been identified by some scholars with his namesake who held the same position and wrote an important juridical treatise (especially on legacy), but this remains undecided. See Lucas Van Rompay, 'Shemʿon of Rev Ardashir (7th or 8th cent.)', *GEDSH*, p. 374.

[267] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 248.

[268] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, pp. 248 and 251; C-16, p. 259; C-17, p. 262; C-18, pp. 265-66. The option that *Marawnaye* would be a reference to another Christian group, namely the Maronites, is discussed and rejected by Assemani and Nau. Assemani interprets it as Merw; Oscar Braun reads it as Mazon (modern Oman) as also do Fiey, Duval, Chabot and Ioan; Nau suggests it referred to Mahrah, a city close to Qatar. Hoyland, who transcribes it as *Mrwnaye* rejects Braun's reading and concludes that Ishoʿyahb III's letters 'seem very much to have Persia in mind' but he is also tempted to connect it with Merw as the same description reappears in the *Chronicon Anonymum* referring to Merw. Landron comments that it is probably Merwe Dash, close to the ancient Persepolis. François Nau, 'Maronites, Mazonites et Maranites', *ROC* 9 (1904), pp. 268-76 with references; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 181 and 186; *Chronicon Anonymum*, Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 31; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 100. Bénédicte Landron, *Chrétiens et Musulmans en Irak: Attitudes nestoriennes vis-à-vis de l'Islam* (Paris, 1994), p. 29.

west coast of the Persian Gulf.[269] It is clear at least that they had been dependent on Fars and its Metropolitan Simon of Rev Ardashir.

Ishoʿyahb III also pointed at the massive destruction of churches and sanctuaries in the more eastern district of Kerman and in Fars in general, while Christians did not try to stop this and did not ask for help either. Ishoʿyahb III saw here again the signs of the coming of 'the man of sin' which would precede the day of the Lord. He wondered that 'if all these things happened among the Christians in Fars and in the whole southern world when Satan did not come yet in the man of sin—as is written about him—what then will happen at the time of the coming of Satan?'[270]

The cause of all the problems was clear to Ishoʿyahb III. He wrote that it was due to the uncanonical ordinations, which cut them off from any priestly power and the gift of God. Only where saints practiced spiritual works, faith prospered. But Simon's people had renounced these things and were therefore powerless watching how others destroyed their churches.[271] Their passivity was due to their weak faith. This stood in contrast to the region of Radan, close to Seleucia-Ctesiphon,[272] where the people of the Church of the East had a strong faith and could therefore resist such attacks, despite the many pagans there. Ishoʿyahb III blamed the destructions in Fars to a demon who, after he had been expelled from Radan, found a place among Christians and pagans in Fars where he was able to destroy all the churches.

> For the one who has seduced you and uprooted your churches was first seen among us in the region of Radan, where there is much more paganism than Christianity. Yet, due to the honourable way of life of the Christians, those pagans were not led astray by him. Rather he was driven out from there in disgrace; not only did he not

[269] See below, section 5.3.2. Hoyland does not seem to have taken this fact into account. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 192-94. The transcription *Marawnaye* follows that of Margoliouth, *Supplement to the Thesaurus Syriacus*, p. 200.

[270] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, pp. 248-49. Cf. 2 Thess. 2:2-12; (NRSV): 2. […] the day of the Lord is already here. 3. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. 4. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. 5. Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? 6. And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. 7. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. 8. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming. 9. The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, 10. and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, 12. so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

[271] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, pp. 250-52.

[272] The district round Seleucia-Ctesiphon, which stretched from the Tigris to the Nahrawan canal, was known as Radan. Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia, from the Moslem Conquest to the Time of Timur* (London, 1905), p. 35. See also map, Annex 2.

> uproot the churches, but he himself was extirpated. However, your Fars, pagans and Christians, received him and he did with them as he wanted, the pagans consenting and obedient, the Christians passive and silent.[273]

Ishoʿyahb III did not understand this situation and argued that even the *Tayyaye* protected churches and monasteries, and he had implied before that they had not commanded the destruction of churches in Fars. Unfortunately, there are no further indications to identify the ‘demon’ that had destroyed them. Andrew Palmer holds that the ‘demon’ was the personification of heretics that were violently driven out from Iraq, where the Christians would have defended their faith and where apostolic succession was unbroken. Ishoʿyahb III would have deliberately blamed the heretics for the destructions.[274] Whether or not the *Tayyaye* actually did not take part in the destructions, as Ishoʿyahb III claimed, is difficult to assess. He might have said so, not only in order to convince the southern provinces, but also not to offend those very Arabs he was himself subject to as well.

Ishoʿyahb III further acknowledged the Arab rule as a God-given fact and he considered it right that *Tayyaye* had to be paid taxes. He asked therefore why the *Marawnaye* rejected their faith because of the *Tayyaye*, who did not compel them to do so. The *Marawnaye* had been free in their choice between either keeping their Christian faith which ‘only’ cost half of their possessions, or abandoning this very faith. Ishoʿyahb III was shocked that they had chosen the latter option and thus sold their eternal life. To Ishoʿyahb III, the price demanded by the *Tayyaye* to be allowed to practice Christianity was apparently not inacceptable in comparison to the desired eternal life for which many had suffered much. However, it is remarkable how lightly he seemed to take it and how he still could claim that the Arabs respected Christianity, even if they required that Christians had to pay them half of their possessions just in order to practice this respected faith. The apostasy from Christianity in order to pay less generally implied that people converted to Islam.

> As for the Arabs (*Tayyaye*), to whom God has at this time given the government (*shultana*) over the world, you know how they are to us: not only do they not oppose Christianity, but they even praise our faith, honour the priests and saints of our Lord, and protect the churches and monasteries![275]

[273] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251, translation after Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it,* pp. 180-81.
[274] Andrew Palmer, review of Ovidiu Ioan, *Muslime und Araber bei Īšōʿjahb III. (649-659)*, *Hugoy*e 12.2 (2011), p. 189.
[275] Duval (ed.), Liber Epistularum, C-14, p. 251.
ܘܐܦ ܓܝܪ ܛܝܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܗܒ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܠܡܐ: ܗܐ ܠܘܬܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ. ܘܠܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ: ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܡܫܒܚܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܗܝܡܢܘܬܢ. ܘܡܝܩܪܝܢ ܠܟܗܢܐ ܘܠܩܕܝܫܘܗܝ ܕܡܪܢ. ܘܡܥܕܪܝܢ ܠܥܕܬܐ ܘܠܕܝܪܐ. .

> Why then do your *Marawnaye* abandon their faith because of them? And this when even the *Marawnaye* themselves say that the *Tayyaye* did not compel them to abandon their faith, but only told them to abandon half of their possessions in order to keep their faith. Yet they abandoned their faith, which is forever, and retained the half of their possessions, which is for a short time. A faith that all the people bought and are buying by the blood of their necks, (a faith) by which they inherit the eternal life, your *Marawnaye* would not even buy for the half of their possessions.[276]

Ishoʿyahb III also enclosed a copy of this letter to the monks in Qatar (C-20). It is not improbable that he sent it to others as well, or that the content was shared with others. He thus had to choose his words very carefully as his letters could be read by heterogeneous groups with opposing interests. His letters were primarily meant to encourage, persuade and instruct a wide Christian audience, of whom a part might consider converting to Islam for various reasons or could have some mixed loyalties. Moreover, the letters could be given easily to Islamic governors, with whom Ishoʿyahb III tried to keep good relations, if he had not discussed such letters with them already during the weekly audiences. Ishoʿyahb III had therefore to achieve two conflicting goals. On the one hand he had to explain the specific benefits of Christianity as opposed to Islam in order to prevent apostasy to Islam; on the other hand he was in no position to annoy the rulers of the day and may have had to emphasize aspects which made East Syrian Christianity acceptable in their eyes.

Another accusation against Simon was that he refused to ordain priests in India, which affected many people. After having pointed out what was wrong, Ishoʿyahb III advised Simon to correct this and to hold on to canonical ordination which stemmed from the apostles. He concluded with suggestions for a meeting, given the fact that he could not travel far due to health and age.[277]

Ishoʿyahb III further corresponded with a ‘teacher in Rev Ardashir’ (C-15). In a short letter he replied that only deeds were necessary now and not words. Here, Ishoʿyahb III explained again that the weak faith in this region was the cause of the poverty of spiritual doctrine and discipline. So far, however, this was not due to the power of persecutors or to ‘the man of sin’,

The phrase ܗܐ ܠܘܬܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܕܥܝܢܬܘܢ is translated here as ‘you know how they are to us’. Ovidiu Ioan discusses several translations and chooses the following interpretation: ‘sie sind—wie ihr wisst—auch bei uns’ (‘they are—as you know—also with us’). Although these two alternatives differ in meaning, in this context that hardly seems to have an impact. The first reading seems the most plausible as it explicitly introduces the following qualifications, while the other does this implicitly and further hardly gives new information. Ishoʿyahb III might have added it for persuasive reasons showing that he knows the Arabs well, but this does not change the argument. See for further discussion: Palmer, review of *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 186-87; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 90.

[276] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 181.

[277] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251.

as he had not appeared yet. This seems to have been a theme that Ishoʿyahb III wanted to use to mobilize the people. He encouraged the teacher to be not only an example for the priests and the people, but for the bishops as well. 'For it is right that a teacher of the community is better than the whole community, not only by the power of the word, but also by the praise of excellent disciplines.'[278]

Ishoʿyahb III sent a second letter to Simon and also included the presbyters, deacons and believers in Fars into his list of addressees. He reminded Simon of his former letter, probably C-14, in which he had invited Simon to come, and he stated that the believers in Fars needed spiritual help, because they had become negligent in faith, which was a cause of the apostasy. He repeated his claim that their weak faith was due to uncanonical ordinations. He moreover stated that they had worldly ideas concerning their ecclesiastical position: instead of giving spiritual gifts, they wanted to get material tribute (ܡܕܐܬܐ ܠܘܫܡܒܬܐ) from each other and from the people in India. Ishoʿyahb III went on to recall that when he had written to persuade them, they fell from their faith and testified in sealed letters the apostasy (ܟܦܘܪܘܬܐ) from their faith to the temporal leaders (ܫܠܝܛܢܐ ܕܙܒܢܐ). He sarcastically added that he had learnt from these leaders that this testimony showed 'that they are neither Christians nor men of understanding'.[279]

They would therefore deserve punishment for their sin, but were punished by the government of the world (ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܐܚܪ̈ܝ، ܥܠܡܐ). Ishoʿyahb III wept for them as he had done for their companions, the *Marawnaye*. Ishoʿyahb III sent them now, as to the dead, Bishop Theodor of Hormizd Ardashir and the bishop of Shustar.[280] The bishops should examine only whether there was hope, and Ishoʿyahb III assured them that the bishops would not demand their belongings or receive their impure profits. If there was no hope, they would go and wait for Judgment Day.

3.9.4. The rebellion on the coast of the Arabian Peninsula

On the other side of the Gulf, on the coast of the Arabian Peninsula, the situation was a bit different. After 632, the peninsula had for several years been the scene of battles between Arab tribes concerning the succession of Muhammad, with some tribes leaving the new movement

[278] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-15, pp. 255-56.
[279] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-16, p. 258.
[280] As we have seen in section 3.4.2, Shustar and Hormizd Ardashir, which belonged to Bet Huzaye, were taken somewhere between 635 and 642. After an initial conquest around 634 by Khalid al-Walid, there was strong resistance in this area.

and later embracing it again.[281] Now, roughly two decades later, the rebellion in Fars against the Church of the East had affected the bishoprics there. Ishoʿyahb III wrote to the bishops of the people of Qatar several times about this. While remaining dependent on Fars, they must have gained supremacy over their fellow believers in the adjacent regions, because Ishoʿyahb III described them as those who hold the 'assisting authority' (ܡܫܠܛܘܬܐ ܡܥܕܪܢܝܬܐ) over the islands and the dwellers in the desert, namely Dairin, Mashmahig, Talu, Hatta and Hagar.[282]

In C-17, Ishoʿyahb III reminded them of a former letter on the knowledge of truth, which the baptized could receive, and of his invitation to visit him so that they might share this. But they had despised it, rebelled and brought a statement of it to the court of the secular leaders, as people also had done in Rev Ardashir. Consequently, the Church had separated from them. Their titles had become empty, because they were not connected anymore with the main source of priestly life. Similarly to what he had written to the believers in Fars, Ishoʿyahb III concluded that hoping for recovery, he had waited with the punishment and that he would lament for them as he did for the *Marawnaye* if they would not return. He finally asked them to inform him where they stood, not only by letters, but also in works.

The letter was composed on two verses from John: '*I came that they may have life, and may have something more'* (John 10:10). The phrase 'something more' would indicate the grace of the spirit which the baptized would receive.[283] The 'life' was explained in John 17:3, which Ishoʿyahb III, apart from omitting the word 'true' (ܫܪܝܪܐ) with respect to 'God', accurately reproduced: '*this is eternal life: that they may know you, that you are the only God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent*'.[284] It is not clear why he did not speak of 'true God' here. Ioan signals that the presentation of this fragment was meant to emphasize the agreement between Christianity and Islam as it formed a parallel to the Islamic profession of faith, the *shahada:* 'There is no god but God; Muhammad is the messenger of God'. Christians would, however, still understand that Christ was God incarnate.[285] This is not impossible.[286]

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[281] See above, section 2.5.
[282] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, p. 267.
[283] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-17, p. 260. ܕܐܢܐ ܠܡ ܐܬܝܬ ܕܚܝܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ.. ܘܡܕܡ ܕܝܬܝܪ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ..
Cf. John 10:10 (Peshitta): ܐܢܐ ܐܬܝܬ. ܕܚܝ̈ܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܡܕܡ ܕܝܬܝܪ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ. [...] Cf. also John 10:10 (NRSV): 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'
[284] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-17, p. 260.
ܕܗܠܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܡ ܚܝܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ: ܕܢܕܥܘܢܟ ܕܐܢܬ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܠܚܘܕܝܟ. ܘܡܢ ܕܫܕܪܬ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ
Cf. John 17:3 (Peshitta): ܗܠܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܚܝ̈ܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ. ܕܢܕܥܘܢܟ. ܕܐܢܬ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ ܒܠܚܘܕܝܟ܆ ܘܡܢ ܕܫܕܪܬ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ.
[285] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 107.
[286] The first part of the *Shahada*: لا إله إلا الله (*la ilaha illa l-lah,* 'There is no God but God' (see also above section 3.5.2), reminds one in content and sound vaguely of the catechetical homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia which had to be learnt before baptism and therefore still might have sounded familiar; ܠܝܬ ܡܕܡ ܒܝܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ (*layt medem bet alaha l-alaha*, 'there is nothing between God and God'). Tonneau and Devreesse, *Les homélies*, 4:2, pp. 78-79. It is not known, however, whether these homilies still had to be learnt before baptism during the sixth

In his next letter (C-18) to the believers in Qatar and the connected bishoprics, Ishoʿyahb III warned that their faith should be strengthened, so that they would not follow the example of the remote people beyond them. Similarly to what he had written to Simon, the metropolitan of Fars (C-14), and to the monks of Qatar (C-21), Ishoʿyahb III diagnosed that the 'disease' of the Qatari was due to the uncanonical ordinations, which separated them from the source of priestly power. In line with the traditional claim of Apostolic succession, he explained that the priestly power only proceeds spiritually from Christ through the rightful successors of the Church in the unchangeable and eternal spiritual tradition.[287] Bishops connected to Qatar, however, appear to have been consecrated without the consent of the catholicos. Ishoʿyahb III stated that they traded the office's title among each other, and this had thus lost its real power. Moreover Ishoʿyahb III went on, they were neither ascetics nor an example of a life after resurrection. They could not perform miracles, did not heal nor drive out bad spirits. Furthermore, no 'Christian tribe there offered the usual sacrifices with the blood of the testimony of God Almighty'.[288]

The fact that Ishoʿyahb III described the Christians in this region as belonging to tribes (ܫܪ̈ܒܬܐ) seems to indicate that to him most were of Arab or Bedouin ethnicity. What Ishoʿyahb III meant with sacrifices that were without 'the blood of the testimony of God Almighty', is not clear. Did it refer to a (partial) rejection of the Eucharist by these tribes, or to an unwillingness to offer their life as 'martial blood' for the sake of Christianity and their eternal life, as Ishoʿyahb III demanded of the monks in Qatar (C-21)?

Ishoʿyahb III analysed the problems in Qatar and Fars from his perspective. He believed that faith would not perish if the ordination would be canonical again, which would require obedience to the Church of the East. Since the bishops of Fars had cut themselves from this tradition, they also had cut themselves from a life of hope, as it had started in *Marawn*.[289] As faith in the southern part of the world perished, Ishoʿyahb III had tried to prevent this by calling a synod twice. The bishops of Fars, however, had not attended. They had made their apostasy from Christianity public in writing with blasphemy and impious seals (ܚܬܡ̈ܐ ܕܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ) and had renounced the community with the Church for ever. This change, as had happened with the *Marawnaye*, was not enough: the bishops of Fars and Qatar had even made their commit-

and seventh centuries. In any case, they were influential and still amply available during the thirteenth century, when all of Theodore's works are said to have been found in the churches and monasteries. Mingana, *Nicene Creed*, p. 6, with references.

[287] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, p. 269.

[288] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, p. 263.
ܟܕ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܩܘܪܒ ܠܫܪ̈ܒܬܐ ܕܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܒܥܝܕܗ. ܒܕܡܐ ܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ.

[289] On the *Marawnaye*, see also the first paragraphs of section 3.9.3.

ment for the following generations and had confirmed this in writings with impious seals. Nevertheless, Ishoʿyahb III had sent two bishops from the adjacent Maishan with letters from the synod and himself. These bishops, however, had been treated badly, while the 'so called bishops were not satisfied with the impiety against the Church of God'. They had further presented the demonstration of their rebellion (ܡܪܘܕܘܬܗܘܢ) against the primacy of 'the Church of God' to the governors (ܫܠܝܛܢܐ) there. They moreover did so to the 'highest governor, who is above the governor of this time' (ܫܠܝܛܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܠܥܠ ܡܢ ܫܠܝܛܢܐ ܕܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ).[290] Ishoʿyahb III added here as well that the governors had soon despised them.

After this account, Ishoʿyahb III gave the measures taken due to this estrangement (ܢܘܟܪܝܘܬܐ) from the Church of God 'with a stupidity that resembles that of the Jews'. The bad bishops were banished officially from the ecclesiastical communion and the holy sacraments. The addressees should stay away from these bishops, while presbyters and deacons should stand in for them until a priestly seat was rightly prepared. He warned them strongly against 'the enemy of Christians'. He further warned twice that the 'man of sin' was near, and he reminded them of the order which indicated his coming. The foolish bishops 'did not know that everyone is subject to the secular government that dominated now every land'. The fact that Ishoʿyahb III, as head of the Church of the East, wrote his flock in general letters that they had to obey the Arabs must have been welcome to the latter. Ishoʿyahb III thus solved the problem how subjection to the Arabs was to be combined with Christianity, by indicating that the Christians not only had to submit to this God-given government, but also should continue to submit to God. This submission to God, however, was rather what they had not been doing.

> So now is also the time that the arrival is near of the man of sin, the son of perdition. And not only has the sequence of events which indicate his coming been foretold in the book of the spirit, but also that many will err, namely the chosen, as also those of you have erred, namely the so-called bishops. While they thought in their stupidity that the servitude (ܫܘܥܒܕܐ) of the Church of God is not the source of the spiritual help for those who deserve it, but that the servitude is hurtful and damaging, they demonically renounced like the devils who renounced the servitude to God (ܟܦܪܘ ܒܫܘܥܒܕܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ) their creator.
>
> The fools did not know and did not understand that they—as well as everyone with complete will—are subject (ܡܫܬܥܒܕܝܢ) to this secular government (ܠܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܥܠܡܢܝܐ) that now dominates every land. Those who have the command from Christianity to submit to the governors (ܫܘܠܛܢܐ) who are commanded by God, do not want to submit to the government of Christianity (ܠܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ). While they eagerly submit to every government beyond Christianity, with body, soul and possessions and with every deed except for the servitude of Christianity, i.e. against the servitude for God, they rebel (ܡܪܕܝܢ) like demons. And this also the fools do

[290] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, p. 266.

not understand that we are commanded to give every government what is due to it from us: namely capitation tax (ܟܣܦ ܪܫܐ) to whomever capitation tax (is due); tribute (ܡܟܣܐ) to whomever (p. 269) tribute (is due); fear to whomever fear (is due); and honour to whomever honour (is due).

However, the lawful servitude—this means that each ordains (ܠܟܒܫܘ) us to submit in the love of Christ—does not require that we give him something of ourselves, but that he gives us from him.[291] Namely the gift of the Spirit by which we will be strengthened to inherit beautifully adoption as sons and the kingdom of God, through the priestly power which flows spiritually from our Lord through the successors of the holy Church in a spiritual tradition that prevails and proceeds unchangeably within the Church from eternity to eternity.[292]

In seemingly tedious formulations Ishoʿyahb III spoke here of the servitude to both secular leaders and to God. This leads to a definition of the rebellion against the Church of the East as a rebellion against the servitude to God (*Alaha*). As being the servant of God played a highly important role in Islam, Ishoʿyahb III cunningly managed to discredit them for Islam as well. This way, he also could claim that the Arab governors considered them fools.

Ishoʿyahb III thus might have hoped to solve his dilemma of submitting to the Arabs without facilitating conversions to Islam by arguing that rebellion against the Church of the East was even against fundamental Islamic tenets. As the content of these letters probably was transmitted to Muslim governors as well, this letter might have been another warning for Christians not to separate from the Church of the East, provided these governors in fact agreed with Ishoʿyahb III's argumentation.

Ishoʿyahb III concluded this letter by urging the people of Qatar to take the spiritual weapons (Eph. 6:14-17) against the 'man of sin' and assuring that he himself did not want to have their material possessions, as their bad bishops thought he would, because they habitually did so themselves. He invited those interested to examine 'our customs'. He closed his letter urging the people of Qatar to be firm in faith and to inform him about their position.

This letter makes a difference between two kinds of taxes: poll tax (ܟܣܦ ܪܫܐ, *ksep resha*) and tribute (*maksa,* ܡܟܣܐ), which remains unspecified.[293] In M-10, also written during Arab rule, Ishoʿyahb III distinguished between *shqala* (ܫܩܠܐ) and *madata* (ܡܕܐܬܐ) which had to be paid to the temporal secular leaders.[294] The later official Islamic terms for taxation are not used

[291] The Syriac text of this sentence is as follows: ܘܫܘܥܒܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܢܡܘܣܝܐ: ܗܢܘ ܕܚܕ ܚܕ ܒܚܘܒܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܟܒܫܘ ܠ ܠܡܫܬܥܒܕܘ: ܠܐ ܕܢܬܠ ܠܗ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܕܝܠܢ ܒܥܐ. ܐܠܐ ܕܗܘ ܢܬܠ ܠܢ ܡܢ ܕܝܠܗ.
As discussed in section 3.7.3, Richard Payne holds that taxes had to be paid to Ishoʿyahb III as intermediary of the Muslims. This interpretation is due to a different translation (which omits the last part of the sentence): 'They have commanded that lawful domination, that is of one another in the love of Christ, be subject to us.' Payne, 'Persecuting Heresy', p. 401.

[292] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, pp. 268-69.

[293] The term *maksa* also appeared in E-43, indicating a tax collector. See also section 3.3.

[294] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, p. 148.

here. Although we lack further information, the two kinds of taxation seem to represent a continuation of former Sasanian practices.[295]

In his second letter to the Qataris (C-19), Ishoʿyahb III first spoke of 'Abraham, the eminent and most praised bishop there', but later he called him by contrast 'the governor of Mashmahig with tyrannical government'(ܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܡܫܡܗܝܓ ܒܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܛܘܪܢܝܐ), when he described how Abraham had broken with the Church, offended the monks, driven them away and threatened anyone who helped Christians'. Ishoʿyahb III further explained the value of the monks for Christians.[296]

The next letter was addressed to the monks of Qatar themselves (C-20). Ishoʿyahb III wrote to them that George, the metropolitan of Perat d-Maishan (Basra), had brought him a positive report. George probably was also one of the bishops from Maishan mentioned in C-18 who had been sent to Qatar. He was a disciple and friend of Ishoʿyahb III.[297] Ishoʿyahb III seems to have wanted to arouse a militant feeling among the monks, when he wrote again on the spiritual weapons against impiety, and he explained that zeal for truth, which resulted in the rebuking of the erring, was most important. He supported this by many examples from the Old and New Testament and quoted: '*The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the flesh, but have divine power*'. On the question what this might imply, he continued the quotation from 2 Cor. in a formulation differing from the Peshitta only at the end: '*We destroy strongholds with it and we destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ. We are ready to punish* those who do not believe, so that the *obedience* (ܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܐ) *is fulfilled* of those who believe.'[298]

The monks of Qatar were further reminded of those who had rejected worldly honour for God and were today a source of help. Ishoʿyahb III urged them that now was the time of trial and that they should follow this example of spiritual struggle and thus should put the so-called bishops to shame by guarding the name and fame of faith with appropriate glory. Ishoʿyahb III finally advised them to read several letters: the general letter he had written to all the clerics and believers of their land; the synodal letter to them and the former bishops; a sealed copy of his advisory letter to 'Simon, who was called Bishop of Rev Ardashir'; and a copy of his next

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295 See for further discussion section 5.2.

296 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-19, pp. 270-73. The role of the monks will further be discussed in section 4.4.2-3.

297 Budge (trans.), Chapter 2.12, *The Book of Governors*, p. 181.

298 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-20, pp. 273-74. Cf. 2 Cor. 10:4-6. The last sentence reads in NRSV: 'We are ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.'
Peshitta 2 Cor. 10:6: ܘܡܛܝܒܝܢ ܠܡܬܒܥ ܬܒܥܬܐ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ܆ ܡܐ ܕܐܬܡܠܝܬ ܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܟܘܢ܀
Ishoʿyahb III wrote: ܘܡܛܝܒܝܢ ܠܡܬܒܥ ܬܒܥܬܐ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ. ܡܛܠ ܕܬܬܡܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ.

letter to him, written after Simon had expressed his apostasy from Christianity and had made their bishops to do the same. Ishoʿyahb III asked the monks to read these letters for everyone and inform him where they stood.[299] Because the rebellion of Simon had triggered the revolt among bishops in Qatar, Ishoʿyahb III thus might have tried to isolate him from the Qataris. The rebellion, however, went on and was ended in 676 under the new Catholicos George I.[300]

The letter to the monks of Qatar was followed by an extensive second letter (C-21), which also formed the last of the seven letters concerning the rebellion in the provinces around the Persian Gulf. As he had done before to the others, Ishoʿyahb III also gave the monks his analysis of the situation. Starting with the motto ‘*all things can be done for the one who believes*’,[301] he logically inferred that one who does not believe can do nothing. This happened in Fars and Qatar. The ‘disease of unbelief’ was a result of their being cut from the power of the Holy Spirit, due to the uncanonical ordinations. The people consequently despised monks and expelled them. Ishoʿyahb III blamed this also on the weak faith of the monks who could work no wonders and lacked the zeal for truth and the help of the Lord.

> And their boldness was not ashamed by your appearance and your fame. But neither your faith—that is to say, your virtue—prevailed over their fury by the power of a miraculous deed, nor your eagerness for the truth, and not even with a sign of the help of our Lord, who joins those who believe rightly.[302]

Thus, even the monks could not resist the difficulties because of their weak faith, which in turn was due to the weak priesthood and uncanonical ordinations. Because the bishops had traded the clergy positions for money, the believers were weak as well. Ishoʿyahb III had tried to intervene, but the bishops were unwilling and the believers did not separate from the false priests. Although Ishoʿyahb III had tried to prevent the monks from contact with the bishops of Fars and Qatar, they had returned quickly to them.

Ishoʿyahb III criticized the bishops of Fars and Qatar for their disobedience and acquisitive attitude, whereas the real Church should not receive but give. Their behaviour sharply contrasted with that of the other bishops and metropolitans in the East that were ordained by the Church of God, stayed in contact by letters and did well. Given this situation, Ishoʿyahb III was amazed that the monks now even asked him for permission to join the priestly perfor-

[299] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-21, pp. 274-77.
[300] See also below, section 5.3.2.
[301] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-21, p. 277. Cf. Matt. 21:22 and Mark 11:24.
[302] Duval (ed.) *Liber Epistularum*, C-21, p. 278.
ܘܠܐ ܡܪܚܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܒܗܬܬ ܡܢ ܐܣܟܡܟܘܢ ܘܡܢ ܫܡܥܟܘܢ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܟܝܬ ܡܝܬܪܘܬܟܘܢ ܕܝܠܟܘܢ. ܙܟܬ ܠܚܡܬܗܘܢ ܒܚܝܠܐ ܕܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܬܕܡܘܪܬܢܐ. ܠܐ ܒܛܢܢܟܘܢ ܕܥܠ ܩܘܫܬܐ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܒܐܬܐ ܕܡܥܕܪܢܘܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ: ܗܘ ܕܢܩܦ ܘܡܩܒܠ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ.

mances of the bishops and priests of Fars, as those had no power by the Holy Spirit. Ishoʿyahb III pointed at the right order in which the power of the Holy Spirit reached the believer. The believers received the power to be Christians from above. Via the catholicos it was further passed down to metropolitans, bishops and priests. The believers in Fars, however, had already made bishops and metropolitans for themselves without the catholicos. Sarcastically Ishoʿyahb III suggested that if the Qataris considered this a fine procedure, they could also do this.

Apparently, the monks in Qatar had also referred to old customs that would allow this practice, but Ishoʿyahb III did not recognize these customs as belonging to the tradition of the Church of God. He compared the addressees therefore to Severians, Julianists and Marcionites, who had separated from the Church.[303] After this exposé, Ishoʿyahb III urged the monks to come back to the Church of God. He concluded by stating that he also had written many letters to the Qataris and to Nimparuk son of Dustar from Hatta with the request to read the letters to the Qataris. Since this Nimparuk had not done so, the addressees should ask for these letters.

Ishoʿyahb III expressed his hope that someone would react against the so-called bishops and Christians. He feared that if they did not realize the danger they were in, '*the iniquity of the Amorites*' would 'already *be complete* for them, as was written, and it was therefore the time of the final perdition'.[304]

One could ask why Ishoʿyahb III referred to the Amorites and chose exactly this example of perdition. An explanation might be found in the name of the Amorites, who were traditionally associated with people living 'west' of the Euphrates.[305] Connecting this with John bar Penkaye's 'westerners', the Umayyads,[306] one might speculate that Ishoʿyahb III referred here to Umayyad groupings who were becoming more dominant in the Persian Gulf area and who supported ʿUthman, whereas Kufa supported ʿAli and had participated in the revolt against ʿUthman (654-55). The involvement of the bishop of Basra, the city which also supported ʿAli, might form another indication. One might therefore speculate further that Ishoʿyahb III allied with the Arab leaders around Kufa and possibly also in Basra. This seems plausible because of the geographic vicinity with Kufa, and might be inferred from a similar sentiment as virulent

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[303] Duval (ed.) *Liber Epistularum*, C-21, pp. 281-82. The reference of the monks in Qatar to their own old custums is not new. As we have seen in section 1.14.4, already in 585 Catholicos Ishoʿyahb I had to respond to specific practices in this region.

[304] Ishoʿyahb III quoted here Gen. 15:16 (cf. Num. 21:21-32; Deut. 2:26 and Judg. 11:19-24), which narrates God's promise to Abraham to give his descendants the land of the Amorites when the iniquity of the Amorites would have run its course. This was the case after the Exodus from Egypt, when the Amorites were driven from their country by God, because they had refused Israel to cross their land peacefully. Duval (ed.) *Liber Epistularum*, C-21, pp. 282-83.

[305] Ernst Axel Knauf, 'Amoriter', *RGG*[4] 1, col. 417; idem, 'Amoriter', *LTHK*[3] 1, col. 537-38.

[306] This will be discussed in more detail in section 5.1.

among the proto-Kharajites when he urged his readers to 'buy' eternal life by 'selling' earthly possessions, or even one's life (or soul).[307]

Ishoʿyahb III expressed such thoughts in two letters. In C-21, martyrdom formed an additional indication of the perfect faith of the Christians. Alongside a holy way of life and divine miracles performed by their hands, Ishoʿyahb III recognized a third, even more important element: 'to buy the life of their faith with the death of their *qnoma*'.[308] These three could be performed by miracle, because Christians received the power of the Holy Spirit by sacramental baptism, provided it was performed by someone canonically ordained. The third element added by Ishoʿyahb III is in line with his earlier letters in which he for instance described monks as 'spiritual soldiers',[309] reminded his readers of the exemplary martyrs, or wanted to mobilize the nobility and the clergy of Nisibis for a fight for the truth against Miaphysites. Although such earlier statements may have been meant mainly metaphorically, the later statements seem to call explicitly for an active fight up to death in order to reach salvation. The use of the term *qnoma* seems to vary considerably in this respect, even leading to contradictory remarks. Whereas Ishoʿyahb III spoke here approvingly of the 'death of their *qnoma*', probably indicating personal death, he connected this elsewhere with the perdition of the soul which had to be avoided.[310]

It is not clear against whom exactly the monks in Qatar should fight and whether or not the 'so-called bishops and Christians' allied with other parties during the Arab civil war. There are some hints that they might have allied with the Umayyads, whereas Ishoʿyahb III might have sought to raise opposition with proto-Kharijite slogans.

3.9.5. Rebellion and apostasy

In Ishoʿyahb III's letters concerning both rebellion and apostasy around the Persian Gulf, the difference between the two is not always clear. He considered both to be the result of weak faith. In case of rebellion, one might suppose that there would still be hope for reunification. As we have seen, these regions wanted the freedom to make their own ordinations while referring to their own specific customs. In the case of apostasy to Miaphysitism or to another form

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[307] See Duval (ed.) *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251. The relevant Suras are given in section 3.9.2.
[308] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251 (see also above) and C-21, p. 278.
ܡܢ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܡܫܪܪܬܐ ܘܡܫܘܕܥܢܘܬܐ ܠܡܫܝܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܬܘܠܝܩܐ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܕܒܢܝܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܘܡܢ ܚܝ̈ܠܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ ܕܡܬܥܒܕܝܢ
ܒܐܝ̈ܕܝܗܘܢ. ܘܬܠܝܬܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܬܬܝܬܪ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ: ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܒܡܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ: ܢܙܒܢܘܢ ܚܝܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ.
[309] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-13, p. 157, see also section 4.4.2.
[310] In C-14 he lamented the perdition of the *qnoma* (soul) of the rebels, and in the hagiography of the martyr Ishoʿsabran, he stated that by denying the right confession one 'has acquired the sentence of death for his *qnoma*' (ܐܬܬܪܢ ܠܩܢܘܡܗ ܦܣܩܐ ܕܡܘܬܐ). Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 253; Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 8, p. 534, see also below section 4.3.4.

of Christianity, which to Ishoʿyahb III was no Christianity at all, he might have hoped to persuade them to return. Apostasy to Islam might have been considered irreversible already.

The terminology of Ishoʿyahb III in his letters does not clarify what he meant in every instance. The occurrence of the two terms mostly used, *kaporuta* and *maroduta*, is therefore analysed here. The term *kaporuta* (ܟܦܘܪܘܬܐ) was already widely used to denote apostasy.[311] It means 'denial', 'unbelief' and could also be easily recognized by Muslims, as their term for this (*kufr*) stems from the same root. It is therefore interesting that Ishoʿyahb III used this only in later letters, when Islam was more established. Of the ten times it occurred, only once there seems to be little doubt that it indicated an apostasy to Islam.[312] This was when he spoke of the *kaporuta* of the *Marawnaye* who did so in order to avoid paying half of their possessions.[313] He also might have referred to apostasy to Islam when he spoke in the letter to Simon of Rev Ardashir and to the believers in Fars (C-16) of the '*kaporuta* which occurs in your region' that he wanted to prevent by giving spiritual power. As we have seen he also mentioned in this letter that bishops here had expressed their apostasy to the governors in sealed statements.[314] In the other instances, the 'apostasy' remained within the context of Christianity, as also shown in the hagiography of Ishoʿsabran in which Ishoʿyahb III described the Persian aristocrat Shabor as apostate (*kapora*).[315]

Ishoʿyahb III used the word 'rebellion' (*maroduta*, ܡܪܘܕܘܬܐ) ten times.[316] It appeared already in E-2 when he praised Babai for his zeal against the 'heirs of Satan' as they followed Satan's rebellion against God.[317] He also used the term *maroduta* in his letter to Metropolitan Gabriel, in which he complained about the Miaphysites in Nineveh and—probably referring to 2 Thess. 2:3—spoke of the rebellion which had been predicted.[318] All other occurrences were in the context of the rebellion in Fars and Qatar. In C-14, Ishoʿyahb III spoke of the 'rebellion against the ecclesiastical canons', by which the priestly succession was broken for India; of a 'rebellion of stubborn sons' and the 'rebellion at the end times'.[319] In his letters to the Qataris (C-17 and C-18), he spoke of both apostasy and rebellion. In C-17 he wrote to the bishops in

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[311] Hubert Kaufhold, 'Häresie, Schisma und Apostasie in den Kirchenrechtsquellen der orientalischen Kirchen', *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 60 (2008), pp. 321-22.
[312] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14; 16; 18; 19 and 20, pp. 248, 257, 258, 265, 271 and 277.
[313] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 248.
[314] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-16, pp. 257-58.
[315] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 19, p. 578. On Shabor and this hagiography, see section 4.3.4.
[316] Five times Ishoʿyahb III also used the word *marduta* (ܡܪܕܘܬܐ), which has as first meaning 'rebellion', and as second 'chastising, training'. Ishoʿyahb III applied this, however, in the second (biblical) sense (for instance referring to Heb. 12:7 in E-6). Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-4, p. 5; E-6, p. 8; E-47, p. 91 and M-31, p. 214; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, p. 828.
[317] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-2, pp. 2-3.
[318] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-44, p. 81.
[319] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, pp. 252-53.

Qatar about their rebellion. In C-18 he stated explicitly that the bishops of Fars and Qatar 're-nounced Christianity in statements of madness and with seals of impiety', and he called this 'apostasy'. As he also stated that the bishops of Qatar had presented a written statement of their 'rebellion' to the secular leaders, he seems to have applied the terms 'apostasy' and 're-bellion' rather indifferently. The situation in Qatar and Fars seems to have been similar in his view. This analysis does therefore not allow a more differentiated view on the events on the Persian Gulf as referred to in Ishoʿyahb III's letters, except for the observation that *kaporuta* was mainly used in his later letters and once in his biography of Ishoʿsabran, and that *marodu-ta* was used more often in the biblical sense, signalling the end times.

The fact that despite their apostasy or rebellion the bishops were still considered as acting bishops by their supporters seems to indicate that they had not left Christianity completely. They might have sought their own treaties with the Islamic governors, independently from Ishoʿyahb III. For instance, some Christian Arab tribes might have demanded a special tax regime, arguing that they were Arabs, as the (Miaphysite) Taghlib successfully had done.[320] Winkler suggests that Simon had even claimed the Patriarchate for himself as he already had refused to recognize Ishoʿyahb III as Catholicos in 649.[321] An additional suggestion is that during the civil war, the rebels might have also negotiated treaties with the enemies of the Ar-ab groupings whom Ishoʿyahb III considered lawful leaders.

3.10. Ishoʿyahb III's position towards the Arabs and Muslims

Especially letters E-48 and C-14 have drawn the interest of scholars as they contain some in-formation on Arab rule in its early days. They therefore have been subject of several (frag-mentary) translations and subsequent varying interpretations. Four scholars in particular can be cited: Jean Maurice Fiey, Harald Suermann, Robert Hoyland and Karl-Heinz Ohlig. Ovidiu Ioan discusses their translations and conclusions and infers several indications from these let-ters, which in his opinion show Ishoʿyahb III's view of these conquerors. Andrew Palmer apt-ly continues the discussion when commenting on points brought forward by Ioan.[322] The pre-

[320] See above, section 3.4.3.
[321] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum,* p. 120.
[322] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, Chapter 9, pp. 89-122. (His nine basic arguments ['grundlegende Argumente'] are on p. 93); Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 30-35; Harald Suermann, 'Orientalische Christen und der Islam. Christ-liche Texte aus der Zeit von 632-750', *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 52 (1983), pp. 128-130; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it,* pp. 180-81; Karl-Heinz Ohlig, 'Hinweise auf eine neue Religion in der christlichen Literatur "unter islamischer Herrschaft"?', in idem (ed.), *Der frühe Islam. Eine histo-*

sent study incorporates their points in this summarizing discussion while presenting additional material.

3.10.1. Ishoʿyahb III and the first signs of Arab rule in the Northern provinces

A first weak sign of Arab rule in Ishoʿyahb III's letters might be found in E-39, which already has been discussed, because of its expression 'barbarian leaders' (ܫܠ̈ܝܛܐ ܒܪ̈ܒܪܐ). This has been interpreted in different ways and might have referred to the Byzantines or to the Arab troops employed by them.[323] This latter option does not seem to be impossible. The possibility is also not to be excluded that during the turbulent transition period of which only some later and inconsistent records are left, other tribes were involved who were already living in or around this area. A further analysis of this expression does not seem to offer clearer indications. We have already seen that Ishoʿyahb III used the terms *shallita* and *shallitana* mostly for any secular leader. A survey of his use of forms of the term 'barbarian' in four other letters unfortunately does not point into a specific direction either.[324] In M-32, Ishoʿyahb III rejected the 'barbaric anathema' which probably was imposed by a schismatic party within the Church of the East that might have affiliated with Sahdona in Edessa.[325]

The first letter showing a clear indication of Arab control in combination with Christological notions is probably E-48, in which Ishoʿyahb III indicated that the different branches of Christianity were beginning to claim that the Arabs were on one or the other side. It describes a conflict in the region around Nineveh between Miaphysites and the people of the Church of the East, with Arab governors allegedly being involved. In the address, Ishoʿyahb III is called 'the one who by the grace of God ministers the holy Church of the Ninevites' (i.e. the bishop of

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risch-kritische Rekonstruktion anhand zeitgenössischer Quellen (Berlin, 2007), pp. 244-46; Palmer, review of *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 182-93.

[323] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-39, p. 66; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 29; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 333.

[324] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-2, p. 3; E-17, p. 26; M-24, pp. 190-91; M-32, p. 217. Ishoʿyahb III spoke in his early letter to Babai (E-2), of a 'storm of barbarians' in the contexts of the difficult time and the disobedience among men, but did not specify it. He probably referred to the Byzantines. In E-17 he used it in a horrified outcry because of the schism in the Great Monastery and in M-32 he spoke of 'barbarian alms' in his excuse for not supporting some travellers from Jerusalem better. M-24, the letter discussed in the above section, might give some suggestions as to whom he referred. Cf. also Peter Bruns, who acknowledges that the use of the term 'barbarian' in Syriac is still not clear, but generally signifies that someone is neither Christian nor cultivable and is an outsider from the civilised world. Peter Bruns, 'Von Adam und Eva bis Mohammed – Beobachtungen zur syrischen Chronik des Johannes bar Penkaye', *OC* 87 (2003), pp. 61-62.

[325] Although the Syriac noun for anathema (ܚܪܡܐ, *herma*) and its adjectival form (ܚܪܡܐ, *harma*), which indicate that something is forbidden and damned, correspond closely to the Islamic term *haram* (حَرَامْ), it does not seem to imply a deliberate reference to Muslims here, because these terms already had figured many times before in the *Synodicon Orientale.* A list of anathemas in the *Synodicon Orientale* is presented by Marcel Birnie, 'Studies on Anathemata and Their Lifting in Relationship to the Question of Ecclesial Communion and Heresy', in Alfred Stirnemann and Gerhard Wilflinger (eds.), *Syriac Dialogue. Third non-official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition* (Pro Oriente; Vienna, 1998), pp. 116-19.

Nineveh) and there do not seem to be reasons to doubt this. There are no clear indications that the introductory formula is corrupt and that the main part of the letter would belong to the time Ishoʿyahb III was Catholicos, as Ovidiu Ioan asserts without further substantiation.[326] As I have argued above, other claims that the letter was written after Ishoʿyahb III had left Nineveh may rest on wrong assumptions. This means that Ishoʿyahb III was probably still bishop of Nineveh when the Arabs invaded it.[327]

Since the letter signifies that Arabs already dominated the region, it might have been written some time around 637 or 641/42, the two periods given for a capture of Nineveh by the Arabs. As we have discussed above, the difference between the dates of the capture might be explained by the prolonged contests between several Arab groups striving for supremacy during a transition period. The situation in this area at the border between the new Islamic provinces of Jazira and Mosul was not yet well established, and new incoming Arab parties that allied with Kufa seem to have rivalled those coming from the north-west. The Arab tribes already present here might also have played a role. Although the time span suggested above seems the most probable, it cannot be demonstrated with certainty, and further hypotheses on possible developments remain therefore tentative. A more profound examination of the chronology of the conquests and the specific Arab tribes involved is beyond the scope of the present study.

Letter E-48 is addressed to seven 'unfortunate sons of faithful believers and Christians of truth' whose names are given. They were living in an unknown place where a 'demon' of the rebels of Mar Mattai on Mount Alfaf (ܐܠܦܦ, the Miaphysite bulwark 35 km. northeast of Nineveh) had infiltrated. The place had a church, with a 'fortress (ܚܣܢܐ) of Babai's followers' at the corner gate. The people did nothing against his actions and were therefore scorned by Ishoʿyahb III. What had happened? The rebel had put impure signs on this fortress while the addressees had left the holy sacraments there. Using several intruiging metaphors, Ishoʿyahb III described this as follows:

> one demon flew to you from those who rebel (ܡܪ̈ܘܕܝܢ) on Mount Alfaf and it buzzed (ܙܡܪ) in the form of an obnoxious wasp (ܒܕܡܘܬ ܕܒܘܪܐ) over the corner gate on which the honoured name of the holy Church was put by you in the fortress of Babai's followers. He laid the signs of his incantations (ܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ ܕܠܘܚܫ̈ܬܗ) over it and departed, while all of you rolled down there as stones without soul, your mouths silent without words and your limbs shrunk without action. No one was found among you who moved his hand—even to his forehead—and

[326] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 114; Palmer, review of *Muslime und Araber*, p. 184; Duval, *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, pp. 92-93; Heal and Griffin (eds.), *Syriac manuscripts from the Vatican Library* 1, Vatican Syriac 157, folio 41r.ܕܡܫܡܫ ܒܟܠܒܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܪܬܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܬܐ ܕܒܢ̈ܝܢܘܬܐ

[327] See above, section 3.6.3.

> made the sign of the cross on his face or on his heart, so that the help of God could come to you, and you could wake from the sleep of the blind mind and see to what humiliation, contempt, disgrace and sneering Satan led you by one impure raven (ܥܘܪܒܐ), the servant of his rage. But you remained—as they say—without motion, passion or perception like mute idols, while you were not able to take the holy mysteries out of there […]. But like men who are without hope and without God in the world, you left the holy and life-bringing mysteries themselves under the seal (ܚܬܡܐ) of demons.[328]

It is not clear whether 'fortress' is used here in the literal or the metaphorical sense.[329] It probably referred to one of the reform monasteries. If Ishoʿyahb III implied that the building was like a real fortress, it could refer to some of the monasteries that had a highly strategical function and could offer shelter. One of them was close to Nineveh and Chase Robinson's statement that Nineveh's walls 'came to be home to Muslim holy men and Christian monks in the early Islamic period',[330] seems to indicate that some sort of sharing might have existed between Muslim and Christian ascetics.

Although infiltration from Mar Mattai clearly indicates Miaphysite influences which Ishoʿyahb III fought, he also might have alluded to an Arab in this fragment as might be deduced from two instances. He mentioned one raven (ܥܘܪܒܐ, *ʿurba*) who helped Satan, whereas he initially spoke of a demon having the form of a wasp. Both animals have impure connotations, but it is remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III changed the metaphor and this makes one wonder why he did so. The word ܥܘܪܒܐ not only meant 'raven', as translated here following R. Duval, but also could be read as *ʿuraba*, which could mean 'mingling' or 'Arab'. The latter meaning was a rare variation also used in an anonymous text written after the Islamic conquest and in the *Book of Governors*, which clearly stood in the same tradition as Ishoʿyahb III did, but was written two centuries later.[331] It is therefore not sure whether Ishoʿyahb III used it already in this sense. If applicable, both alternatives might offer reasonable interpretations as they could

[328] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, pp. 93-94.
ܕܦܪܫ ܐܚ̈ܝܟܘܢ ܥܣܪܐ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܪܕܝܢ ܒܠܒܘܪܐ ܕܐܠܦܐ. ܘܐܦ ܒܥܒܕܬܐ ܕܒܗܪܐ ܠܢܦܫܐ ܥܠ ܬܪܥܐ ܕܩܠܝܬܐ: ܗܘ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܘܐ ܠܟܘܢ ܠܥܠ ܥܕܬܐ ܡܫܝܢܐ ܕܒܪܝܬܐ ܘܡܫܬܐ ܒܫܠܡܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܒܟܪ. ܘܐܡܪ ܒܠܒܗ، ܠܦܬܟܐ ܕܠܫܘܐܠܬܗ ܘܥܒܪ. ܟܕ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܒܠܟܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܒܐܦܐ ܕܕܠܐ ܢܦܫ ܗܘܐ ܡܬܐܡܪ ܚܠܝܡ ܗܘܝܘܬܐ. ܘܐܬܩܛܪܘ ܦܘܩܕܢܝ̈ܗܘܢ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܬܐ. ܘܐܬܥܩܪܬܐ ܡܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܐܬܬܢܝܚ ܒܒܗܘܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܐܢܫ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܥܐ ܠܨܠܝܒܐ ܚܣܝܢܐ، ܘܪܫܡ ܐܬܐ ܕܨܠܝܒܐ ܥܠ ܐܦܘ̈ܗܝ، ܐܘ ܥܠ ܠܒܗ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܥܘܕܪܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܬܬܬܥܝܪܘܢ ܡܢ ܫܢܬܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܥܘܝܪܐ: ܘܬܚܙܘܢ ܠܐܝܢܐ ܫܝܛܘܬܐ ܘܡܣܪܝܩܘܬܐ ܘܒܘܣܐ ܘܡܒܗܬܢܘܬܐ ܘܡܬܠܥܒܢܘܬܐ ܕܣܛܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ: ܟܕ ܒܚܕ ܥܘܪܒܐ ܛܡܐܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܕܚܡܬܗ. ܐܠܐ ܟܕ ܩܘܝܬܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܙܘܥܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܚܫܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܪܓܫܐ ܐܝܟ [94] ܦܬܟܪ̈ܐ ܚܪ̈ܫܐ. ܟܕ ܐܦܠܐ ܠܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ ܐܫܟܚܬܘܢ ܠܡܦܩܘ ܡܢ ܬܡܢ [...]. ܐܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܐ̈ܢܫܐ ܕܕܠܐ ܣܒܪܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܕܠܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܥܠܡܐ. ܐܦ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ ܘܡܚܝܢܐ ܠܓܘ ܡܢ ܚܬܡܐ ܕܫ̈ܐܕܐ ܐܪܦܝܬܘܢ.

[329] In E-17, this word seems to have been used in allegorical sense when Ishoʿyahb III bemoaned the schism in the Great Monastery and asked who had entered its 'fortified courtyard'. See also section 4.4.1.

[330] Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 64-66 and 70-72, quotation esp. p. 66.

[331] K. Brockelmann, *Lexikon Syriacum*, p. 546; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, p. 1086. For its meaning as 'Arab', both refer to Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors*, Chapter 2.41 and 5.16, pp. 131, 133 and 316, and to Georg Hoffmann (ed.), *Opuscula Nestoriana* (Paris, 1880), pp. xx and 95.

either refer to the mingling the Miaphysites were accused of, or to an Arab. Moreover, if Ishoʿyahb III was here again enjoying playing with words, he could have alluded to an Arab with Miaphysite background.

The following allusion to Arabs, admittedly, should be considered with the highest caution, but seems too interesting to leave aside. It appears in the cryptic fragment describing the wasp who buzzed over the corner gate of the fortress where the church was and who 'laid the signs of his incantations over it'. Do we find here an allusion to a formalized religious call somewhere from the church and do the 'impure signs' signal its words in Arabic (or Kufic)? Could this refer to the Muslim *adhan* or was it of a Miaphysite Christian nature, or was there some occasional local compromise? The above questions are also inspired by Trimingham's remark that the Arab script used for the Qurʾan stems from Kufa where it was common among Christian Arabs. This Kufic script had 'attained a special status by being employed for inscribing scriptural verses on the walls of churches, and one may conjecture that Christian Arab consciousness was just beginning to be defined at the time of the Muslim Arab occupation.'[332] In any case, Ishoʿyahb III considered it a temporary situation which should be discontinued, and apart from the signs and the humiliation no damage seems to have been done.

Ishoʿyahb III reminded the addressees of their ancestors, Simon and Qamishoʿ, who had fought heresy. Ishoʿyahb III wanted to test if they were still right believers: until they would study the faith of our Lord and throw the impure signs (ܐܬ̈ܘܬܐ ܛܡ̈ܐܬܐ) out which Satan put above the gate of their church and would restore it, they were not allowed to enter the churches for the 'divine mysteries' (Eucharist). Here the Arabs came clearly in the picture, when he wrote to his addressees that they should not use the Arabs (referred to as *Tayyaye,* ܛܝ̈ܝܐ and *Tayyaye mhaggre,* ܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܡܗܓܪ̈ܐ) as an excuse.[333]

> And if it happens that you make false excuses and you or the heretics who go astray with you, say, 'It was because of the command of the *Tayyaye*', it is not true at all. For the *mhaggre Tayyaye* do not help those who say that God, Lord of All, suffered and died. And if by chance they helped those for whatever reason, you nevertheless can inform the *mhaggre* and persuade them of this matter, if you take care of it appropriately. So do everything wisely, O my men brothers, and give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.[334]

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[332] Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs*, pp. 224-28, quotation esp. p. 228.

[333] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, p. 97.

[334] The last sentence is a clear reference to Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:17 and Luke 20:25. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* E-48, pp. 96-97. This fragment is often commented on and saw several translations. See for a discussion: Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 114-20. The above translation contains several new adjustments.
ܘܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܘܒܕ ܡܬܬܚܠܠܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܒܥܠܠܬܐ: ܬܐܡܪܘܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܐܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܥܡܟܘܢ ܡܛܥܝܢ ܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ: ܕܒܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܗ݁ܝ؛
ܕܗܘܬ. ܠܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܠܓܡܪ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܥܕܪܝܢ ܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܡܗܓܪ̈ܐ: ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܚܫܐ ܘܡܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܐ ܟܠ. ܘܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܘܥܕܪܘ

This letter has an apocalyptical character. The behaviour of the brothers was seen as an indication of their poor faith during the events that occur at the end times, 'the present times'. Ishoʿyahb III argued that Satan could destroy their discernment and that their lack of faith and passivity towards disgusting deeds 'was the beginning of the fall of many when they turn themselves from the true faith and the real hope at the time of the coming of Satan to the world'. He thereupon quoted 2 Thess. 2:10 which spoke of all the deceptions at the end times. Ishoʿyahb III further reminded them of Judgement Day and advised them to armour themselves with prayer and thus strengthen the hope in 'God the Lord of All' (ܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܐ ܟܠ) and 'all honour, governorship and power of your country will be guarded for you at this time by the help of God, faith, prayer and your Fathers.'[335]

Which Arab tribes Ishoʿyahb III referred to is not known. In three letters, he referred altogether five times to them. He called them *Tayyaye* and once he augmented this with the term *mhaggre.* The simple and augmented form both appear once in letter E-48.[336] He used the simple term again in M-32, to designate a jurisdiction (ܐܘܦܪܟܝܐ), namely 'Hira of the *Tayyaye*', which probably was part of the same *politeia* (ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ) to which he and Catholicos Maremmeh belonged. As we have seen in section 1.14.3, there must have been a well known connection between *Tayyaye* and Hira.[337] The extent to which this dominated his perception is not clear. In the same letter he also showed that the situation had changed over a wide area when he mentioned the 'changed new practices' (ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܥܒ̈ܕܐ ܚܕ̈ܬܐ), which enabled people to travel from Jerusalem to Hira, Adiabene and Nisibis in the hope of finding support.

It is debatable in what sense Ishoʿyahb III may have used the term *mhaggre* (ܡܗܓܪ̈ܐ). Referring to Patricia Crone, Hoyland holds that the addition *mhaggre* in E-48 is the earliest reference to the Arab term *muhagirun* (المهاجرون), 'which is the name by which the Arabs are designated on all official documents of the first century of Islam'.[338] According to Crone, the term *mhaggre* was associated with 'of the *higra'* (هِجْرَة) and she points out that it was closely associated with emigration and warfare. She suggests moreover that originally ʿUmar (634-44) had connected emigration with the settlement in a garrison city and with regular service in

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ܐܢܘܢ ܡܢ ܐܡܪܐ ܕܗܘ، ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܐܠܐ ܡܥܕܪܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܒܪܐ ܘܠܡܩܡܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܥܠ ܥܘܡܪܐ ܗܢܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܬܠܡܝܕܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ، ܒܥܠܠܬܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܡܦܩܕ ܐܘ ܒܢܝܐ ܐܟܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܡܪܢ ܒܣܒܪܬܐ. ܘܗܒܘ ܕܩܣܪ ܠܩܣܪ ܘܕܐܠܗܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ.

335 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, pp. 95-96. ܗܐ ܢܛܝܪ ܠܟܘܢ ܒܡܥܕܪܢܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܒܨܠܘܬܐ ܘܕܐܒܗܝܟܘܢ: ܟܠܗ ܐܝܩܪܐ ܘܪܝܫܢܘܬܐ ܘܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܐܬܪܟܘܢ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ.

336 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, p. 97.

337 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-32, p. 216. ܚܝܪܬܐ ܕܛܝ̈ܝܐ.

338 In Syriac the term *muhagirun* was rendered *mhaggre* and in Greek *margaritai.* Hoyland defends his interprettation against that of Griffith who doubts the connection with the term *muhagirun.* Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 179-80, with references.

order to receive a stipend. 'An emigrant thus came to be identified as a person endowed with fiscal rights which bedouin and non-Arabs lacked'. When this was not relevant anymore in Umayyad times, this concept would have been reinterpreted in what is considered now the 'classical' concept of the *higra*.[339] Another explanation for the term *mhaggre* can be found in descriptions for Arabs as 'sons of Hagar' (Gen. 16:1) which already existed centuries before the rise of Islam. In Latin it was rendered *Agareni*; in Greek *hagarenoi* and in Syriac *hagraye*.[340]

Although the exact etymology of the term cannot be decided here, I presume that either way Ishoʿyahb III used the term *mhaggre* to describe Arabs connected with nascent Islam. I do not agree with Ovidiu Ioan who holds that Ishoʿyahb III used it only polemically for Muslims when disagreeing with their theology and politics,[341] but suggest that he used it in letter E-48 to distinguish them from the (mainly Miaphysite) Arab tribes that were already living in the vicinity. It is moreover not impossible that the Arab expedition, which started from Hira/Kufa and established Mosul close to Nineveh shortly after 637, consisted of Arabs who had some affinity with the Church of the East and its theology

Letter E-48 is the only letter in which Ishoʿyahb III explicitly referred to Islamic theology of his day. Other reactions to this theology can only be inferred or guessed at when comparing some of his expressions in a Christological context to Islamic theology as preserved.[342] E-48 was probably written in the context of dangerous conflicts between Miaphysites and the Church of the East of which Ishoʿyahb III had given several examples in other letters as well. His remark that the '*Tayyaye mhaggre* do not help those who say that God, Lord of All, suffered and died', and moreover, that if they did so, they could be persuaded 'by information on this matter', indicates at least two things. First, it clearly shows that he knew they opposed Theopaschism. Second, he used this as a means to get them on his side. He moreover must have been confident that his own views were not offensive to the Arabs, who did not seem to

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[339] Palmer, review of *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 184-87; Patricia Crone, 'The first-century concept of *hiğra*', *Arabica* 41 (1994), pp. 355-68, also in eadem, *From Arabian Tribes to Islamic Empire*, Chapter 3; Crone, 'The first-century concept of *hiğra*', pp. 356-63, especially p. 359, note 36 (with references) in which she briefly discusses Griffith's criticism of this interpretation.

[340] Already in the early fourth century Eusebius connected the Arabs with the offspring of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar. The first Syriac source that explains the term '*Mahgraye*', is dated A.H. 63 (682/83) and informs us that they are the descendants of Abraham by Hagar. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Malta, 1977), pp. 9-11 and 160. Another manuscript dated 874 describes a religious debate with an emir of the '*mhagrye*' (ܡܗܓܪ̈ܝܐ), which took place in 639 or 644. François Nau suggest in his introduction (p. 238) that '*mhagrye*' was based on the name Hagar and would indicate that someone turned to 'Hagarism' (Islam). François Nau (ed. and trans.), 'Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréniens', *Journal asiatique* 11 (1915), pp. 226-27, 233-39 and 248.

[341] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* p. 119.

[342] See also section 4.3.5.

have had a completely fixed set of judgments on the Christians yet and were willing to listen. The addition that the Arabs could be persuaded if this was done appropriately, and that they should be given what was due to them as secular leaders, might have hinted at necessary bribes.[343] To interpret Ishoʿyahb III's remark as an exhortation for more interreligious dialogue and a warning not to keep a 'low social profile', as Ioan seems to imply, neglects this pragmatic approach during that time.[344]

The second metropolitan letter to Maremmeh, who recently had been elected Metropolitan of Elam (Bet Huzaye), might refer to changing circumstances after the Arab conquests. Maremmeh's election had annoyed Ishoʿyahb III and Maremmeh was therefore still angry with Ishoʿyahb III, who tried to restore contacts. He mentioned several problems: the fraternity in Arbela was weak; the 'paternity' (probably Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II) was discouraged; there was a schism among those 'who are in name leaders of God's Church', and the practice of their belief suffered.

> And if the Lord does not show mercy, the acts of the community will suffer, and not only in (ways in) which they are already expected to, but also in religious life itself. For it is necessary that when what begins, begins out of evil, it also will end in total evil.'[345]

Ishoʿyahb III was concerned that the 'sufferings in religious life', which he did not specify, might even increase. Whether this had to do with Arab rule or with the schism mentioned is not clear. It could imply that parties within the Church forbade each other certain elements of the liturgy which had nothing to do with other external influences. It is, however, not impossible that the schism weakened the position or credibility of the Church, which further reduced its ability to defend the practice of its service against the Arab governors there. One might think of the way Christians were allowed to worship. The striking of the sounding boards, for instance, was sometimes forbidden.[346]

Ishoʿyahb III's comments might also imply that he and Maremmeh initially had different ideas on how to accommodate to the new situation and that both were involved in the schism that moreover could have been related to divergent positions towards the Arab parties. The

[343] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, pp. 96-97. See for a discussion on several translations and alternative interpretations: Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 114-20.
[344] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 121-22.
[345] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-2, pp. 110-11.
ܘܐܢ ܡܪܝܐ ܠܐ ܢܬܪܚܡ. ܚܠܝܫܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܕܓܘܐ ܠܓܡܪ. ܘܠܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܒܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܡܣܬܟܝܢ: ܐܠܐ ܘܐܦ ܒܗܘܢ ܒܢܝܬܐ ܕܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ. ܐܢܢܩܐ ܓܝܪ. ܕܡܐ ܕܡܢ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܫܪܐ ܐܝܟܐ ܕܫܪܝܐ: ܕܐܦ ܒܒܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܫܡܠܝܐ ܢܫܠܡ.
[346] Robinson is reserved about the conquest arrangements reported, as this often reflected post-conquest situations. The 'Islamic conquest tradition frequently prohibits the striking of sounding-boards, but we know that monks and priests kept on striking.' Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 12-13.

relation with Arab parties is inferred from the claim that, thanks to Arab influence after he had helped them, Maremmeh was later appointed Catholicos.

Some hints of a restriction of the Church services which were caused by groupings within the Church participating with Arabs might be found in the earlier mentioned letter E-39. There, Ishoʿyahb III lamented the difficult times and stated that he performed the service of the Church of God 'in a moderate way' and subsequently reported having been arrested during the Easter Ceremonies. This situation was probably connected with Miaphysites and higher clergy within the Church of the East that might have cooperated with Arab allies of Heraclius.[347] The schism mentioned just above in M-2 might even have become more complicated when diverse parties within the Church of the East would have allied with various Arab tribes as we have suggested in the discussion on the Arab conquest of Nineveh. Letter E-44, for instance, indicated that Miaphysites might have found the support of Miaphysite Arabs, and this also might apply to others with Miaphysite inclinations.[348] These hypotheses remain however speculative. Meanwhile, Ishoʿyahb III's position in the schism and the potential alliances remains unclear. As a further illustration of the complicated situation, it should be recalled that Ishoʿyahb III and Maremmeh later seemed to have cooperated for a while and to have been attacked together by other circles within the Church that possibly affiliated with Ishoʿyahb III's opponent Sahdona.

Letter M-11 might have implied a reference to (internal) Arab wars. Ishoʿyahb III tried to encourage several people imprisoned and 'bound to the struggle of the temporal sufferings'. In this respect he praised them for remembering 'the world, time, actual leadership, the many sufferings shared, the continuous changes of corrupt things, the hasty transition of temporal conquerors (ܫܘܚ̈ܠܦ ܕܒܠܟܐ), the fall of the honourable power and the ruin of wisdom.' The 'hasty transition of temporal conquerors' might refer to conflicts between the Arab tribes as well.[349]

The relation between the governor and Ishoʿyahb III is briefly touched on in a rather cryptic letter (M-18). Ishoʿyahb III wrote the new metropolitan of Bet Garmai, Sabrishoʿ, that he was not able to make it to their appointment because of some adversities. 'The power of the governor' suddenly had drawn him to another and troublesome road, the 'riverroad', whereas a 'hint (ܪܡܙܗ) of God' sent Sabrishoʿ in another direction. Ishoʿyahb III intended to persuade the governor concerning the matters the governor had written about, and had also decided 'according to my own will' to persuade the Catholicos as well on the things the latter had

[347] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-39, pp. 65-66. See for a further discussion of E-39, section 3.6.1.
[348] See for a further discussion of E-44, section 3.6.2
[349] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-11, p. 151.

written about. He assured that in both cases ‘the reasons for my travelling are much freer than by the force of necessity’.[350] Ishoʿyahb III seems to apply here his distinction between obedience towards secular leaders and towards God. How free Ishoʿyahb III actually was, cannot be assessed from this letter.[351]

As noted above, letter M-23, which might have belonged to Ishoʿyahb III’s earlier Metropolitan letters, seems to imply that Ishoʿyahb III and Maremmeh acted in closer association with Muslims in Adiabene than was acceptable to others within the Church of the East. The associated letters M-22 and M-24 suggest further that this opposing group was connected with circles around Sahdona.

3.10.2. Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III and the Arabs at the dawn of the first civil war

Ishoʿyahb III was dependent on the attitude of the local governors while the administration of the provinces was not fixed in the first decades of Arab rule.[352] Two later chronicles may give some additional information. The twelfth century Mari claims that the governors of his region respected him and that one of them gave him ‘a diploma assuring him a free hand with regard to his monasteries, his seat, his revenue and exemptions of his family; and only a small charge exacted for those things’, and that he went every week to the governor ‘to ask for what he needed and for whatever he might thereby benefit the affairs of the Christians’.[353] What Ishoʿyahb III’s position and that of the East Syrian Christians was in this, Mari does not tell. Apparently, Ishoʿyahb III had to pay for the favours granted, whereby ‘his family’ might be interpreted as the whole Church of the East of which he was the ‘Father’.[354] The weekly audiences could be interpreted favourably, but could also be a sign of dependency with respect to both the acquisition of goods and to the supervision of the Church including its believers. The latter interpretation would imply a close control by the Arabs. If his position had been relatively favourable, it was in any case not lasting.

Sliwa indicates that Ishoʿyahb III left Seleucia-Ctesiphon because the local leader treated him badly.[355] Bar Hebraeus, the thirteenth century Miaphysite chronicler may have given some details. If so, some of his opponents had notified an *amir* of the *Tayyaye* (ܐܡܝܪܐ ܕܛܝܝ̈ܐ) of his wealth. When he thereupon refused to pay the gold demanded, the *amir* had him imprisoned

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[350] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-18, p. 167.
[351] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* p. 74, emphasizes Ishoʿyahb III‘s freedom and initiative in this matter.
[352] Fiey, ‘Īšōʿyaw le Grand’, pp. 31-33 and 43; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it,* pp. 181-82; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 83-86.
[353] Gismondi (trans.), *Maris,* p. 55. Translation mainly after Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it,* p. 182. Mari’s work is largely based upon the *Chronicle of Seert,* Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 452.
[354] Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* p. 84, with references.
[355] Gismondi (trans.), *Amri et Slibae*, pp. 32-33.

and tortured, while churches in the vicinity of Hira and Kufa were destroyed.[356] Fiey holds that this must have taken place at the earliest in late 656, after the reorganization of the Arab provinces by ʿAli in 656/57, when a new district was formed which included Kufa and Hira. It was centred in Koke,[357] the part of Seleucia-Ctesiphon located at the western border of the Tigris.[358]

As Catholicos, Ishoʿyahb III dealt with a rebellion around the Persian Gulf. The situation in these southern provinces was different. Arab rule had been more firmly established in the meantime, although it should be noted that people on the Arabian Peninsula had now already lived for some longer time under Arab rule than those in Fars. Among the rebels were Arab tribes who wanted an independent status in which they could change the liturgy, ordain priests themselves and probably make their own treaties with the Muslims. Some might have turned to Islam, but there are no indications in the letters that they changed to a form of Miaphysitism.

In C-14 Ishoʿyahb III started to describe the *Tayyaye* in a favourable way when he mentioned their respectful behaviour towards Christians, monasteries and churches.[359] This statement has been used by some scholars as representative for the behaviour of Arab conquerors in general.[360] As we have seen, however, already in the same letter this positive statement is somewhat contradicted by Ishoʿyahb III's remark that Christians had to pay half of their possessions in order to keep their faith.[361] We also might recall the Arab governor who destroyed churches and monasteries when he suspected that Ishoʿyahb III had more possessions.

It is further not always clear whether Ishoʿyahb III referred to Arabs in general or to either Islamic or Christian Arabs. Andrew Palmer even suggests that Ishoʿyahb III deliberately remained vague for persuasive reasons. In his explanation of Ishoʿyahb III's supposed strategy, Palmer tends to hold that the more favourable remarks on Arabs by Ishoʿyahb III actually would only apply to Christian Arabs. Thus, Ishoʿyahb III would have put the government by the Muslims in a rather favourable light in order to convince the Christians of Fars to reunite

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356 At first sight, the imprecise note of Bar Hebraeus seems to refer to George I. However, the context and the fact that Sliwa also reported a maltreatement by the local leader support the identification with Ishoʿyahb III, as also done by Fiey, Hoyland and—with some caution—by Ioan. Abbeloos and Lamy, *Gregorii Barhebraei*, pp. 130-32; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 43; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it,* p. 182; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 85-86.

357 Koke (Kohe) is called Veh Ardashir by the Iranians, Mahuze in Jewish and Christian sources. Later it was called Bahrasir by the Arabs. Fiey, *Jalons*, p. 41.

358 Another district was located on the eastern side of the Tigris and centred in Ctesiphon, the ancient part of the twin city. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 43, with references.

359 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251. See also above section 3.9.3.

360 Robert Hoyland warns against such rather one-sided views as expressed by Fred Donner. Ovidiu Ioan uses only this fragment of C-14 for his nine 'grundlegende Argumente' concerning Ishoʿyahb III's view on the conquerors. Hoyland, review of *Muhammad and the Believers*, p. 574; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber,* pp. 93 and 98-99.

361 Palmer comes to a similar conclusion. Palmer, review of *Muslime und Araber*, p. 192.

with the Church and follow its example. Only when they would submit to the canonical order of the Church and pay the Arabs what was due to them, might they regain the necessary help from the Spirit of God to resist the destructions and subjections. Moreover, subjection to the Arabs was justified, because God had given the Arabs the power over the world during this time, which also was part of the end times. Most of Palmer's findings coincide with ours. It seems, however, that without further substantiation, his suggestion that Ishoʿyahb III deliberately obscured differences between Christian Arabs and Muslim Arabs must remain tentative.

Ishoʿyahb III's claim that the *Tayyaye* protected the churches may have been based on real events. We have seen that under Maremmeh's catholicate an army coming from Kufa (a Muslim garrison) would forcefully have ended an uprising of Jews who had burnt churches in Bet Aramaye some time between 646-50.[362] It is not impossible that Ishoʿyahb III actually referred to such an event and in this case the Muslim Arabs could be credited for protecting the churches, even if their main objective might have been different.

Ishoʿyahb III also called the *Tayyaye* 'those whom God gave the government over the world this time'. This cannot be disconnected from both the experiences with the rapidly changing governments during his life time, and his profound feeling of living at the end times which he already had expressed decades before. By now, he believed to live in its very last phase in which the Arabs played their own God-given role and therefore had to be submitted to. One could add that such submission was in line with how the Church of the East had reacted to the preceding authorities. In the contemporaneous letter C-18, Ishoʿyahb III also reminded the believers in Qatar of the order which indicated the coming of the end times and explained that Christians now had to submit to the secular government and pay them taxes, because it was commanded by God. Meanwhile they should continue submitting to God and honouring him.[363] The idea of living at the end times permeated Ishoʿyahb III's letters. This also can be seen in his view as Catholicos on the deterioration in Jerusalem.[364]

In his attempt to prevent apostasy to Islam, Ishoʿyahb III not only had to convince Christians that the East Syrian faith had its merits in comparison to Islam even if this was very expensive due to the taxes, but at the same time had to assure Muslim governors that his faith was not too much in conflict with theirs. He seems to have tried to solve this dilemma by using several arguments. One argument was that according to divine command Christians had to submit to both the secular leaders (the Arabs) and to God. Another line of argument was that

[362] Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 33. See section 2.7.
[363] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, pp. 268-69; cf. Matt. 22:21; Mark 12:14; Luke 20:22.
[364] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-13, pp. 245-47. See also section 4.5.2.

when one refused to submit any longer to the Church of the East, one actually refused to submit to God, which also was an important Islamic theme. Apparently, he wanted to argue that any change would make Christians suspect in the eyes of Muslims. However, it is not known whether or not this argument was valid for Christians or Muslims in these regions.

Ishoʿyahb III's argumentation was at least in line with that of Caliph ʿAli who reigned in Kufa from 656 to 661 and held that disobedience to God included disobedience to the human authority installed by God. This view was challenged by a substantial part of ʿAli's own supporters that resisted any human authority considered to act against God's revelations. These so-called Kharajites murdered ʿAli.[365]

Some merits claimed for Christians were their holy way of life and the miracles which proved that God was with them. Although miracles formed a very important argument for the Christians against Islam, as the Qurʾan did not ascribe miracles to Muhammad, it cannot be assessed whether or not Ishoʿyahb III already used this argument. Only in later Islamic traditions, such as that of al-Tabari (839-923), were miracles ascribed to Muhammad, but during Ishoʿyahb III's times they might already have played a role in discussions between Christians and Muslims (including many recently converted Christians). The conquests themselves, however, formed for many people already an indication of God's favour.

In order to enable the believers in the Church of the East to receive divine power, Ishoʿyahb III wanted to restore the canonical ordinations, which he considered the only means to transmit this divine power. He presumably used the argument of the miracles to convince believers of the importance of submitting to his episcopal authority while implicitly reminding them of the fact that such miracles were missing in Islam.

[365] Cf. P.L. Heck, 'Eschatological Scripturalism and the End of Community. The Case of Early Kharijism', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 7 (2005), pp. 144 and 149.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISHOʿYAHB III'S CHRISTOLOGY AND VIEW ON MONASTICISM AND PAIDEIA

4.1. Ishoʿyahb III's view on Christological history

Several comments of Ishoʿyahb III give an indication of his view on the history of the Christological controversies. In M-9, written to two befriended clergymen in Nisibis whose names he did not gave, he stated that recently in Nisibis the error of one *qnoma* was introduced in the name of Chalcedon (ܟܠܩܝܕܘܢܐ).[1] In letter M-28, written to Catholicos Maremmeh (646-49/50), he stated that the corruption of the true faith had started already with 'those who erred in Nicaea and after Nicaea', with the subsequent acceptance of followers of Arius and eventually of Arius himself. Ishoʿyahb III thus expressed his view that Arius and his followers were responsible for the corruption of faith and that this had not been dealt with completely during the council in Nicaea (325). When the Orientals thereafter had come to an unspecified synod expecting that 'the summit of glory would be in the praise of faith', they actually found 'humility, contempt, insult, compulsion and tears and groans' when Cyril was accepted 'under the pretext of correction and peace' (ܒܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܨܘܬܐ ܘܕܫܝܢܐ). Thereafter they even anathematized each other and their Fathers and their faith.[2] Ishoʿyahb III referred here most probably to the Council of Ephesus (431) and the subsequent events.

In M-30, Ishoʿyahb III wrote approvingly about an apparently recent and profound change which would have taken place in the Roman Empire. Where Cyril had been the founder of the doctrine of one *qnoma*, property (ܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ) and energy (ܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ) in Christ, now God would have brought it about that the whole Roman Empire rejected Cyril's teaching, and professed two *qnome*, two energies and properties of Christ instead. His account of the events is noteworthy and is therefore given here in full.

> Listen, I will tell you new tidings and the miracle God did in his Church now, at the end times, to confirm the testimony of his faith on earth, as God loves the humans, he who never left or leaves himself without a testimony (ܗ̇ܘ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܘܡ ܫܒܩ ܐܘ ܫܒ̇ܩ ܢܦܫܗ ܕܠܐ ܣܗܕܘ).[3]

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[1] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-9, p. 142.

[2] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-28, pp. 204-205.

[3] The exact meaning of ܢܦܫܗ is not clear in this context. The expression 'who never left himself without a testimony', had already appeared in a similar way in E-22. There it referred to God and was followed by the explanation: 'so that his goodness was (not) taken away from us because of the error of a false likeness' (ܗ̇ܘ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܘܡ ܐܪܦܝ ܒ ܢܦܫܗ ܕܠܐ ܣܗܕܘ܆ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܬܬܢܣܒ ܒ ܛܝܒܘܬܗ ܡܢ ܠܘܬܢ ܒܛܘܥܝܝܐ ܕܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܓܠܐ.). It explained that God always provided

> For the demons who for more or less 300 years—since the days of Cyril and later—corrupted the discourse about faith in the dominion of the Romans with that confession of one *qnoma*, or (ܐܘ ܟܝܢܬ) of one nature and things like that, he now expelled them from there with all his power. And together with them he took from the Diptychs and from the whole Church of the Roman Empire: Cyril and Severus and those who died like them in impiety. Those who are now living, however, and who confess like these, he sent into exile, to all the borders of the dominion of the Romans, whether they are patriarchs, or bishops or whatever they are. And the eye-witnesses and those who know these things are with us, for they are our brother monks, who travelled all over the world and returned to us!
>
> And now the great Rome and its companion Ravenna, the whole of Italy and the whole kingdom of the Longobards (Lombards) and the whole kingdom of France and whole Africa, and the whole of Sicily and the whole of Thracia and all Crete and Rhodes and Kios (Chios) and all the islands, and Constantinople and its whole province, and Asia, Bithnya, Lycaonia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Isauria, the whole of Greece, and Jerusalem and Cyprus, and many from Palestine and Phoenicia, confess the duality of the *qnome*, energies (ܡܥܒܕ̈ܢܘܬܐ) and properties (ܕܝ̈ܠܝܬܐ) of Christ in one agreement (ܒܚܕܐ ܫܠܡܘܬܐ), and anathematize and send all the living bishops into exile who have not thus confessed!
>
> And the impious Cyril, the first founder of the (doctrine of the) one *qnoma*, property (ܕܝܠܝܢܘܬܐ)[4] and energy in Christ is anathematized and taken from the ecclesiastical diptychs. And it is a miracle that those who erred for more or less 300 years returned to the knowledge of truth by the grace of God, and that we, who persisted in the faith and in the accurate knowledge for more or less 600 years, slip now in the error of ignorance by the works of demons who were expelled from the Roman Empire!
>
> And now that they have taken Cyril—the corruptor of their faith—from their ecclesiastical Diptychs after 300 years, we take great pains to admit the inanimate aborted fetus (ܠܢܦܠܗ ܠܐ ܡܢܦܫܐ) of Cyril—namely the insane Sahdona—into the Church of God with the honour of the Saints, while he cries to us daily that he does not belong to our faith and that we all err, and that he is assiduous to convert us to his faith, and that for this he returned and came from the land of the Romans![5]

The introduction of M-30 speaks of new tidings that confirm the love of God for mankind at the present end times. Some statements of his historical overview are remarkable.

First, the 'circa 300 years ago' would have referred to the middle of the fourth century, but the immediate specification of 'since the days of Cyril and later' contradicted this. The reason is not clear. One might expect that sufficient chronicles were available and that neither Ishoʿyahb III nor his audience suffered from such a lack of historical knowledge on matters

man with signs and means against deceptions concerning his virtue. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-22, pp. 43-44. See also section 4.5.2.

[4] The Syriac term ܕܝܠܝܢܘܬܐ appears as such in Vat 157, folio 92r. Duval uses it in his edition, but translates it as 'proprietate'. Without further comments, Dietmar Winkler gives the Syriac as ܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ and translates it accordingly ('Proprietät'). Since Payne Smith does not give the variation ܕܝܠܝܢܘܬܐ, it might have been an error or an ill-advised correction by the copyist. Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 113; Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* 1, col. 881-83.

[5] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-30, pp. 212-13 (cf. trans. idem, p. 154).

that were so important to them. These data probably should not be interpreted too literally. Ishoʿyahb III might have referred in general to the first Synods starting in 325, which would allow a time span of roughly 300 years. The immediate link with Cyril might have been caused by the tendency within the Church of the East to consider Arius and Cyril as being of one and the same kind. For rhetorical reasons, he further may have preferred round numbers with 300 years of error in the Roman Empire being contrasted to 600 years of orthodoxy in the East.

Second, where Ishoʿyahb II did not mention Cyril and did not want to call the solutions of Chalcedon heretical, but explained that it was illogical and that terminology had been inconsistent, Ishoʿyahb III again followed the pattern of Babai by strongly rejecting both. He did not, however, follow Babai's strong and explicit rejection of Origen and Justinian. As discussed above, Ishoʿyahb II's more lenient attitude towards the Byzantines might have been related to the powerful role of Heraclius in the Persian Empire and his attempts to find a theological compromise. Ishoʿyahb II seems to have sought a diplomatic route here. When Babai wrote, it was important for him to emphasize his loyalty to the Persian Emperor in rejecting the theology of the Byzantines and their emperor. By the time Ishoʿyahb III wrote the above contentions, Maremmeh still was Catholicos, but as we have seen above, it was probably not long before his death. This letter was thus probably written shortly before 649/50. By then, the Persian Emperor's rule had already effectively almost ended in 642. This might have reduced the necessity to emphasize the theological differences with Byzantium.

Third, it is most remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III stated that the whole Byzantine Empire now adhered to the 'duality of the *qnome* […] of Christ'. How Ishoʿyahb III got that impression is not clear. Possibly he connected it to the debates on Monenergy and Monothelitism, which brings us to the next point.

Fourth, Ishoʿyahb III may have reacted to the developments in the Byzantine Empire. After Heraclius had started in 622 to (re)conquer provinces in Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia, where the non-Chalcedonians had become powerful, he unsuccessfully tried to solve the dogmatic controversies and restore the unity in his Empire with the dogma of Monenergism (the notion of one energy in Christ). He met with a lot of resistance, in which Sophronios, the Chalcedonian Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Maximus the Confessor played an important role. After 638, Heraclius promulgated therefore the *Ekthesis* and started to promote Monothelitism which provoked even more resistance in both the East and the West.[6] There do not seem to be strong indications for a reaction on these discussions in the work of Ishoʿyahb II.

[6] See above, section 2.6.3. See also Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-700)*, pp. 62-69.

The opposition was openly expressed in Rome. In 640, the Roman Pope Severinus condemned the *Ekthesis* and he decreed that as 'there were two natures, so there were two natural operations'. In January 641 (the month before Heraclius died), the new Roman Pope John IV also condemned the *Ekthesis* and its Monothelitism.[7] Around the time Ishoʿyahb III wrote M-30, the opposition among Chalcedonians against the imposed Monothelitism had still increased. In 648 Heraclius' grandson Constans II tried to solve the problems by forbidding any further discussions on wills, energies or natures in Christ, but this was without success. After several years of preparation, another synod in Rome organized by Pope Martin I condemned in October 649 the *Ekthesis*, but acknowledged the two natures with the resulting two energies and natures, holding this to be a clarification of Chalcedon. Constans II reacted by arresting Martin and Maximus in 653. Meanwhile, Martin I had still been able to send out reports to for instance Christian circles in Jerusalem and Antioch, and to Theodore, the Bishop of Esbas (Hesebon or Heshbon) in the Byzantine province Arabia, commending him for his fight against Monothelitism in Arabia and Palestine.[8] The decisions of this Council remained to be supported, however, and they were vindicated in the Council of Constantinople of 681.[9]

The events leading to the Synod of 649 took place in the period Ishoʿyahb III was Metropolitan, but it is not sure whether this synod itself also fell in this period.[10] If so, the possibility is not to be excluded that he was informed about this via Martin's letters or via other contacts such as with Jerusalem, as we know from one of his own contemporary letters (M-32) that people from Jerusalem had visited him.[11] However, provided Ishoʿyahb III had been informed, it is not clear whether he also was aware of the fact that Canon 18 of this synod had reconfirmed the condemnation of the main representatives of the Church of the East, Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius.[12] One still may safely conclude that Ishoʿyahb III was at least aware of the opposition against Monothelitism as expressed in Rome and supported in the East, but that it is less likely that he could have been informed about the latest synod in October 649. It is further probably telling that M-30 is actually the only letter in which Ishoʿyahb III mentioned

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[7] Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages* 1.1. *The Popes under the Lombard Rule. St. Gregory I. (The Great) to Leo III. 590-657* (St. Louis, 1914), p. 349; Johannes Dominicus Mansi, *Conciliorum. Nova et amplissima collectio* 10. *Ab anno DXC usque ad annum DCLIII inclusive* (Florence, 1764), p. 680; Andrew J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern Influences on the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, A.D. 590-752* (Plymouth, 2007), p. 95.

[8] Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes*, pp. 134-41; Peter Sarris, *Empires of Faith*, p. 283; Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christianity (600-700),* pp. 71-75; Pius Bonifacius Gams, *Series episcoporum Ecclesiae Catholicate* (Regensburg 1873-86; repr. Graz, 1957), p. 435.

[9] Mansi, *Conciliorum,* pp. 1149-50.

[10] As we have seen above, Maremmeh died circa 649 and Ishoʿyahb III may have succeeded him in the same year. As the sources offer different dates, it is also possible that Ishoʿyahb III succeeded him in 650.

[11] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-32, pp. 215-17.

[12] Mansi, *Conciliorum,* p. 1154.

energies and properties in a Christological context, as it might not have been opportune anymore.

If the recent developments would have influenced Ishoʿyahb III, it is not clear why he did not thematize the one or two wills. He frequently used the word 'will' in his letters, but this was predominantly in the sense of following God's will. He seems to have generally ignored or circumvented the discussion on the number of wills, as is also clear in C-22 where he omits it in a list of heresies. The other term Ishoʿyahb III did apply, 'properties' (ܕܝ̈ܠܝܬܐ, *dilayate*), had often been used by the Church of the East and could be harmonized with the Chalcedonian formula, which stated that the property of each nature is preserved. Ishoʿyahb III wrote that the whole Roman Empire now confessed the 'duality of the *qnome*, energies and properties of Christ in one agreement (ܒܚܕܐ ܫܠܡܘܬܐ)'. Duval translated the last part as belonging to the confession of the Romans, indicating that all Romans agreed. Another interpretation would be that it formed a part of the Christological formula, signifying that the energies and properties came together in one voluntary union in Christ. If Ishoʿyahb III remained in traditional East Syrian thinking, he might have interpreted it as the *parsopa of the union* in which the human and divine part formed a voluntary union that could be seen from outside.[13] In any case, Ishoʿyahb III was aware of the groupings in the Roman Empire of the early forties of the seventh century, which emphasized the two natures and two energies in Christ. To what extent he might have been informed about the latest developments is not clear, although the following point might—if correct—be indicative of this.

Fifth, the fact that the present Byzantine Emperor, Constans II, forbade in 648 all discussion on how many wills, energies or natures Christ possessed, might have been the reason for the recent exile of bishops from Byzantium Ishoʿyahb III spoke of. Sahdona being sent away from (a former part of) Byzantium recently might have had to do with this.

Finally, it should be noted that Ishoʿyahb III connected the events with eschatological interpretations that would prove God's interventions at the present 'end times'. It remains a question whether he might have allied therefore with some Byzantine groupings. The letter ended with renewed warnings for the end times.

> Stand firm in the guarding of the Lord for which you are constituted, so that those demons that are expelled with God's help from the West, will not treacherously enter our East by a contemptible intermediate (ܡܨܥܝ̱ ܒܣܝܐ), who is called Sahdona; and we will (not) have a bad name at the end of the world.

[13] This would especially apply to Nestorius and Babai.

> Remember therefore, as highly informed men, what is written: that this evil cause entered long ago in the *politeia* of the Romans by insignificant and easy entrances, and that admirable and illustrious men stumbled and fell and suffered shipwreck. And those lamented their soul when they were forced to do terrible things, namely to anathematize their faith and their Fathers and their helpers. Yet, their record was written in the book that is to our eternal instruction and our admonition for the end of worlds has come over us. And who knows whether these are not the beginnings of the birth-pangs of the coming of Satan?[14]

In several letters, Ishoʿyahb III expressed such apocalyptical thoughts.[15] One might suggest therefore that the emphasis Ishoʿyahb III placed on soteriology reflected a widespread feeling that the end was really near and a corresponding acute desire to secure life thereafter.

During his exile in Edessa at the end of his life when Islam was more firmly established, Ishoʿyahb III recognized that the believers there showed ‘the obstacle Satan put in opposition to the glory of Christians’ as they ‘taught us the orthodox confession of your hearts, although it was a bit lessened by the confession with the mouth’.[16] He recognized therefore the profound similarities, but also the doctrinal differences and he hoped to solve this by explaining his own position. He did so by giving a general overview of the several Christological positions, but without names or dates. He introduced this by referring to Christ as a ‘stumbling block’ who ‘was *appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed*’.[17]

Since Ishoʿyahb III’s main Christological letters were written in reaction to the apparently competing Christology of Sahdona, this will be given further attention here first.

4.2. Sahdona

4.2.1. Sahdona, the opponent of Ishoʿyahb III

Ishoʿyahb III stated twice that the Church was not only threatened by enemies from outside, but also from within.[18] We have already seen some examples of leaders who supported the Miaphysites and often changed sides to join them. The fact, however, that the two-*qnome* Christology was not accepted by everyone in the Church of the East does not necessarily mean that they belonged to the Miaphysites.

Bishop Sahdona (Martyrius), who came from Bet Nuhadra, is a famous example of a church leader who defended a one-*qnoma* Christology while keeping close to the East Syrian tradition.

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[14] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-30, p. 213.
[15] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, e.g. in E-39, E-44, E-48, M-6, M-30, C-13, C-14 and C-18.
[16] Cf. Rom. 10:9-10. See also section 4.3.3.
[17] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 285, referring to Luke 2:34. See also section 4.3.3.
[18] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-2 and M-8, pp. 2 and 140.

Sahdona and Ishoʿyahb III had known each other well since they had joined the same monastery Bet Abe.[19] Initially, Sahdona must have had an honoured position as he—according to Thomas of Marga—wrote the funeral oration for its founder Jacob and would have participated in the embassy to Heraclius.[20] Ishoʿyahb III had even recommended him as bishop for Mahuze d-Ariwan (belonging to Bet Garmai), but later he came into fierce conflict with him.[21] It is not sure how long Sahdona had been bishop in the Church of the East. Fiey holds that Sahdona was already bishop of Mahuze before 630 and was replaced in 649/50,[22] but must have been expelled already on a previous occasion by Ishoʿyahb II around 642/43.[23] Brock states that Sahdona was made bishop of Bet Garmai some time between 635 and 640 and was deposed twice.[24]

The *Book of Chastity* reports that after Sahdona was exiled by Catholicos Maremmeh, he became bishop of Edessa and was installed at the order of Heraclius, who met him in Jerusalem. Sahdona would have convinced Heraclius that he was anathematized by the Church of the East because he now preached the 'true faith' and he proved this by making its confession and anathematizing Diodore. Thereafter, though, he was accused of teaching the views of Diodore and was sent away from Edessa. Sahdona then asked Maremmeh for absolution, who wanted to grant this and to send Sahdona back to his former position. Unfortunately, the exact date and circumstances of this return are unclear. The assertion, for instance, that this position was vacant since the death of bishop Saba who had replaced Sahdona, conflicts with other data.[25] The outcome remained the same: Ishoʿyahb III protested successfully against Sahdona being bishop again and Sahdona had to go back to Edessa after Ishoʿyahb III had become catholicos.

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[19] See for a more elaborate description: De Halleux, 'La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona', pp. 5-32; Ovidiu Ioan, 'Martyrius-Sahdona: la pensée christologique, clé de la théologie mystique', in Desreumaux (ed.), *Les mystiques syriaques*, pp. 45-61.

[20] Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors,* Chapter 1.34 and 2.4, pp. 62 and 69-70; (cf. trans. idem, pp. 112 and 124-25). De Halleux considers the participation of Sahdona in the embassy an invention by Thomas of Marga and suggests that it was based only on Sahdona's exiles. De Halleux. 'La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona', p. 32.

[21] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-6, p. 124.

[22] Fiey, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques,* pp. 106-107.

[23] Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 23.

[24] Sebastian Brock, 'Sahdona (Martyrius) (early 7th cent.)', *GEDSH*, p. 356.

[25] Chabot, *Livre de la Chasteté,* No. 127, pp. 56-57. Fiey holds that Saba replaced Sahdona in 649/50, which fits in with the letter Ishoʿyahb III wrote as catholicos to 'Saba the bishop of Mahuze d-Ariwan', and which had been designated to the period he was catholicos (C-12). See Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 29; idem, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, pp. 106-107; Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-12, pp. 243-44. The *Livre de la Chasteté* must at least have confused several elements, since the acclaimed meeting during Maremmeh's Catholicate (646-49/50) could not have taken place with Heraclius who had died in 641. Further more is it not clear what exactly the role of Byzantium was around 648 in sending Sahdona away from Edessa, since Arabs had already conquered this area.

The *Book of Governors* acknowledged Sahdona's talents, praised his zeal for the monastic life, but further depicted him as an apostate who was deluded by 'the Devil' and 'went out of his mind'. This would have happened during a visit to a heretical monastery on the way back from the official embassy to Heraclius in 630. Sahdona had been accompanied by Ishoʿyahb III and John, the highly praised Bishop of the 'Scattered of the country of Damascus'. These two left, but Sahdona became 'corrupted from the true faith' and wrote books for those who denied that 'there are two natures and two *qnome* in one *parsopa of filiation*' (ܕܬܪܝܢ ܟܝܢܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܩܢܘܡܝܢ ܒܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܒܪܘܬܐ).[26] Reflecting the later negative opinion about Sahdona, the *Book of Governors* clearly was on the side of Ishoʿyahb III. Nevertheless, Sahdona found considerable support within the Church during those turbulent times. The chronological uncertainties and inconsistencies in the records of Sahdona's and Ishoʿyahb III's careers in the Church at least make this quite possible.

Ishoʿyahb III's letters offer—not surprisingly—a negative picture of his opponent Sahdona. He started to write in a relatively reasonable tone when he warned Sahdona by letter. Paul, 'the head of our monastery' and some other brothers handed this letter (M-7) over to Sahdona.[27] Ishoʿyahb III informed Sahdona of his deep concerns and compared Sahdona's work to that of Isaiah of Tahal (ܐܫܥܝܐ ܛܚܠܝܐ) which was written with the 'same sense and with the same phrases'. He wondered why Sahdona presented his ideas as new since they had already been rejected by Mar Henanishoʿ, Jacob and Babai. He recommended Sahdona to read his own *Refutation of Opinions* (ܗܘܦܟ ܚܘܫܒܐ, *Huppak Hushshabe*), which he claimed was written at the request of 'the honoured Mar John, the great bishop metropolitan of Bet Lapat and of all the famous and honoured men in the Church, against those who then as now attempted to show this confusing opinion by the change of many habits. It reached by the grace of God the territories of the Syrians, Arameans, Huzians and Persians, as you also heard'.[28] He subsequently gave an exposé of the right Christology and the right use of key concepts.[29]

Ishoʿyahb III did not have much success and his position hardened. In the next letter (actually M-6), he explained the situation to the believers of Mahuze d-Ariwan. He wrote about Sahdona's 'deviation from the glory of orthodoxy' and admitted that he himself was mistaken with regard to Sahdona because this deviation had secretly taken place 'out of the love of lead-

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[26] Budge (ed), *Book of Governors*, Chapter 1.34 and 2.4, pp. 61-62 and 71-73 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 110-11 and 128-30). As we have seen in Chapter 2, the expression *parsopa of filiation* also appeared in Babai's work and in the reply of the bishops in the 612 debate.
[27] Probably the monastery of Bet Abe is meant. On Paul and this monastery, see also section 4.4.1.
[28] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-7, pp. 133-34.
[29] This will be discussed in more detail in section 4.3.

ership to violate the true faith with his idiotic subtleties'. He further admitted that by the time he had recommended Sahdona as bishop, he had not noticed the deviations from orthodoxy because of Sahdona's good and promising conduct and he held that the change had recently taken place.[30] Once he discovered his error, Ishoʿyahb III tried to correct Sahdona and demanded that Sahdona would rewrite his 'absurd treatise' (ܡܐܡܪܐ ܫܛܝܪܐ). Sahdona did not obey, fell from orthodoxy and took the letter with warnings of Ishoʿyahb III to an unnamed honourable leader.[31] This letter apparently provided evidence against Ishoʿyahb III's own orthodoxy, but the identity of this leader is not clear. Sahdona might have taken it to Cyriacus of Nisibis where the alternative synod was organized which condemned Ishoʿyahb III. As we have discussed above in the description of the problems with leaders in Arbela, Sheroy and John might have supported this opposition against Ishoʿyahb III.

Ishoʿyahb III further wrote that Sahdona and the unnamed leader agitated against him and he claimed that Sahdona had desired to become metropolitan of Adiabene before and therefore had associated with people who could help him, on the promise of a reward. When Sahdona was not chosen as metropolitan, Sahdona went to Mahuze d-Ariwan and corrupted the orthodoxy there. Ishoʿyahb III urged his readers therefore to expel Sahdona. He saw in him the originator of an uproar both against himself and the Church. He reminded his readers moreover of the fact that once he had defended them and he expressed his hope that they would reward him now by helping him and not allowing the corrupt faith of one *qnoma* of Christ. He enclosed a copy of his letter to Sahdona (M-7) and his own *Refutation of Opinions*.[32]

The claim that Sahdona opposed Ishoʿyahb III and the Church might be true, since he might have participated in attacks on Catholicos Maremmeh, as other letters written concerning Ishoʿyahb III's problems in Arbela suggest (M-22-24). There seem to be some indications that initially Ishoʿyahb III hoped that Sahdona could be won back. If the comments about an exiled priest in M-17 referred to Sahdona, Ishoʿyahb III's hope that 'God in his mercy' will seize the 'stupid priest from the old dragon's mouth' and bring him back to the Church, could relate to Sahdona indeed.[33] This willingness to forgive would be in line with his later statement that Sahdona had been forgiven eight times in the universal Synods of the Church, which Ishoʿyahb

[30] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, p. 124.
[31] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, pp. 126-27. According to Budge, this treatise was entitled *Fictitiousness of Faith* (ܒܕܝܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ). This title, however, is not known elsewhere. As the adjective ܒܕܝܐ (*bediya*, meaning 'folly', 'babbling' 'humbug' or 'foolish inventions') was often used of heretical teaching, it was probably given by Ishoʿyahb III in order to show his disdain. In the same letter he used it several times to describe Sahdona's 'error'. Budge (ed.), *The book of Governors*, Introduction, p. xci; J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, p. 35.
[32] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, p. 130. On the alternative Synod in Nisibis, see also section 3.7.1.
[33] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-17, p. 165.

III most probably attended.[34] M-30 does not clarify whether Ishoʿyahb II or Maremmeh had been responsible for Sahdona's most recent exile. As we have seen in M-21, Maremmeh may have expelled Sahdona. However, we have also seen in M-26 that Maremmeh may have considered installing Sahdona in a leading position again, possibly even as metropolitan of Bet Lapat and that Ishoʿyahb III warned against this.[35]

The letters M-28-30 centre on the return of Sahdona from his exile. The first two were written to Hormizd, an old friend with whom Ishoʿyahb III had shared a cell in the School of Nisibis.[36] Ishoʿyahb III depicted Sahdona as an enemy of the orthodox faith, who had written a book against the orthodox and had stated 'that those who do not confess one *qnoma* in Christ were heretics'. Some had witnessed that he disputed in the land of the Romans with the 'Orthodox' (which for Ishoʿyahb III only could mean people adhering to the two-*qnome* doctrine), whom Sahdona called 'Paulianists and (confessors) of two sons', and moreover that Sahdona intended to go to Persia 'to teach them faith'. The letter contains also a part addressed to all the bishops, 'you bishops, you orthodox, you teachers, you wise, you have been made protectors of the truth for the Church of Christ'. He warned them against the deceit of Sahdona. They would err if they accepted it under the pretence of correction and perfection of the truth. Apparently, Maremmeh and the bishops of Bet Garmai intended to change the orthodoxy as defended by Ishoʿyahb III in favour of Sahdona's view on orthodoxy. Ishoʿyahb III argued that this would resemble the events of the council of Nicaea and thereafter when followers of Arius spoiled the true faith under the same pretence. Therefore, so he argued, evil which stayed in the Church under the pretext of achievement would injure the Church after all. Because only Hormizd had answered of all the bishops written to, Ishoʿyahb III asked him to read this letter with them.[37] In the next letter, Ishoʿyahb III warned Hormizd that Sahdona had indeed returned, was staying with Maremmeh in the monastery of Mar Simon and that all the bishops of the province Bet Garmai (to which Hormizd belonged) were going there. He warned him not to do anything in this matter without letting him know and he believed that Hormizd sufficiently knew what was necessary.[38]

Ishoʿyahb III feared that Sahdona would be rehabilitated by Maremmeh in this Synod, which was held in the monastery of Simon,[39] possibly in Karka d-Gedan.[40] Ishoʿyahb III had

[34] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-30, p. 209.
[35] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-21, p. 170; M-26, p. 198; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 15.
[36] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-7, p. 9.
[37] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-28, pp. 202-206. Quotation especially p. 204.
[38] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-29, pp. 206-207.
[39] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-29, p. 207.
[40] Scher, 'Histoire nestorienne 2.2', Chapter 112, p. 639.

not been invited and in one of his last metropolitan letters he wrote to the bishops of Bet Garmai in an attempt to prevent them from accepting Sahdona in the Church again (M-30). He wondered why they discussed this with each other, or why they did not demand a confession of Sahdona. According to Ishoʿyahb III, Sahdona did not deserve the biblical mercy because he had already been forgiven eight times and afterwards went to the 'region of the heretics where he was initiated in the rites of Baal-Peor with all the evil symbols of the evil company of heretics'. Moreover, Sahdona wrote and gave many 'blasphemous pamphlets against us and against our faith and against our teachers in all the assemblies of the erring'. Ishoʿyahb III claimed that Sahdona was now a 'bishop, honoured for his many books against us, more than the books of Philoxenus against the Fathers'.[41] He further reiterated the arguments from his former letter and warned that the bishops should avoid a schism. He brought in an apocalyptic element when he concluded that now might be the beginning of the birth-pangs of the coming of Satan and that the bishops should be good protectors (ܣܥܘ̈ܪܐ) for the Church during that time and not make the same mistake as their predecessors had done in Nicaea.[42]

The feared rehabilitation of Sahdona did not take place. Fiey estimates that the Synod in Karka d-Gedan took place in 647.[43] Maremmeh is also said to have fallen ill during his journey to the monastery in Karka d-Gedan, due to the hard road and the heat. He would have refused medicine, and died in Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[44] The uncertainty of the dates of the Synod and of Maremmeh's death prohibits further speculation about whether these events were connected or not.

The death of Maremmeh would not have been inconvenient to Ishoʿyahb III. When he was chosen Catholicos, he exiled Sahdona, who still found support within the Church. This comes to the fore in letter C-5, written to an apparently influential person called Berikvai (ܒܪܝܟܘܝ), whose identity is further unknown. Berikvai seems to have mediated on behalf of the people in Mahuze d-Ariwan (*Mahuzites*) who had advocated Sahdona's return. Ishoʿyahb III rejected this and advised Berikvai not to listen to such people. He compared the situation of Berikvai to mothers who had lost their child, and he considered mothers whose child was dead better off than those of the kidnapped, because of the uncertainty. Ishoʿyahb III went on with this metaphor when he wrote that the kidnapper (Satan) was cruel and deadly, the mother was the Church and the children were 'the miserable Mahuzites'. The kidnapper took their victims'

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[41] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-30, pp. 208-211.
[42] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-30, pp. 211-14.
[43] Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 28.
[44] Gismondi (trans.), *Maris*, p. 55. The *Chronicon Anonymum* reports only that Maremmeh had been in office for three and a half years and that his body was interred in the Monastery of Sergius of Mabrakta. Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora* 1, p. 34; Nöldeke,'Die syrische Chronik', p. 38.

Christian freedom, removed the intellect from the noblemen and ruined their life indiscriminately.

Ishoʿyahb III could not believe that Berikvai wanted the helpers of Satan back and he lamented that the sons still denied, insulted and excommunicated him, not duly revering him 'because of seniority'. Ishoʿyahb III not only wondered how Berikvai could believe those who claimed they needed freedom in Christ; he also wondered that people turned to Berikvai, as to 'the chief of the world (ܪܒܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ)'. Unfortunately, there is no further information that might clarify Berikvai's position.

Berikvai had provided some names and among them Ishoʿyahb III recognized those of the instigators of the strife. They considered Sahdona the only mediator (ܡܨܥܝܐ) for this time, although they had despised him before and had even blamed Ishoʿyahb III for recommending him. Apparently, they had changed their minds after Sahdona had published his books and consorted with the heretics. Ishoʿyahb III described the brutality of the people against him and other bishops: they even spat in his face, tore their books, despised the bishops and ignored their anathemas. On top of this, they insulted him because he rejected 'a heretic bishop for the orthodox people'. Here opposite opinions were clearly at stake. Ishoʿyahb III still remained confident that he defended the right opinion and admitted the fact that people were free to enter or to leave the Church, but warned that it was not the same way in the eternal world.[45] Why the Mahuzites wanted Sahdona back as 'mediator', what this meant to them and why Berikvai negotiated for them, is not clear.

4.2.2. Sahdona's Christology.

Just like Ishoʿyahb III, Sahdona claimed to teach the 'true faith and the sound confession of orthodoxy' (ܥܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܘܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܚܠܝܡܬܐ ܕܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܘܬܐ). This was the title of the second chapter from his *Book of Perfection* (ܟܬܒ ܕܫܘܡܠܝ ܕܘܒܪ̈ܐ).[46] He might have written it already before 628, although Bedjan holds that it was some time after his journey to Heraclius in 630, and have kept it secret for most people, including Ishoʿyahb III.[47]

[45] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-5, pp. 229-34.
[46] Paul Bedjan (ed.), *S. Martyrii, qui et Sahdona, quae supersunt omniae* (Paris- Leipzig, 1902), pp. 156-75; André de Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius (Sahdona). Oeuvres spirituelles* 2. *Livre de la Perfection, 2me partie (ch. 1-7)* (CSCO 214, Scriptores Syri 90; Leuven, 1961), pp. 8-25; cf. trans. idem, *Martyrius (Sahdona). Oeuvres spirituelles* 2. *Livre de la Perfection, 2me partie (ch. 1-7)* (CSCO 215, Scriptores Syri 91; Leuven, 1961), pp. 8-25.
[47] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-7, p. 131; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', pp. 20-22; Bedjan, *S. Martyrii*, p. ix.

Sahdona started his treatise with the incomprehensibility of God and stated that one can only believe that he exists and that his name is eternal.[48] In line with Ephrem he stated that one can only believe that there is one God who is professed in three. Sahdona discussed briefly the logical implications of this statement:

> [10] Oh, ineffable wonder! We believe in one God and he is confessed threefold. But it is not that the one suppresses the threefold and it is not that the threefold suppresses the one. The fact now, that there is one God (does) not (entail that there) is also one *qnoma*; and neither (does the fact that there are) three *qnome* entail (ܡܩܝܡܐ) three Gods. For the nature of God is one, unitingly distinguished and distinctly united. […] But God is incomprehensible in his properties. We only know that he is, and that he is threefold. But how, is not for us to examine, because the domain of the divinity is unsearchable.[49]

Concerning Christ, Sahdona emphasized the two natures and taught one *parsopa* but also one *qnoma*.[50]

> [21] While God the Word united himself in a sublime manner with this nature of our humanity from the beginning of his formation until eternity, he made with it one *qnoma* and *parsopa* in a wonderful and ineffable union. And he filled it with the glory of his divinity and he made himself visible to the creation in the form of it. '*We have seen his glory, glory like that of the Only-Begotten* (ܝܚܝܕܝܐ) *from the Father, full of grace and truth*'. (John 1:14).
>
> [22] Because God the Word put on (ܠܒܫ) a human body, he connected (ܐܘܦ) the honour of his *qnoma* to the visible and he was seen in the world in its appearance (ܐܣܟܡܐ) in which he constantly manifests himself. And therefore he is thought and spoken of (as) the one *parsopa* and one *qnoma* of the son, the assuming one and the assumed.
>
> [23] Although he has a human nature completely like any of us—which means a body and a soul—, this very nature is also the temple of God the Word who manifests himself in it. It is indicative of the one who assumed it and is the distinguisher of his *parsopa*; it is never seen for itself,[51] so that only his *parsopa,* without the divinity that indwells it, is manifest to the observer. For, even if the assumed was perfect in his nature, he is not to be found for observers in his own dimensions, but everything is elevated (ܡܬܥܠܐ) to his assumer, like the cloth to the one who puts it on and like the purple to the king. For, if it had been known separately by itself while it was removed from his assumer, one would speak of two *parsope* and two sons.

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[48] De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, p. 11.

[49] De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, p. 12.
[10] ܐܘ ܬܕܡܘܪܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܡܠܠܐ. ܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ. ܘܬܠܝܬܝܐܝܬ ܡܬܬܘܕܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܗܝ، ܕܚܕ ܡܒܛܠܐ ܠܗ̇، ܠܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܗܝ، ܕܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܠܗ̇، ܠܚܕ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܝܬ ܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ: ܐܦ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܢܗܘܐ. ܐܦܠܐ ܗܝ، ܕܬܠܬܐ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ. ܬܠܬܐ ܐܠܗ̈ܐ ܡܩܝܡܐ. ܚܕ ܗܘ ܓܝܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܕܡܚܝܕܐܝܬ ܡܬܦܪܫ: ܘܡܦܪܫܐܝܬ ܡܬܚܝܕ. [...] ܐܠܗܐ ܓܝܪ ܠܐ ܡܬܕܪܟܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܕܝܠܗ. ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܝܢ ܝܕܥܝܢ: ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܘܕܬܠܝܬܝܐܝܬ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܘ ܕܝܠܢ ܗܘ، ܠܡܒܩܝܘ ܐ. ܠܐ ܡܬܒܩܝܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܥܘܒܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ.

[50] De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, p. 14.

[51] The expression 'seen for itself' was also used by Ishoʿyahb II, but then in connection to *qnoma*. Sako, *Lettre christologique,* No. 67, p. 172.

> Now then, because it is elevated to God the Word by the union, the *parsopa* of the divinity is manifested in 'the form of a slave' and the *parsopa* of the Son is one and not two. Although it is two according to the nature of God and of man, it is one according to the filiation. Although the natures are two and distinct according to the properties, the *parsopa* is one and equal according to the filiation; and although it is distinguished according to their natures, according to the union it is said to be in each one of them without being divided into two.[52]

Numbers 21-23 of this treatise strongly remind one of the quotations from Theodore's work against Eunomius on the *parsopa* of Christ: 'for because God the Word was revealed in humanity, he was causing the honour of his *qnoma* to conjoin (ܡܩܪܒ) the visible one.' Sahdona might have interpreted this as the expression of two *qnome* becoming one, just as it applied to the *parsopa*. In this case, he may either have neglected or have not known the beginning of the subsequent gloss to this quotation, which stated that 'this honour is neither nature nor *qnoma*'. It is further noteworthy that this quotation also entailed the comparison with the robe and purple of the king, an analogy used prominently by the Church of the East.[53] Sadhona's treatise further reminds one of Theodore's statement that the inseparable union made it impossible that the form of a servant could be 'separated from the divine nature which put it on' and that they rather share the same honour. Theodore spoke in this context also of the 'one assumed' and the 'one who assumed'.[54]

The expressions such as 'put on a body' and 'the assuming one and the assumed' in the above quotation clearly show that Sahdona used terminology dear to the Church of the East. His conclusion, however, that Christ had one *qnoma* by which God the Word had assumed the

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[52] Apart from making use of de Halleux's translation mentioned just above, I also have looked at the selections translated in de Halleux's 'La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona', pp. 5-32; Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 22-24; Ioan, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 53-57. Bedjan, *S. Martyrii*, pp. 166-67; De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, p. 16 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 16-17).
[21] ܠܗܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܐܬܥܫܢ ܒܗ ܡܬܠܒܟܢܘܬ ܣܓܝ ܠܗ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܡܢܗ ܡܢ ܥܒܘܪ، ܒܚܠܠܬܗ ܘܒܥܒܕܐ ܠܟܠܗ܇ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ
ܘܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܚܕܢܝܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܒܫܘܝܘܬܐ ܕܬܪܝܢܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܦܠܓܐ. ܘܡܬܝܕܥ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܒܠܒܘܫܗ، ܘܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܕܠܗ ܠܒܪܢܫܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ. ܢܣܒ ܠܗ
ܥܡܗ ܒܡܥܒܕܢܘܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܣܬܪܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܒܐ܇ ܕܓܠܐ ܠܦܪܘܩܘܬܐ ܘܦܘܪܫܢܐ܀
[22] ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܠܦܓܪܐ ܐܬܠܒܫ ܠܗ܇ ܐܡܪܐ ܕܩܘܡܗ ܐܣܩ ܠܡܬܚܫܒܢܐ: ܘܟܐܘܡܝܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܐܬܚܙܝ، ܒܚܠܠܗ. ܒܗ
ܡܬ ܚܠܦ ܒܗ ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܥܠܘܗܝ. ܘܚܕ ܡܟܝܠ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܘ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܘܡܬܐܡܪ. ܗܘ ܕܢܣܒ ܘܗܘ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ.
[23] ܐܦ ܗܢܐ ܚܝܠܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܐܦ ܦܓܪܐ ܘܢܦܫܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܬܠܒܟܢܘܬ ܐܝܟ ܚܕ ܒܗ܇ ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܗܢܐ ܚܝܠܗ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܗܘ
ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܗ ܫܪܝܐ. ܘܒܚܝܠܗ ܗܘ ܕܢܣܒ ܘܡܬܥܒܕܢܐ ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ. ܘܠܘܬ ܐܒܐ، ܕܒܗ ܘܠܗ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ܇ ܐܡܪܢܐ
ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܒܠܒܘܫ ܕܠܐ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܢܬܒܪܐ ܒܗ ܫܠܝܛܐ ܠܚܫܐ. ܐܦ ܗܢܐ ܡܬܠܒܟܢܐ ܗܘ ܒܒܢܝܢܗ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܢܣܒ: ܐܠܐ ܠܗ
ܒܡܬܚܫܚܢܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܬܚܒܪ ܠܗ ܫܘܝܐ: ܐܠܐ ܒܠܒܪ ܠܗ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܡܬܠܒܟܐ܇ ܐܝܟ ܐܬܚܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܒܘܫܗ ܘܐܝܟ ܐܪܓܘܢܐ ܠܗ
ܡܠܟܐ. ܐܠܐ ܗܢܐ ܚܕܢܐ ܘܠܗ ܡܬܚܫܚܢܘܬ ܡܬܚܒܪ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܢܗܘܘܢ܇ ܡܬܐܡܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܬܪܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܟܝܢܝܢ.
ܗܟܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܗ، ܕܠܗ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܬܠܒܟ ܒܚܝܠܘܬܐ܇ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܒܗ ܕܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܥܒܕܐ. ܘܚܕ ܐܬܝܠܕ، ܦܪܨܘܦܐ
ܕܒܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܪܝܢ. ܬܪܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ. ܚܕ ܕܝܢ ܒܒܪܘܬܐ. ܚܕܢܝܐ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܢ܇ ܘܦܪܝܫܝܢ ܒܕܝܠܝܬܐ. ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܕ ܘܫܘܐ
ܒܒܪܘܬܐ. ܘܟܕ ܦܪܝܫ ܒܟܝܢܘܗܝ: ܡܬܐܡܪ ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܒܟܠܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ: ܟܕ ܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫ ܠܬܪܝܢ.
De Halleux translates the last difficult sentence as follows on p. 17: 'et, encore qu'il soit distinct par ses natures, il est dit être dans chacune d'elles par l'union, sans être divisé en deux'.

[53] See above, section 1.3. and 1.4.3.

[54] Found in Theodore's *Commentary on the Nicene Creed.* See above, section 1.4.2.

human *qnoma,* was something Babai particularly had fought. Sahdona argued that since everything 'was elevated' to the assumer, this also applied to the (*qnomatic*) *parsopa* of the *Filiation*.[55] This line of thought reminds one of Abbot Abraham's question to Ishoʿyahb II, but the specific discussion does not seem to reappear in the work of Ishoʿyahb III, who did not use the verb 'elevate' in a Christological context.[56]

Ovidiu Ioan holds that it was Sahdona who amended the term *qnoma* with the expression 'the assuming one and the assumed', so that the unique *parsopa* and *qnoma* were the expression of the union between the assuming and the assumed.[57] Babai, however, had argued that a *qnoma* could not be assumed by another *qnoma*, although a *parsopa* could be assumed by another *parsopa*. This meant to him that the divine *qnoma* assumed to its *parsopa of filiation* the human *qnoma* including its *parsopa* with these two *parsope* becoming one *parsopa* and the two *qnome* remaining separate. Christ was therefore both visible and invisible; both the assumer and the assumed in two forms, while the natures remained distinct. Thus, according to Babai, the exchange (*communicatio idiomatum*) was possible on the level of *parsopa*, while natures and *qnome* remained without any mingling or mixture.

Sahdona might have found further confirmation for his view that the human *qnoma* was assumed in the account of the 612 debate. The Eastern bishops had not specified how the human *qnoma* was assumed when they stated: 'But when we call Christ perfect man, we do not name all men, but that one *qnoma* which was manifestly assumed (ܐܬܢܣܒ) for our salvation into the union (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ) with the Word'. If so, Sahdona must have ignored other statements that acknowledged the two *qnome*. Sahdona further compared the union of the two natures in Christ to the human body and soul forming one *qnoma*, which view Babai had combatted fiercely. In this respect Sahdona rhetorically asked how one could think of examining the mystery of the union in Christ if one did not even understand one's own natural union.[58]

Sahdona seems to have referred approvingly to Theodore of Mopsuestia and disapprovingly to Babai's examples of images of kings, when he stated:

> [28] For we also have to acknowledge this, that this *parsopa* is of Christ (who is) in the union, while he is made known of the union, [and] not of an *ousia* composite of two natures, but of the elevation to the glorifica-

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[55] De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, Nos. 28-29, pp. 18-19, see also below.

[56] Sako, *Lettre christologique,* No. 19, p. 167. The statement concerning Ishoʿyahb III's use of the verbe 'elevate' is based on a word by word analysis of variations of the verb ܥܠܐ in his letters. On Ishoʿyahb II's letter, see also section 2.6.4.

[57] 'Cependant, Sahdona amende le terme (*hypostasis*) en y ajoutant un autre concept christologique: *nsab, «assumer»*. L'unique *prosopon* et *hypostasis* du Fils est ainsi l'expression de l'union entre *celui qui assume* […] et *celui qui est assumé* […].' Ioan, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', p. 55.

[58] De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, p. 21.

> tion that has been awarded for the cause of the revelation. The *parsopa* is *qnoma*-tic (ܩܢܘܡܝܐ) of the natures and not fictive (or: borrowed) and assumed (ܫܐܝܠܐ ܘܡܣܝܡܐ) afar from the one to whom it belongs, because it is not composite (ܡܪܟܒܐ) according to nature into one *ousia* from two natures, neither is it fictive and assumed afar from one of them, as in the way of images of messengers who represent the *parsopa* of the one afar.
>
> [29] For a picture, although it resembles the image of a human, is not a human by nature! An angel now, or an ambassador— although one is representing the *parsopa* of God and the other the *parsopa* of the king—are not truly (ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ) God and king. Concerning our Lord then, he is not like this, but he is truly in these two, in which he is seen and in which he becomes known, while the natures are close and united to each other; and manifested in these two is the *qnoma*-tic *parsopa of filiation* while it is not distant from the truth (ܫܪܪܐ) of his natures.[59]

Some expressions here are again reminiscent of the Syriac quotation from Theodore's work against Eunomius mentioned above. These are: 'not […] one *ousia* from two natures' and the last part of the accompanying gloss.[60] Where Sahdona tried to be in line with quotations from Theodore, he seems to have opposed some of Babai. The latter had used the example of a coin with the picture (*parsopa*) of the king which is stamped in clay to illustrate how the human nature could receive the *parsopa* of God with his honour and splendour, while both kept their nature and the *parsopa* of God remained one but existed in two *qnome*: that of the golden coin and the clay. The *parsopa* of God belonged truly (or 'authentically') (ܡܪܝܐܝܬ) and fixedly (ܩܒܝܥܐܝܬ) to the divine *qnoma* and belonged assumptively (ܢܣܝܒܐܝܬ) and qua *parsopa* (ܦܪܨܘܦܐܝܬ) to the human. It has already been noted that the word ܢܣܝܒܐܝܬ could also be interpreted as 'feignedly', 'pretending' and the opposite of 'real'. This exactly seems to be what Sahdona did and why he rejected it, because he required a 'real' Christ and not a fictive one. This further raises the question of whether or not such an insistence on a 'real' Christ opposed that of a less 'real' Christ.

After analysing the *Book of Perfection,* André de Halleux states that Sahdona's line of thought and formulations differed from the Chalcedonian mentality, but fitted well in the tradi-

[59] Bedjan, *S. Martyrii*, p. 170; De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, pp. 18-19 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 18-19).
[28] ܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܦܠܐ ܠܝ ܠܫܘܒܚܐ. ܕܗܘ ܗܢܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܒܣܝܡܘܬܐ: ܒܗ ܕܝܠܝܕܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܫܘܒܚܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܐܘܣܝܐ ܕܡܪܟܒܐ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ: ܐܠܐ ܡܬܥܠܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܪܘܪܒܐ ܕܡܬܦܪܥܐ ܡܛܠ ܥܠܬܐ ܕܓܠܝܢܐ. ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܗܘ ܩܢܘܡܝܐ ܕܟܝܢܐ. ܘܠܐ ܫܐܝܠܐ ܘܡܣܝܡܐ ܕܪܚܝܩ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܕܝܠܗ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܪܟܒܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܟܝܢܐܝܬ ܠܚܕܐ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܗܘܢ ܟܝܢܐ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܫܐܝܠܐ ܘܡܣܝܡܐ ܕܪܚܝܩ ܡܢ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ. ܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܨܠܡܐ ܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܐܝܙܓܕܐ ܕܡܡܠܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܪܚܝܩ.
[29] ܗܐ ܓܝܪ ܨܘܪܬܐ ܟܕ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܡܝܐ: ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܟܝܢܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܡܠܐܟܐ ܗܫܐ ܐܘ ܐܝܙܓܕܐ: ܟܕ ܚܕ ܠܒܝܫ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܐܚܪܢܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ: ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܡܠܟܐ. ܠܘܬ ܡܪܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ: ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܗܟܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ. ܒܗܝ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܘܒܗܝ ܕܡܬܝܕܥ. ܟܕ ܩܪ̈ܝܒܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܘܡܚܝܕܝܢ ܚܕ ܠܚܕ. ܘܡܬܚܘܝܐ ܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܘܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܩܢܘܡܝܐ ܕܒܢܘܬܐ: ܟܕ ܠܐ ܪܚܝܩ ܡܢ ܫܪܪܐ ܕܟܝ̈ܢܘܗܝ.

[60] 'For the honour is neither nature (ܟܝܢܐ) nor *qnoma*, but an elevation to great dignity which is awarded for the cause of the revelation.' See also section 1.4.3.

tion of the Church of the East, of which he gave some examples: the insistence on the integrity of both natures in Christ; the *parsopic* union in terms of adoration, exaltation, honour and elevation; the incarnation of the Word that was not seen as becoming something else, but as an inhabitation (of a temple) or the putting on of a cloth; the Word assuming the form of a slave; the union that was seen as an assumption (*nsab*), conjunction (*naqiputa*) or a manifestation; the one *parsopa* that was often called '*parsopa of filiation*'; the absence of the term *theotokos*. He concludes that Sahdona was not a convert to the 'monophysisme jacobite' and that his theology did not have a Chalcedonian origin.[61] Moreover, Ishoʿyahb III did not accuse Sahdona of Theopaschism or of Apollinarism, but mainly of the wrong vocabulary.[62]

Luise Abramowski confirms most of De Halleux's findings and adds that Sahdona was moreover highly dependent on two interpolations in the introduction to Nestorius' *Liber Heraclides* which actually changed the meaning into the opposite of what Nestorius had said elsewhere. These interpolations suggested that Christ had just one *parsopa* and *qnoma* and that the one *parsopa* was according to nature and *qnoma* (ܟܝܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ). They influenced Sahdona's thinking profoundly and also could be used to argue that his one-*qnoma* doctrine was based on a highly respected source. Abramowski further holds that Sahdona never qualified this one *qnoma* of Christ as 'composite' and that Ishoʿyahb III did not accuse him of this either. Only two times did Ishoʿyahb III explicitly quote some expressions of Sahdona, not found in his *Book of Perfection*, which did not contain the element 'composite' either. She concludes therefore that Sahdona's Christology had an 'old'-Chalcedonian origin and differed from the '*neo*-Chalcedonian hypostasis synthetos'.[63] Of the two expressions quoted by Ishoʿyahb III, one was 'single *qnoma*' (ܩܢܘܡܐ ܟܠ ܠܚܘܕܝܐ), and the other was given in two variations, namely 'unique subsistence' (ܡܩܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ) and 'individual subsistence' (ܡܩܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܟܠ ܒܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ). Ishoʿyahb III already admitted that he could not remember them because they were so 'stupid'.[64]

The above discussion on Sahdona's Christology seems to indicate that he might have found confirmation for his one-*qnoma* Christology in works of Theodore, in glosses on the work of Nestorius and in the 612 debate, while ignoring opposite statements in the same works. In Christology, he seemed to have treated *qnoma* and *parsopa* as synonyms, with *parsopa* the leading term. Thus, Sahdona could remain within the framework of the older Christology of the Church. There are no specific statements indicating why Sahdona did so. The fact that he had been a bishop in Edessa during Byzantine times forms at least an indication that he might

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61 De Halleux, 'La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona', pp. 15, 23-24 and 31, with references.
62 De Halleux, 'La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona', pp. 10-11.
63 Abramowski, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 22-25. See also section 1.12.
64 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-6 and 7, pp. 129 and 136.

have accommodated his definition of *qnoma* to that of Chalcedon. Ishoʿyahb III's accusations rest mainly on his own different use of terminology, but do not seem to give an accurate representation of Sahdona's thinking.

While we have argued in Chapter 2 that one of the reasons why Babai had developed the two-*qnome* doctrine was to be found in the needs of monastic mysticism, Ovidiu Ioan identifies the same needs as the cause of Sahdona's one-*qnoma* Christology. Although the outcome of these hypotheses is opposite, it is remarkable that both make a connection with monastic mysticism as a deeper reason underlying these Christologies. Ioan argues that the mystic's aim of perfection was impaired by the definitions given to Christological terms in the East Syrian tradition, including Babai's Christology. The mystic would aim at a real union and it was therefore a prerequisite that the *parsopa* of the union was real as well and not only an appearance. This, however, was the logical implication when one applied the restricted use of the term *parsopa,* because this only signalled what could be seen from outside. Moreover, because *qnoma* meant for Sahdona the reality of a *parsopa* and not an individual nature, this real *parsopic* union should be a union according to *qnoma* as well. Ioan concludes that Sahdona developed the Christological formula one *parsopa* – one *qnoma* – two natures, while redefining the term *qnoma* and the relation between the terms, in order to make it capable of rendering the complexity of the union.

Ioan argues further that Sahdona's mystical system and soteriology thus enabled one to reach perfection and *theosis*, given a real *communicatio idiomatum* in Christ in which the relation of the two natures should be determined precisely as a 'union hypostatique et personelle'. Without such a real union the ascetic would not be able to 'expérimenter sa propre union mystique avec Dieu et en conséquence d'atteindre la perfection et la déification'.[65] Deification of ordinary men, however, was strongly rejected by Babai as it countered fundamental Antiochene views, and might have been one of the grounds for fighting Henana and his school. It was probably also objectionable to Ishoʿyahb III.[66] As will be shown further below, Ishoʿyahb III also disapproved of changing the meanings of words at will, as this would corrupt the discourse.

The relation of Christ to the Trinity is discussed by Sahdona when describing the qualities of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father is without cause and eternally generating (ܝܠܘܕܐ, *yaluda*); the Son is caused by him and is born, generated (ܝܠܝܕܐ, *yalida*) according to God's essence. This is a reformulation of the Nicene Creed, which stated that Christ was of the

[65] Ioan, 'Martyrius-Sahdona', pp. 55-58.
[66] Babai and Ishoʿyahb II mentioned this only with respect to Christ.

essence of his Father and that he was born and not made (ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܘܠܐ ܐܬܥܒܕ), as already had been formulated in both versions of the Synod of 410 and commented upon by Theodore of Mopsuestia. Although Theodore had explained that the expression ‘born from God’ was used to emphasize their same nature, whereas ‘made’ referred to anything in creation which was outside of God, he did not discuss the exact role of the Father in this.[67] This probably was a later development. Sahdona must therefore have referred to comments on the Trinity by later Fathers such as Gregory of Nazianzus when he claimed that they had said:

> [12] The Father is not generated (*la yalida*) and does not proceed, but is only generating.
> The Son does not generate (*la yaluda*), does not proceed and is only generated.
> The Holy Spirit does not generate and is not generated, (*la yaluda w la yalida*), but only proceeds.[68]

Although Babai and the bishops in the 612 debate had mentioned the distinct qualities of the Trinity without further elaboration, the old discussions on such qualities still appear to have been current at this time and were also taken up within nascent Islam.

4.3. Ishoʿyahb III’s main Christological terminology and concepts

Like Ishoʿyahb II, Ishoʿyahb III was influenced by Babai’s terminology and definitions. He mentioned Babai in his second and eleventh letter. The first was addressed to Babai personally and Ishoʿyahb III briefly praised Babai’s effort for the study of faith.[69] The other is written after Babai’s decease and is addressed to the Brothers of the Monastery on Izla, encouraging them to guard the orthodox religion.[70] For Ishoʿyahb III, Babai stood in the tradition of the Fathers who like angels taught the liturgy of the spiritual service to the people of the East and consolidated in the monks—as in pure gold—the image of their ascetic lives and the excellent image of the Fear of God.[71] This description shows moreover that Ishoʿyahb III and Babai stood in a similar ascetic and mystical tradition. The following analysis of Ishoʿyahb III’s terminology will also investigate to what extent this might have been the case.

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[67] See on the Syriac versions of the Nicene Creed: section 1.6; Theodore of Mopsuestia: section 1.4.2.

[68] De Halleux also notes in his translation that Gregory of Nazianzus was referred to, de Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, p. 13. (cf. trans idem, p. 14). [12] ܐܒܐ ܡܢ ܠܐ ܝܠܝܕܐ ܘܠܐ ܢܦܘܩܐ ܝܠܘܕܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܒܪܐ ܠܐ ܝܠܘܕܐ ܘܠܐ ܢܦܘܩܐ ܝܠܝܕܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܠܐ ܝܠܘܕܐ ܘܠܐ ܝܠܝܕܐ ܢܦܘܩܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ.

[69] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-2, pp. 2-3.

[70] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-11, pp. 13-16.

[71] Duval (ed.), Liber *Epistularum*, E-11, p. 15.

As has been pointed out earlier, *qnoma* could have several connotations. In general, it could be associated with something which made a nature a 'real' and existing entity. In everyday language it could refer to an individual or 'self'; in a theological context it could refer to the three *qnome* of the Trinity, or in a Christological context to one or two *qnome* of Christ, and finally it could be closely associated to the soul and its purification aimed at reflecting or receiving the light of truth.

In order to get an estimation of the way Ishoʿyahb III used this term, I investigated its occurrences and contexts in his letters and in his hagiography of Ishoʿsabran, which probably was written when he was metropolitan. Of the ten times it figures in the hagiography, only once is this in a Christological context, when he speaks of the 'union of the *qnome* without confusion' (ܘܒܚܝܘܕܬܐ ܕܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܘܠܒܠ). It further indicates an individual and this is often in the context of the suffering of the soul.[72]

4.3.1. Qnoma in Ishoʿyahb III's letters

The term *qnoma* appears ninety times in Ishoʿyahb III's letters. In the following table these are listed according to the numbering in Duval's edition. A very brief context is given as well. The last column indicates whether *qnoma* signifies an individual (I) and can be translated as 'self'; is used in Christological or Trinitarian context (C or T); or might refer to the soul and its salvation (S). Sometimes, different interpretations might be possible. Where *qnoma* is used several times in an outspoken Christological context in a page or letter, only the number of occurrences is given.

QNOMA in the letters of Ishoʿyahb III			
P.	No.		I/C/T/S
10	E-8	6 ܡܬܡܟܝ ܚܘܬܐ ܚܠܫܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܝ	I
10	E-8	ܐܝܟ ܕܠܩܢܘܡܝ ܒܡܕܒܪܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ 10 ܡܬܪܗܒܐ ܐܢܐ.	I (S?)
11	E-10	ܠܡܟܝܟܘܬܐ ܕܡܫܪܐ ܒܚܫܐ25 ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܚܠܦܝ.	I
28	E-17	26 ܠܐܒܕܢܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܘܠܚܫܘܟܬܐ ܕܠܒܗܘܢ.	I (S?)
30	E-18	22 ܗܘܝܬ ܕܐܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܝ ܐܬܐ ܠܘܬܟܘܢ:.	I
33	E-18	28 ܕܠܐ ܢܬܓܠܙ ܠܐܚܘ̈ܗܝ., ܘܢܚܣܪ ܠܩܢܘܡܗ.	I (S?)
35	E-19	9 ܕܒܬܒܬ ܠܝ. ܥܠ ܡܫܠܡܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܝܟ ܒܬܫܡܫܬܐ	I
73	E-42	ܘܗܘ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܒܪ: ܕܐܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܝ 2 ܐܩܝܡ ܘܡܘܡܝܢ ܥܠ ܐܦ̈ܝ ܗܕܐ.	I
79	E-43	ܠܡܢܐ ܚܫܐ ܐܝܬ31 ܒܬܘܪܝ ܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܝܢ:	I
80	E-43	[...]27 ܘܡܢܐ ܕܡܕܒܪ ܝܢ ܕ ܕܬܘܪܝ ܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܝܢ.	I
84	E-44	3 [...]: ܘܕܐܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܝ ܠܡܪܝ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܒܢܝܐ	I

[72] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', pp. 485-584, quotation from Chapter 17, p. 572. The hagiography will be discussed in more detail in section 4.3.4.

112	M-3	ܘܡܟܐܢܐ ܕܒܢܝܐ ܒܓܢܘ5 ܠܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܠܒܝ:	S (I)
115	M-3	ܘܒܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܗܘܬܐ ܥܦܝܪܬܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ 13 ܢܣܒܘܢ ܒܟܠ ܒܢ̈ܝܐ ܠܒ̈ܢܐ.	S
116	M-3	ܡܚܠܦ ܠܩܢܘܡܗ.	S
123	M-5	29 ܩܢܘܡܝ ܐܬܡܛܝ ܠܘܬܟܘܢ.	I
124-29	M-6*		C 8x
134-36	M-7*		C 15x
142	M-9*	ܗܘ ܕܒܥܡܩܐ ܕܒܠܥܕܘܗܝ ܘܒܐܒܐ ܕܝܠܝܕܘܬ 16 ܩܢܘܡܐ ܦܬܠܐ ܠܡܟܠܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ ܥܪܝܪܬܐ:	C
142	M-9*	ܕܒܬܪܬܝܢ ܕܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܩܢ̈ܘܡܬܐ ܘܒܢܝܢܬܐ	C
160	M-15	10 ܪܥܝܐ ܒܗ ܡܚܒܒܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܟ:	I
160	M-15	11 ܕܩܢܘܡܟ:	I
163	M-16	ܐܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܝ ܢܦܫ ܐܢܐ ܒܗܘ 27 ܕܗܒܐ ܪܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܗܘܬܗ ܕܬܘܠܡܕܐ.	I
166	M-18	ܐܠܐ ܘܕܬܪܝܢ ܡܢ ܫܥܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܟ:	I
167	M-18	1 ܠܐܒܗܘܬܟ ܐܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܝ ܐܡܘܪ ܒܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܝ.	I
170	M-21	15 ܡܕܡ ܣܘܠܚܢܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܝ:	I
170	M-21	26 ܡܒܛܠ ܣܪܝܩܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ	C
180	M-23	ܒܪ ܒܫܐܠܬܐ ܡܕܒܪܝܢ ܣܝ29 ܒܠ ܢܦܩ ܠܥܦܪܗ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܕܗܢܐ.	I (?)
202	M-28*		C 3x
205	M-28*	31 ܒܩܢܘܡܟ ܘܒܐܒܗܬܐ ܡܕܒܪܐ ܕܒܢܝܟ.	I
208-12	M-30*		C 6x
220	C-1	ܠܚܘܪܢܐ ܠܗܘܡܕܡ19 ܕܫܢܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܝ.	S
220	C-1	ܒܠܗܘܢ ܐܒܗܬܐ24 ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ: ܕܗܘܘ ܠܗ ܡܥܒܕܢܐ ܫܒܝܚܐ 25 ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ	S
224	C-3*		C 6x
229	C-4	3 ܘܡܬܠܝܢ ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬ ܫܒܝܚܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ	S
234	C-5	9 [...] ܐܠܐ ܘܗܘ ܩܢܘܡܝ	I
236	C-6	ܘܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܗܼܘ: ܗܘ 13 ܗܘ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܒܘܢ ܐܦ ܗܫܐ.	I
241	C-10	ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܠܒܝܫܘܬܐ	I -S
247	C-14	ܐܦ ܠܗ 11 ܒܡܟܐܬܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘ ܢܒܗܘܐ ܪܘܚܢܐ ܬܒܥ:	I
248	C-14	ܒܕܒܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ.	I
253	C-14	11 ܡܫܡܫ ܒܠܒܘܫ ܠܐܒܗܬܗܘܢ ܒܐܒܕܢܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ.	S
256	C-15	6 ܡܢ ܦ ܕܠܦܫܛܐ ܠܡܫܬܪܬܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܟ ܬܗܘܐ.	I (S?)
266	C-18	2 ܗܢܘܢ ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܐܢܠܐ. ܘܫܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܠܬܠܒܘܢ 3 ܐܬܕܪܘ: ܠܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܥܪܝܪܘ ܣܠܩܘܡܗܘܢ.	I
278	C-21	ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܒܡܗܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ: :8 ܪܚܡ ܫܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܗܘܢ.	S-I
283	C-22*	17 ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܘܩܫܬܐ:	I?
286-88	C-22*		C 13x

Ishoʿyahb III did not use *qnoma* in a Trinitarian context. More than 50 times, *qnoma* has an outspoken Christological meaning and appears especially in letters elaborating Ishoʿyahb III's Christology of two *qnome.* He only started to do so in his metropolitan letters to Sahdona. These Christological letters will be discussed in more detail below and are indicated in this table with an asterisk. About twenty times *qnoma* is used in an everyday context referring to the author or to the addressee. About ten times it is disputable whether one has to interpret *qnoma* simply as an individual or whether it refers to the soul, but in five letters it seems to

stand clearly in an ascetic context referring to the soul. The texts that might refer to the soul will be discussed here in more detail, so that attention can be given to the question whether or not Ishoʿyahb III might have used *qnoma* with the same mystical meaning I suggested Babai had done.

As bishop, Ishoʿyahb III mainly used *qnoma* in an everyday context, but in a few letters (E-8, 17 and 18), it might also have referred to the soul. E-8 is an early letter written to Sabrishoʿ, a nobleman (ܒܪ ܚܐܪ̈ܐ) and abbot of a monastery, who seems to have supported Ishoʿyahb III's election. The latter wanted to repay him and trusted that the other would be safe in the disturbances, because he was a nobleman and the abbot of the monastery of the Holy Cross, which was the 'adorable anchor and sign of salvation'. Ishoʿyahb III' considered repaying Sabrishoʿ and with such thoughts he 'nourished' his *qnoma* in his poor mind.[73] In E-17, Ishoʿyahb III spoke of an evil person who mingled 'in your peaceful crowd for the destruction of his *qnoma* and for your misfortune'. *Qnoma* can here be interpreted not only as 'himself', but might also refer to his soul. A similar uncertainty occurs in E-18, where someone should not stay in Bet Abe, in order not to disturb his brothers, nor to harm his *qnoma.*

As metropolitan, Ishoʿyahb III connected *qnoma* with purification in at least one letter. His subsequent description of monks as mirrors that reflect the light of the Gospel indicates that he was influenced by Babai's mysticism. Referring to 2 Tim. 2:21 he stated:

> Those indeed, who kindled the love of Christ for their nature with the desire for perfection (ܠܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ) as with fire, shook all the motion of corporeal desire out of their nature with mental efforts, and they made their *qnoma* pure vessels, useful for their Lord and prepared for every good work.[74]

During his catholicate, Ishoʿyahb III continued to use the word *qnoma* in all ways. Three times this might have been in the context of soul and asceticism (C-1, 4 and 14).

In his first letter as catholicos, in which he humbly and eloquently informed Isaac of Nisibis of his recent installation, Ishoʿyahb III asked him to pray that God from the height of his inaccessibility would send the help of his power: 'first salvation of my *qnoma*, for the grandeur and honour of his holy Church'. He finished his letter with the greetings of 'all the father bishops, who are here diligent ministers in their *qnome* for the work of the holy Church of our Lord'. This seems to refer to (the purification of) their soul. In C-4, Ishoʿyahb III encouraged the

[73] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-8, p. 10. ܐܝܟ ܕܠܩܢܘܡܝ ܒܡܒܝܢܐ ܡܣܟܢܐ ܡܬܪܣܐ ܐܢܐ
[74] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*), M-3, p. 112. ܗܢܘܢ ܓܝܪ ܕܒ ܒܪܓܬܐ ܕܠܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܢܘܪܐ ܒܚܘܒܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܟܝܢܗܘܢ ܫܓܪܘ: ܠܟܠܗ ܙܘܥܐ ܕܪܓܬܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܬܐ ܒܥܡ ܫܐ̈ܩܐ ܕܗܘܢܢܝ̈ܐ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܗܘܢ ܢܦܨܘ. ܘܡܐܢ̈ܐ ܕܟܝ̈ܐ ܥܒܕܘ ܠܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܟܠܝܒ. ܕܚܫܝܚܝܢ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܗܘܢ ܘܡܛܝܒܝܢ ܠܟܠ ܥܒܕ ܛܒ. See for further discussion section 4.4.3.

clergy of Nisibis, who 'fight against the enemies of divinity and humanity and the blasphemers of the mystery of the salvation of the world', by reminding them that God will reward them.

> (God) will clothe you again with deserved praise in his eternal kingdom, together with those who were a perfect example of the spiritual life for this world and brought in their *qnoma* (ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ) the participation in the glory of Christ in the eternal kingdom.[75]

This fragment seems to show that according to Ishoʿyahb III, participation in Christ could be effected at the level of *qnoma*. He may have been in line here with the mysticism of Babai, according to which the ultimate truth could be seen in the purified *qnoma* of the soul. He further stated in C-3 that only through the human *qnoma* of Christ could Christians be saved and participate 'in the hope of resurrection because of the participation in the prime resurrection'.[76] His other letter on Christian heresies specifies this as follows: 'If our death in Christ our Lord was not by *qnoma* (ܐܢܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܢ) part of our *kyana*, then there is for our *kyana* also no participation in the immortality of Christ our Lord, (that is) the hope of immortality.'[77]

The last instance where *qnoma* is brought closely in contact with the (perdition of) the soul occurs in C-14, which was written to the rebellious metropolitan of Rev Ardashir. Ishoʿyahb III wrote that the leaders of the Church did not suffer from this rebellion per se, but were only distressed by the stubborn sons who 'alienated their soul from the inheritance and blessing of the good Fathers' and by the perdition of their *qnoma*.[78]

4.3.2. Parsopa in Ishoʿyahb III's letters

An overview of the use of *parsopa* is given in the next table.[79]

Forms of *parsopa* in the letters of Ishoʿyahb III			
P.	No.		Meaning
19	E-14	ܕܠܗ 8 ܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܠܗ ܠܦܪܨܘܦܐ:	I
20	E-15	22 ܠܡܬܚܙܝܘ ܡܕܡ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܐܒܗܘܬܢ.	I
24	E-17	17 ܘܐܫܬܘܕܝ ܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܪܫܐ ܠܟܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ	I

[75] Duval (ed.), Liber Epistularum, C-4, pp. 228-29. ܘܢܠܒܫܟܘܢ ܬܘܒ ܫܘܒܚܐ [229] ܡܬܦܪܢܣܐ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܗ ܕܠܥܠܡ: ܥܡ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܗܘܘ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ: ܠܦܘܡܐ ܫܠܡܐ ܕܕܘܒܪܐ ܪܘܚܢܐ. ܘܐܝܬܝܘ ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܫܘܒܚܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ. On Babai's mysticism, see above, section 2.2.7.
[76] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-3, p. 224.
[77] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, pp. 287-88. The expression *bar kyana* is often translated as 'consubstantial'. However, because the sentence continues here with an explanation of 'our' *kyana*, the translation remains quite literal. On the Christology in C-22, see also section 4.3.3.
[78] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 253.
[79] Here again, the number of the page in the edition of Duval is given first, followed by the classification of the letter and a relevant short fragment. In the last column is indicated whether it refers to a specific individual or person (I), is used in a Christological context (C), or should be translated otherwise.

38	E-20	ܕܟܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܙܕ ܟܠܬܐ 16 ܕܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܗ ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ.	I
69	E-41	ܘܐܦ ܠܗ ܟܕ ܒܗܘ ܠܟܐܐ17 ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܟܡܝܢܘܬܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܐܠܟܫܬ.	pretext, form
70	E-41	ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܒܢܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝܟ 21 ܦܪܨܘܦܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܟܠܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܟ.	I
73	E-42		I 3x
86	E-45		I 3x
100	E-52	ܕܢܣܒܘܢ 23 ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܪܘܫܡܐ ܟܕ ܫܢܝܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܗ 24 ܕܡܫܒܚܐ ܠܟ ܕܠܡܠܟܐ.	in the presence of
113	M-3	16 ܕܟܡ ܐܢܫܐ ܐܬܬܠܗܘܢ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܢܣܒܬ ܥܠܬܐ.	pretext, form
121	M-5	ܘܒܦܪܨܘܦ ܡܟܡܟܘܬܐ ܘܕܝܠܬ27 ܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ:	pretext, form
125-29	M-6*		C 4x
134-36	M-7*		C 12x
142	M-9	17 ܐܝܕܐ ܕܟܢܝܫܘܬ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܟܢܝܫܘܬ ܒܪܘܬܐ	C
167	M-18	9 ܦܓܪܐ ܡܠܟܝܐ ܕܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܫܘܫܘܬܢ:	I
169	M-21	ܕܠܗ 21 ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܐܒܗܘܬܢ ܟܠܗ22 ܘܟܢܐ:	I
180-81	M-23		I 3x
197-99	M-26		I 3x
204-205	M-28		pretext, form 5x
205	M-28	ܘܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ 30 ܒܝ ܗܢܐ ܕܫܠܡܘܬ، ܐܝܟ ܒܗ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܪ ܠܡܫܡܪ:	I
206	M-28	ܘܐܦ ܐܢܐ 2 ܕܝܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܬܘܒ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܠܟ ܐܦ ܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܒܬ.	in your presence or: in your name
208	M-30	12 ܐ ܠܒܪܬܐ ܘܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ.	I
236	C-6	10 ܐܘܣܦܘ ܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܡܩܪܒܬܐ: ܟܠ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܡܪܬܗܘܢ11 ܒܫܡ ܪܥܝܘܬܐ ܕܒܡܪܢܐ.	I
240	C-10	ܫܪܪܐ ܠܒܪ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ. ܠܗ ܟܕ ܡܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ 24 ܢܩܒ ܐܢܐ ܫܡܗܐ.	I
241	C-10	ܫܦܝܪܘܬܗ ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܝܠܫܐ.	I
247	C-14	12 ܐܠܐ ܒܡܬܪܥܝܬܐ ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܒܪ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ	I
283	C-22	ܠܡܟܒܪ ܬܪܘܨܘܬܐ ܡܢܝܫܐ ܕܝܠܟ ܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܡܠܟܐ:	person, face?
all		5 x ܦܪܨܘܦܝ - not listed separately.	I
all		9 x forms of plural (ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ)	I, face, pretext

Altogether, forms of *parsopa* (singular) figure 61 times in Ishoʿyahb III's letters. Similarly to what we saw for *qnoma*, it is mainly used in a Christological context in letters M-6 and M-7 where Ishoʿyahb III clarified his terminology and Christology, and it will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In most cases, *parsopa* is used to denote an individual, a specific person. It deals more with the outside and not with the inside of such an individual. This fits Ishoʿyahb III's own definition of these terms, according to which *qnoma* means 'stability, subsistence and substance', while *parsopa* means 'face, distinction, perception and the essential and dominating appearance'.[80] This meaning of appearance is especially seen where (a form of) *parsopa* is used to indicate that something or someone is brought forward under false pretences or another form.

[80] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-7, pp. 135-36.

This is often rendered as ‘pretext ‘or ‘form’. In some cases, it also can mean ‘in your presence’ or ‘in your name’. Apart from the concentration of Christological meaning in the two letters Ishoʿyahb III wrote as metropolitan, clear developments cannot be traced.

4.3.3. Christology in letters of Ishoʿyahb III

The main Christological exposés are to be found in the letters M-6 and M-7, which Ishoʿyahb III wrote as Metropolitan, and in his last letter as Catholicos (C-22). Some aspects of his doctrine are also discussed in letters M-9, 28 and 30 as well as in C-3.[81]

As we have seen already, Ishoʿyahb III defended the doctrine of two *kyane* - two *qnome* - one *parsopa*, especially against those who acknowledged only one *qnoma*. This becomes very clear in his letter to Sahdona (M-7). Ishoʿyahb III started with a general exposé on the relation between name and meaning, which he considered fundamental to any Christological discourse.

> Understand therefore also, if you can, O our brother, what *kyana*, *qnoma* and *parsopa* mean, the terms which are used in the discourse of the believers in Christ, and (understand) that these terms do not easily yield (ܡܬܛܦܝܣܝܢ) to being diverted from their accurate meanings and to be exchanged with each other so that they might take each other’s place or that they converge into one (meaning), as you think and even wrote, and as others dare to proclaim. In the same way, someone is certainly considered stupid and ignorant by the distinguished, who calls a bull [with the term for] a donkey, or a man [with the term for] a horse, because the terms for everything will not obey whatever whims he has.
>
> Thus the terms do not agree to adapt to you as you wish either, if you called a *parsopa* [with the term for] a *qnoma*, or a *qnoma* [with the term for] a *parsopa* or *kyana*, or a face [with the term for] an image, or one of these [with the term for] a *qnoma*. Each term has indeed a unique meaning of its own, even if they are close akin and are said concerning the one and same thing. For even though terms for the mental faculties, which are reason, understanding, thought, intelligence and discernment, belong to one species and agree more than those with each other, nevertheless each has a distinct meaning according to its appellation. If someone changes them according to what he feels like, they do not obey him.[82]

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[81] Dietmar Winkler already gave a German translation of most of these fragments and analysed their Christology. Because these texts are so fundamental to the present study in which a consistent use of terminology is aimed for, they will be given here in my English translation of the Syriac text. Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 112-18.

[82] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-7, p. 134.
ܐܬܒܝܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܦ ܐܢ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܐܘ ܐܚܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܟܝܢܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܦܪܨܘܦܐ. ܫܡܗܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܡܬܬܚܫܚܢܐ ܡܠܬܐ
ܕܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܕܠܐ ܗܘܝܐ ܕܠܠܐܢܬ ܡܬܛܦܝܣܝܢ ܫܡܗܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܠܡܦܩ ܡܢ ܫܘܡܠܝܗܘܢ ܚܬܝܬܐ. ܘܠܡܬܚܠܦܘ ܠܚܕܕܐ: ܕܢܬܬܚܠܦܘܢ
ܚܠܦ ܚܕܕܐ: ܐܘ ܕܢܬܟܢܫܘܢ ܠܚܕ. ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܬ ܣܒܪ ܐܢܬ ܘܐܦ ܟܬܒܬ. ܘܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܡܡܪܚܝܢ ܠܡܟܪܙܘ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫ
ܠܬܘܪܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܚܡܪܐ ܢܩܪܐ. ܐܘ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܣܘܣܝܐ: ܣܟܠܐ ܘܚܣܝܪ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܬܚܫܒ ܠܦܪܝܫܐ: ܒܕܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣܝܢ ܫܡܗܐ ܕܟܠ
ܡܕܡ ܠܡܫܬܡܥܘ ܠܨܒܝܢܐ ܟܠ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܐܢܬ ܠܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܢ ܬܩܪܐ: ܐܘ ܠܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܐܘ
ܕܟܝܢܐ: ܐܘ ܠܐܦܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܨܠܡܐ. ܐܘ ܠܚܕ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ. ܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣܝܢ ܫܡܗܐ ܠܡܫܬܐܠܘ ܒܨܒܝܢܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܨܒܐ ܐܢܬ. ܟܠ
ܫܡܗܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܐܝܬ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܩܪܝܒܘܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܥܠ ܚܕ ܫܪܪܐ. ܘܥܠ ܚܕ ܚܠܝܗ، ܒܪ ܚܠܝܗ، ܘܕܒܪܝܫ
ܡܬܐܡܪܝܢ. ܐܦ ܓܝܪ ܫܡܗܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܢܦܫܢܝܐ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܘܡܕܥܐ ܘܡܚܫܒܬܐ ܘܣܘܟܠܐ ܘܦܘܪܫܢܐ: ܕܒܝ ܚܕ ܓܢܣܐ
ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܘܡܫܬܘܝܢ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܠܚܕܕܐ: ܒܪܡ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܠܗܘܬ ܦܘܪܫܢܗ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܦܪܝܫܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܘܐܢ ܐܢܫ ܢܫܚܠܦ ܐܢܘܢ
ܐܝܟ ܕܪܓܐ: ܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣܝܢ ܠܗ.

Ishoʿyahb III further wondered how Sahdona dared to call a *parsopa* a *qnoma* and vice versa, 'without already introducing corruption in logic and every discourse about the union of our Lord', when reasonable people would not even consider changing the term for these closely related faculties. Ishoʿyahb III went on to make some comments on the specific meaning of the terms *parsopa* and *qnoma*, without elaborating these. Meanwhile, he referred to some apparently familiar notions of Aristotle's *Categories* as we also have seen in the work of Babai.[83] To Ishoʿyahb III, *parsopa* and *qnoma* were incomparable and not to be exchanged. If someone nevertheless would like to associate two concepts, he should not equate *qnoma* with *parsopa* as Sahdona had done, but rather with *kyana*. As we have seen in the first chapter, such a semantic confusion might also have stirred the ongoing conflicts in the School of Nisibis and the Church of the East as a whole, which had become virulent under Henana.

> *Parsopa* on the one hand, O our brother, is what differentiates (ܡܦܪܫܢܗ) *qnoma*. And it (i.e. the *parsopa*) has above it a definition of multiple distinctions (ܦܘܪ̈ܫܢܐ)[84] and it has a powerful potential for giving and being assumed, for the definition is manifold, as I said. But *qnoma*, on the other hand, has only the definition of (the general) *kyana* in individuality (ܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ) and it remains alone because of the simple appellation of its essence, while it demonstratively contains the whole definition of *kyana* and does not accept (ܡܩܒܠ) being received or assumed.
>
> So how are you compelled to bring such different things in name and meaning to an identical meaning with a simple argument? If *parsopa* and *qnoma* hold the same definition, as you think, even more can *qnoma* and *kyana* hold the same definition. And the stupidity of equalizing terms casts you already straight into the impious pit of pure heretics.[85]

In contrast to *qnoma*, which is stable and has only one nature and one simple appellation for its essence, a *parsopa* can have many definitions and can assume, or be assumed by, another *parsopa*. As we have seen, Babai had made a similar comparison in Chapter 17 of the LU, titled:

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[83] As it is not clear to what extent Ishoʿyahb III applied these notions and what texts he might have used, the translation of several expressions remains tentative. See also section 4.5.

[84] ܦܘܪ̈ܫܢܐ (differences, distinctions) probably renders here the Greek διαφορά as used in Aristotle's work. This is often translated as 'differentia'. See also Georg Hoffmann, *De Hermeneuticis apud Syros Aristoteleis* (Leipzig, 1873), p. 202; King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation of Aristotle's Categories*, pp. 98-99 and 106-107.

[85] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-7, p. 135.
ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܡܢ ܓܝܪ ܐܘ ܐܚܘܢ. ܡܦܪܫܢܗ ܗܘ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ. ܘܡܠܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬ ܦܘܪ̈ܫܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܥܠܗ، ܘܚܝܠܐ ܡܥܠܝܐ ܕܡܬܝܗܒܢܘܬܐ ܘܕܡܬܢܣܒܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܘܣܓܝܐܐ ܗܝ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ، ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ. ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܠܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܟܝܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ. ܘܒܦܫܝܛܘܬ ܫܘܡܗܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܬܗ ܡܫܬܪܪ ܠܚܘܕܝܗ. ܟܕ ܐܚܝܕ ܒܗ ܟܠܗ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܟܝܢܘܬܐ ܡܚܘܝܢܐܝܬ. ܘܠܐ ܕܢܬܝܗܒ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܬܢܣܒ ܡܩܒܠ.
ܘܐܝܟܢ ܡܛܐ ܠܦܪ̈ܝܫܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܘܒܣܘܟܠܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܕܐ. ܐܢܬ ܓܝܪ ܫܘܬܦܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܫܪܫܐ ܠܡܫܘܬܦܘ ܒܦܫܝܛܘܬܐ ܗܘܢܝܐ. ܐܢ ܓܝܪ ܠܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܘܠܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܝܢܘܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܬ ܣܒܪ ܐܢܬ: ܐܦ ܠܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܠܟܝܢܐ: ܝܬܝܪ ܡܟܝܠ ܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܚܕܘܬܐ ܠܡܣܒܪ. ܘܫܛܝܘܬܐ ܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܗ ܫܘܝܘܬܐ ܕܫܡܗܐ ܡܫܕܝܐ: ܠܟ ܒܝܬ ܠܓܘܡܨܐ ܕܪܘܫܥܐ ܕܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܫܠܝܡܐ.

'What is the difference between *qnoma* and *parsopa,* and how is the *parsopa* assumed and the *qnoma* not?'[86] Ishoʿyahb III explicitly explained to Sahdona that a *qnoma* can neither assume nor be assumed, as Sahdona had actually written.[87] Ishoʿyahb III followed Babai here closely. Both Babai and Ishoʿyahb III further held that the *parsopa* distinguished the various individual *qnome* from each other. We saw this already occur in the work of Nestorius, where a complex of properties (the *parsopa**) characterized and determined an individual nature (*qnoma**).[88]

Having explained that Sahdona should not confuse the names and meanings of *parsopa* and *qnoma*, Ishoʿyahb III discussed the argument that these terms had different meanings in Greek. He offered definitions of the 'masters of language' that supported his position. Ishoʿyahb III stated that the Greek word *hypostasis* (ܗܘܦܘܣܛܐܣܝܣ) rendered *qnoma*, which would mean 'stability, subsistence and substance'.[89] *Prosopon* (ܦܪܨܘܦܘܢ) would indicate the dominating appearance. As we have seen in Chapter 1, this was in line with Theodore's use of *prosopon,* which also referred to the outward manifestation. Finally, Ishoʿyahb III ridiculed some new concepts to describe the union.

> And you must not be deluded by the other error either, O our brother, that some assert, that for the Greeks *parsopa* and *qnoma* are the same. Learn therefore from the native speakers that they call *qnoma 'hypostasis'*, i.e. *qnoma* stability, subsistence and substance. And they call *parsopa* '*prosopon'*, i.e. *parsopa* and face, distinction, perception, and the essential and dominant appearance (ܥܘܡܕܪܐ). So these are the terms among the Greeks and this is their meaning. Those who believed, did so in vain, and they erred and those who have made you err, (in claiming) that among the Greeks the term for *qnoma* and *parsopa* would be the same. You were so certain of such an error that you wrote nonsense in the name of faith, besides other things you added in even more ignorance, namely 'individual subsistence' (ܡܩܝܡܘܬܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ) and 'single *qnoma*' (ܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܚܘܕܝܐ) and the rest of other nonsense.[90]

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[86] Vaschalde (ed.), *Liber de Unione*, 4/17, p. 159 and *TV*, p. 301. See above, section 2.2.6.
[87] De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, p. 16. See also above on Sahdona's Christology, section 4.2.2.
[88] Grillmeier, *JdChr* 1, pp. 712-17. See also above, section 1.5.3.
[89] These descriptions for *qnoma* (ܩܝܡܐ - ܡܩܝܡܘܬܐ - ܩܘܝܡܐ) spring from the same root ܩܘܡ, which has a wide range of meanings. The first are: 'to rise, stand and to be established or fixed'. Further can be mentioned: 'to persevere, to come into a state, to exist, come into being, to stand firm'. Ishoʿyahb III's descriptions are rendered here 'stability, subsistence and substance', although it should be noticed that these meanings often overlap and are translated in various ways. Duval, for instance, translates both ܡܩܝܡܘܬܐ and ܩܝܡܐ with the same word: 'subsistentia'. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, pp. 136 and 224; Sokoloff, *A Syriac Lexicon*, pp. 1330-31.
[90] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-7, pp. 135-36.
ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܘܬ ܛܥܝܘ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܬܬܛܥܐ ܠܟ ܐܘ ܐܚܘܢ. ܗܝ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ: ܕܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܚܕ ܗܘ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ. ܝܠܦ ܗܟܝܠ ܡܢ ܡܪܘܗܝ ܕܠܫܢܐ: ܕܠܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܘܦܘܣܛܐܣܝܣ ܩܪܝܢ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܩܝܡܐ ܘܡܩܝܡܘܬܐ ܘܩܘܝܡܐ. ܘܠܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܘܢ ܩܪܝܢ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܘܐܦܐ [136] ܘܦܘܪܫܢܘܬܐ ܘܗܙܪ ܚܙܝܢܘܬܐ ܘܥܘܡܕܪܐ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܘܡܫܠܛܢܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܫܡܗܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܗܢܘ ܣܘܟܠܗܘܢ. ܘܣܪܝܩܐܝܬ ܐܣܒܪܘ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܣܒܪܘ. ܘܛܥܘ ܗܢܘܢ ܘܐܛܥܝܘܟ ܐܦ ܠܟ. ܕܐܝܟ ܕܠܡ ܕܗܘܝܘ ܚܕ ܗܘ: ܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܫܡܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܘܦܪܨܘܦܐ. ܐܬܬܟܠܬ ܡܢ ܛܥܝܘ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܕܐ. ܠܡܟܬܒ ܒܕܝܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܘܣܦܬ ܒܣܟܠܘܬ ܕܚܣܝܐ ܝܬܝܪܐ ܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܐܘܣܦܬ ܡܩܝܡܘܬܐ ܠܟ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ. ܘܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܟ ܠܚܘܕܝܐ. ܘܫܪܟܐ ܕܒܕܝܐ ܐܚܪܢܝܐ:

This letter to Sahdona confirms that Ishoʿyahb III accused Sahdona mainly of changing the meaning of some Christological key concepts. He therefore tried to convince him by logical and etymological considerations that this could not be done. He does not seem to have discussed Sahdona's requirement that the *parsopa* should be real and not fictive and his corresponding implicit criticism of the metaphors Babai used to explain the one *parsopa* in two *qnome*.[91] When Ishoʿyahb III insisted in C-22 on a 'real *qnoma*', however, this may have been in reaction to views as expressed by Sahdona.[92]

M-6 is a letter to warn the clergy of Mahuze d-Ariwan against Sahdona, who had been sent to this city. Although the city did not actually belong to Adiabene, of which Ishoʿyahb III was metropolitan, but to the more southern and adjacent Bet Garmai, he tried to influence them. He started to praise the clergy of Mahuze d-Ariwan for their orthodoxy and efforts to guard it. 'You cleansed the monastery where you dwell and your believing Church from every kind of evil and the manifold error of those who corrupt the confession of our belief with (the doctrine of) the single (ܚܕܢܝܘܬ) *qnoma* or single *kyana* (nature) by the perversity of their blasphemies.'[93] Ishoʿyahb III then gave a definition of the union (ܚܕܝܘܬܗ) of Christ, which also has been called a brief creed:[94]

> And look, you are this day by the grace of God one body of orthodox men that shines gloriously with rays of the life-bringing light of the one adorable and glorious *parsopa* of our Lord Jesus Christ who is God over all (cf. Rom. 9:5). He (Christ) has the same 'appellation' (ܫܘܝܘܬ ܡܬܩܪܝܢܘܬܐ) as the Father in a perfect *qnoma* and also the same 'appellation' as us in the very same perfect definition of the *qnoma*. He manifests the single (ܚܕܢܝܘܬ) manifestation of the Lordship perfectly in the glorious *parsopa* of two forms: while the human body shines with rays of divinity, he appears a man to the eyes, but the almighty God to the mind (ܪܥܝܢܐ). And in

[91] De Halleux (ed.), *Martyrius*, pp. 18-19.
[92] C-22 will be discussed below.
[93] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, p. 124.
ܘܕܟܝܬܘܢ ܠܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܐܬܬܥܡܪܬܘܢ ܘܠܥܕܬܟܘܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܬܐ: ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܓܢܣ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܘܛܥܝܘܬܐ ܐܣܓܝܐܬܐ. ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܒܚܕܢܝܘܬ ܩܢܘܡܐ.
ܐܘܟܝܬ ܒܚܕܢܝܘܬ ܟܝܢܐ. ܠܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܢ ܒܥܘܩܡܘܬܐ ܕܓܘܕܦܝܗܘܢ ܡܚܒܠܝܢ.
[94] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 115. In this letter, Ishoʿyahb III used both the word ܚܕܝܘܬܐ (*hdayuta*) and ܚܕܢܝܘܬܐ (*hdanayuta*). In all his letters, *hdayuta* appears three times together with either 'of love' (p. 9) or 'of our Lord' (pp. 125 and 135). As we have seen above, before him, *hdayuta* was often used in connection to *parsopa*, and 'the *parsopa* of the union'. For instance, the Synod of 596 spoke of the 'union of the Son of God' (ܥܠ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ), and Babai's influential *Liber de Unione* ('Book of the Union') was devoted to 'the divinity and humanity and the *parsopa* of the union'. *Hdanayuta* appears thirteen times in Ishoʿyahb III's letters and can be used in connection with the rejected doctrine of one *qnoma* or one nature (pp. 124, 128, 142, 170, 212), and also acceptably with the phrases 'of the power of his creation' (p. 43), 'of the manifestation of the Lordship'; 'of the Divine Image' (p. 125) and 'of the one glorious *parsopa* of the one Sonship' (p. 142). It further appears twice in a non-theological context: 'of a peaceful living place' (p. 195), and 'of power and memory' (p. 247). Although there is no harsh difference, *hdayuta* will be rendered here 'union', and *hdanayuta* 'unity' or 'oneness' (in status constructus 'single').

> the single divine image (ܨܠܡܐ ܚܕ) everyone shall recognize God, […]. This then, in an abridged definition, is the name, power (ܚܝܠܐ) and mark (ܢܝܫܐ) of the union (ܚܕܝܘܬܗ) of our Lord.[95]

Where we have seen in C-4 that participation in Christ was effected by the *qnoma*, here we find an example of the idea that the participation of believers is in one body of orthodox men (i.e. the church) which shines in the light of the one *parsopa* of Christ.[96]

Ishoʿyahb III called (the *parsopa* of) Christ explicitly 'God above all' (ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ, Rom. 9:5). The human body of Christ shines with rays of divinity and is therefore perceived in two ways and understood accordingly. Visually he is man, but to the mind he is the almighty God. The dual perception of the two forms of the *parsopa* stood in good Antiochene tradition, which always emphasized the inseparable union of the form (ܕܡܘܬܐ) of a servant and the form of God which puts it on in one adored *parsopa*. Ishoʿyahb II, however, who was Catholicos by the time M-6 was written, had used the term *qnoma* to describe the unity of the Church (the body of Christ) and even had spoken in this respect of a 'composite *qnoma*'.[97] It is not known to what extent his work played a role in the Christological discussions of Ishoʿyahb III's time.

Ishoʿyahb III then went on to warn against the teaching of one *qnoma* because this would lead to many heresies. He further did not want to make any attempt to synchronize the terminology of the Church of the East for *qnoma*, *parsopa* and *kyana* with that of many others, or to make any attempt to understand the terminology from their perspective, as he held that the Church held the right meanings and the others were wrong. In this he was in line with Babai. After declaring that all heresies stem from the 'evil introduction' of the single *qnoma* in Christ, because everyone should have known that this implied one *kyana*, he further criticized Sahdona:

> That we, however, should understand this *qnoma* in terms of *parsopa*, or *parsopa* in terms of *qnoma*, as that stupid writer was himself anxious to demonstrate, the necessity of the ancient meanings of the terms forbids—

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[95] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, pp. 124-25.
ܘܗܐ ܐܬܝܗܒܘܢ ܗܡܢܝܐ ܟܠܒܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܚܕ ܠܓܘܫܡܐ ܕܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܐ. ܕܒܗ ܚܕ ܡܫܝܚܐܝܬ [125] 1 ܒܠܒܘܫܐ ܕܢܘܗܪܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܕܚܕ
ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܣܓܝܕܐ ܘܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܢ ܡܫܒܚܡܫܝܚܐ. ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ. ܗܘ ܕܠܚܘܫܘܬ ܡܬܐܡܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܗ ܐܒܘܗܝ.، ܒܡܘܗܒܬܐ
ܡܫܡܠܝܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܘܠܚܘܫܘܬ ܡܬܐܡܪܢܘܬܐ ܛܘܒ ܕܒܥܢ. ܒܗ ܒܗ ܒܗ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܠܚܕܝܘܬ ܡܬܝܘܡܝܘܬܐ ܕܡ
ܕܡܘܬܐ. ܒܦܘܪܫ ܘܦܩܐ ܫܡܝܫܐ ܛܘܝܒ ܕܡܬܚܙܝܐ ܥܠܡܐܝܬ ܡܢܗܐ. ܕܒܗ ܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܒܙܠܝܩܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܠܥܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܚܙܝܐ
ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܠܗܘܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ. ܘܒܚܕܝܘܬܗ ܒܚܕ ܨܠܡܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܟܠ ܢܫܬܘܕܥ ܠܐܠܗܐ. [...]ܗܢܘ ܗܟܝܠ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܦܣܝܩܘܬܐ. ܫܡܐ
ܘܚܝܠܐ ܘܢܝܫܐ ܕܚܕܝܘܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ.

[96] Ishoʿyahb III thus seems to be in line with the mysticism and Christology of Babai. See for further discussion below, section 4.4.3.

[97] See above, section 2.6.5.2.

> as not only you know, but every man is familiar with—although that man void of understanding is deprived of such insights.[98]

Ishoʿyahb III rejected not only the changed terminology of Sahdona, but also some new descriptions for the union in Christ ascribed to him, namely ‘unique subsistence’ (ܡܩܝܡܘܬܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܬܐ) and ‘singular *qnoma*’ (ܩܢܘܡܐ ܠܚܘܕܝܐ), because these never could arise from Godhead and manhood. De Halleux holds that Ishoʿyahb III might rightly have accused Sahdona of confusing terminology, but that Sahdona did not think in the same framework as Ishoʿyahb III did, and therefore would not necessarily have come to the conclusions to which Ishoʿyahb III supposed he had arrived.[99]

As stated in M-6, Ishoʿyahb III’s earlier letter (M-7) had been used as evidence against Ishoʿyahb III himself, but the exact accusations are not given. In M-9, he wrote to members of the clergy in Nisibis who acknowledged the two *qnome* about the Chalcedonian error that had been proclaimed during a synod in Nisibis. Their leaders had not only expressed the unity of *qnoma*, but also condemned him. This shows that his position was certainly not uncontested and that the clergy in Nisibis was divided.[100]

We have seen in M-30 that according to Ishoʿyahb III, the main part of the former Roman Empire would have turned to orthodoxy again by confessing two *qnome*, energies and properties of Christ ‘in one agreement’ (ܒܚܕܐ ܫܠܡܘܬܐ). This is moreover the only letter in which he mentioned the number of ‘properties’ and ‘energies’ in Christ.

Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III wrote two letters (C-3 and C-22) in which he more or less systematically described the various Christological errors which undermined soteriology. C-3 was written to the nobles of Nisibis, whom Ishoʿyahb III tried to mobilize against the impious, especially Miaphysites. He stated that the souls of right believers were corrupted concerning the mysteries of salvation. The impious taught the denial of universal salvation because:

1. They deprive the *kyana* of the Creator of the glory of impassibility because of the association with corporeal passions, due to the inhabitation in the body.
2. Through the annihilation of the *qnoma* the impious remove (ܡܥܒܪܝܢ) the *kyana* that was gloriously created (ܐܬܒܪܝ) in a new divine image (ܒܨܠܡܐ), which remains forever in the honour and glory of the Sonship, from the seat on the right side and from the worship and glorification by all.

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[98] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, pp. 128-29, quotation esp. p. 129.
ܘܕܠܢܘܡܘܣܐ ܗܢܐ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܝ ܘܦܐ ܢܫܬܠܛ. ܐܘܟܝܬ ܠܦܪ̈ܝ ܘܦܐ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗܼܘ ܗܘ ܡܟܬܒܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܢܘܬܐ ܙܒܢܝܐ ܢܦܩܬ
ܠܟܠܢܫ: ܐܝܢܐ ܕܣܟ̈ܠܐ ܒܠܒܘܫܐ ܕܡܣܟܢ ܒܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܒܠܒܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܐܦ ܒܠ ܒܪܢܫ ܡܟܣ. ܐܦ ܠܒܪܐ ܗܘ
ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܣܟ̈ܠܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ.

[99] De Halleux, ‘La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona’, pp. 10-11.
[100] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-9, p. 142. See also above, section 3.7.

3. And according to them we have therefore neither divinity revealed in humanity, nor humanity sanctified in divinity, nor participation in the hope of resurrection because of the participation in the prime resurrection.
4. And to say it briefly, because of the letter: neither the divinity that is God in the divine *qnoma*, nor the humanity that is man in the human *qnoma*;
5. but instead of all true hope of Christianity, they preach the wandering of unstable names. For every name is unstable that is not attributed to a true *qnoma* (ܕܥܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܬܣܝܡ) with the unchangeable property of the distinct peculiarity of his *qnoma*.[101]
6. It is therefore clear to all who have a reasonable soul that he who adds the impiety of corporeal passions to him whom he calls God in nature does not believe in the definition concerning divinity;
7. and that he who denies the first resurrection by the annihilation of *qnoma* does not believe in a life of resurrection.[102]

The familiar accusation against Miaphysites reappeared: Theopaschism. The letter concentrated mainly on the rejection of a human *qnoma* in Christ, which would impair salvation. Like Babai and Ishoʿyahb II, Ishoʿyahb III brought the human *qnoma* of Christ in connection with the seat on the right side of God. Where Ishoʿyahb II spoke directly of Christ's human *qnoma* in his explanation of Heb. 5:8-9, Ishoʿyahb III only implied this when he stated that the human *kyana*, which was created in a new everlasting divine image (ܨܠܡܐ), would be deprived from this seat and worship, if the human *qnoma* was not acknowledged.

It is moreover remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III recognized the two natures in Christ but seems to have been inclined to conceal the divine nature of Christ. He spoke here only of the divine nature which inhabited the 'created' (ܐܬܒܪܝ) human nature that became eternally one with the Sonship, but he did not mention the normative Nicene phrase that the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of

[101] It is not clear what Ishoʿyahb III actually meant or which text he referred to. Does this 'placed on' ([...] ܥܠ ܡܬܬܣܝܡ) mean 'attribute to'? The fact that Ishoʿyahb II also could use this expression in the sense of 'to attribute to' supports this suggestion. Sako, *Lettre christologique,* for instance Nos. 126, 136, 182, 193 and 224; pp. 179, 180, 186, and 187. Ishoʿyahb III also may have used this expression for other meanings. In C-21, for instance, he used ܡܬܬܣܝܡܐ in the sense of 'proposition'. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-21, p. 277. In C-22, discussed below, 'placed on' ('attribute to') is used with respect to a fantasy which is attributed to a *qnoma*.

[102] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-3, pp. 223-24 (numbering added).

1. ܗܘܢܝܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܗܘܢܝܐ ܕ ܟܘܢܐ: ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܬܫܒܚܬܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܕܡ. ܘܠܒܢܝܐ ܒܪܝܐ: ܒܡܫܬܘܬܦܘܬ ܚܝܐ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ ܬܟܝܡܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܫܬܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܚܫܝܫܘܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܒܡܘܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܒܦܓܪܐ.
2. ܘܠܒܢܝܐ ܕܐܬܒܪܝ، ܒܫܘܬܦܘܬ ܒܢܝܘܬܐ ܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܢܬܩܪܐ [224] ܠܠܒܝܫ: ܒܐܝܩܪܐ ܘܒܣܓܕܬܐ ܕܒܪܘܬܐ: ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܫܒܚܝܢ ܢܫܝܐ: ܡܢ ܡܘܠܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܒܬܘܠܬܐ: ܘܡܢ ܩܝܡܬܐ ܘܐܣܩܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܟܠ. ܘܠܐ ܡܚܝܠ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ ܐܡܪ ܕܡܢ ܝ ܐܘܣܝܐ.
3. ܘܠܐ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܓܠܝܐ ܒܐܢܫܘܬܐ: ܘܠܐ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܕܡܬܩܕܫܐ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܫܘܬܦܘܬ ܣܒܪܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ: ܡܛܠ ܫܘܬܦܘܬ ܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ.
4. ܘܐܝܟ ܕܗܟܢ ܐܦ ܒܦܣܝܩܬܐ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܡܛܠ ܐܓܪܬܐ: ܘܠܐ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܕܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܐܠܗܐ. ܘܠܐ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܕܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܒܪܢܫܐ.
5. ܐܠܐ ܚܠܦ ܟܠܗ ܣܒܪܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ: ܦܘܕܐ ܕܫܡܗܐ ܕܠܐ ܩܘܝܐ ܡܟܪܙܝܢ. ܕܠܐ ܩܘܝܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܟܠ ܫܡܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܬܣܝܡ. ܒܕܠܝܠܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܝܬܐ: ܕܦܪܝܫܘܬ ܡܫܬܡܗܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ.
6. ܓܠܝܐ ܗܝ ܗܟܝܠ ܠܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܠܝܠܬܐ. ܕܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢ ܗܘ ܒܬܚܘܡܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܗܘ ܕܪܘܫܥܐ ܕܚܫܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܐ ܡܘܣܦ. ܠܗܘ ܕܩܪܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܬܘܡܐ ܒܟܝܢܐ.
7. ܘܕܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢ ܗܘ ܒܚܝܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ: ܗܘ ܕܠܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ: ܒܠܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܟܦܪ.

God, was born from God and was not made (ܐܬܥܒܕ). Because the Qurʾan strongly rejected the notion of Christ being born from God, Ishoʿyahb III may have tried to circumvent this. However, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the Creed Ishoʿyahb II presented to Heraclius did not contain this element either, although Sahdona elaborated such terminology.

As he already had done in M-7, Ishoʿyahb III insisted in C-3 on a close and fixed connection between name and meaning. He further demanded that each name should be attributed to a true *qnoma*. This expression 'true *qnoma*' was also used by Ishoʿyahb II and reminds one of Ephrem who held that the name derives from the *qnoma*, which would denote that something really exists. This insistence on a 'true *qnoma*' might be a reaction to views as expressed by Sahdona, who rather demanded a 'true' *parsopa*. Both alternatives tried to defend in their own way that Christ was 'real'.

In his last letter (C-22), which probably was written during or after Ishoʿyahb III's exile in Edessa towards the end of his life (he died 658 or 659), is a similar description of Christological heresies that would undermine soteriology.[103] The introduction indicates that it was written to people in Edessa who had treated him well and praised the name of 'our Lord Jesus Christ', although he politely indicated that their demonstration of faith was deviant and formed an obstacle for Christians. He wrote that 'the correct praise of the faith of your hearts' (ܬܪܝܨܘܬ ܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܒܘܬܟܘܢ) was somewhat lessened 'by the confession with the mouth'. Since Ishoʿyahb III alluded here to Rom. 10:9, according to which the 'confession with the mouth' would result in salvation and since the emphasis of the letter is on salvation requiring the acknowledgment of two *qnome*, he may have referred to defenders of the one-*qnoma* doctrine, probably within the Church of the East.[104]

Ishoʿyahb III started with a general definition of Christ: 'the power of God and the wisdom of God' (I Cor. 1:24).[105] For sinners, however, Christ was 'a stumbling block'. Ishoʿyahb III then distinguished three main streams, which he did not name. The first taught that Christ is

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[103] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-22, pp. 283-84. This letter is considered here to have been written by Ishoʿyahb III and not by Sahdona as Fiey suggests. Fiey, *Nisibe*, p. 66. See also Ovidiu Ioan, 'Die Rolle Edessas in der christologischen Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem Katholikos-Patriarchen Īšōʿyahḇ III. und Sāhdōnā', in Greisiger et al, *Edessa in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*, pp. 106-110. When mentioning Edessa as his place of exile, Ishoʿyahb III also spoke of the famous Oasis (ܐܘܐܣܝܐ), transformed into the beloved Edessa (ܐܘܪܗܝܐ). This word play probably alluded to Nestorius' exile in the Egyptian Oasis (Barhadbeshabba's Church History also calls this ܐܘܐܣܝܐ). Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 24; Nau, 'Histoire de Barḥadbešabba 2', p. 586.

[104] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 285. Rom. 10:9-10 (Peshitta): ܘܐܢ ܬܘܕܐ ܒܦܘܡܟ ܒܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ: ܘܬܗܝܡܢ ܒܠܒܟ. ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܩܝܡܗ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܡܝܬܐ: ܬܚܐ. 10 ܠܒܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܡܗܝܡܢ. ܒܗ ܡܙܕܕܩ. ܘܦܘܡܐ ܕܡܘܕܐ. ܒܗ ܚܝܐ.
Cf. NRSV, 10:9: 'because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.'10 'For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved.'

[105] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 285.
ܘܠܢ ܕܝܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܦܪܩܝܢ ܥܫܝܢ. ܡܫܝܚܐ ܚܝܠܗ ܗܘ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ.

only human;[106] the second that Christ is only God and the third taught that Christ is both God and human, but not truly. This third group was then discussed in more detail, while the denial of a human *qnoma* in Christ formed the main subject of his treatise.

Ishoʿyahb III accused the third group of separating Christ's divinity pertaining to nature from the nature of the Father; attributing death to God (and also to the Holy Spirit); denying that Christ has the same nature as we have, and that he suffered and died. Ishoʿyahb III divided the groups that taught that Christ does not have our nature completely into two subgroups. The first subgroup eliminated Christ's soul, mind,[107] nature or *qnoma*. The other group said that the human nature was absorbed in divinity,[108] and perhaps did not exist. Ishoʿyahb III stated that a rejection of the two *qnome* would lead to a rejection of the Gospel as it would imply that salvation, including the resurrection and immortality, was impossible.[109]

For Ishoʿyahb III, the truth in the Gospel is that Christ not only is really God with a divine *kyana* and a *qnoma* like the *qnoma* of the Father and the Holy Spirit, but also really human with a human *kyana* and *qnoma*.[110]

> For the errors of various heresies are divided in three sections, and from three sections all the many and various sorts of heresies originate. These are the main errors: (1) some say that Christ is (ܐܝܬܘܗܝ) not God, but only a human; (2) others say that Christ is not a human, but only God; (3) and others again say that he is 'both God and human, but neither really God nor really human.'[111]
>
> 1. For either they alienate his divinity from the *kyana* of the Father;[112]
> 2. or, when they say that he is of the same *kyana* as the Father (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܒܐ),[113] they alienate him furthermore from the Father because they blasphemously attribute suffering and death to him, so that they accidentally also blasphemously attribute death to God. According to them one must necessarily con-

[106] As defended by Paul of Samosata, but by now also proclaimed within Islam.
[107] As defended by Apollinarius.
[108] As defended by Eutyches.
[109] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 287.
[110] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, pp. 285-88 (numbering added).
[111] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, pp. 285-86. [...] ܘܗܠܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܪܫܐ ܕܛܘܥܝܬܐ. ܡܢܗܘܢ ܓܝܪ ܐܡܪܝܢ: ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ. [286] ܐܠܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܡܪܝܢ: ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܬܘܒ ܐܡܪܝܢ: ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܠܡ ܐܦ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܦ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܠܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܫܪܝܪܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܫܪܝܪܐ.
[112] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 286. ܐܘ ܓܝܪ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܡܢܟܪܝܢ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܗ ܕܐܒܐ.
[113] The old expression *bar kyana* (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ, which literally meant 'son of the *kyana*') had a specific meaning which often was used to render *homoousios*. It also could be translated as 'same nature' or 'consubstantial'. We have seen in Chapter 1 that it appeared in the Syriac versions of the commentaries on the Nicene Creed by Theodore and Nestorius, while the phrase 'son of nature of his Father' (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܒܘܗܝ) was also used in the West Syrian version of this creed.

clude that if the one with the same *kyana* as the Father (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܒܐ) died, neither the Father is free from death, nor the Holy Spirit.[114] […]

3. Likewise they say about the humanity of our Lord,
   a) either that he who released death by his death is 'not from our *kyana* and endured therefore neither suffering nor death', and thus in their stupidity they cut off from salvation the hope of our *kyana*;
   b) or (they say), that 'even if he is from our *kyana*, he is not completely like us in all these (aspects) of *kyana*'. So these they (are):
      - some of them blaspheme that the body of our Lord is without soul;
      - and others, without mind;
      - and others, without *kyana*;
      - and others, without *qnoma*;
      - and others, while they confess that he had received all these, say nevertheless that he was not recognized by these, and was 'absorbed in the divinity' and perhaps did not even exist.

With all this they cut off the hope of our nature from the salvation God made for us, […].[115]

Ishoʿyahb III devoted most of the last part of this (unfinished) letter to the consequences of the rejection of the two *qnome* doctrine: Theopaschism and loss of salvation.

And those who confess the divinity of Christ without a real (ܫܪܝܪܐ) *qnoma*, and confess the humanity of Christ without a perfect *qnoma*, even reject the whole Gospel of Christ.[116]

a) They attribute (ܡܫܪܟܝܢ [...] ܥܠ) the fantasy of ungodliness to the godly *qnoma* of Christ, through the suffering and death they blasphemously attribute to him.
b) And they attribute the fantasy of non-humanity to the human *qnoma* of Christ, through disbelief in his human *qnoma*.[117]

This way they even attribute both the capability of suffering and the mortality, which he endured in his human *qnoma* for our salvation, not to the *qnoma* of his humanity but to the *qnoma* of his divinity. For through disbelief they remove the sufferings in the human *kyana* from his *kyana*, and attribute them through a wicked belief to a *kyana* that is not his.[118]

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[114] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 286. ܐܘ ܟܕ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܒܐ܆ ܡܬܚܝܒܝܢ ܠܗ ܬܘܒ ܡܢ ܐܒܐ: ܟܕ ܚܫܐ ܘܡܘܬܐ ܕܡܬܚܫܒܝܢ ܥܠܘܗܝ. ܕܐܢ ܗܘܐ ܐܦ ܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܚܫܝ ܐܢܬ ܡܬܚܫܒ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܠܐ ܒܪ ܡܬܚܫܢܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ. ܕܐܢ ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܐܒܐ ܡܝܬ: ܐܦܠܐ ܐܒܐ ܚܐܪ ܡܢ ܡܘܬܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ.
[115] It is remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III did not include 'will' in this list.
[116] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 287. ܘܐܦ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܡܘܕܝܢ: ܘܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܫܠܡܐ ܡܘܕܝܢ: ܠܟܠܗ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܣܠܝܢ.
[117] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 287
20 ܘܦܢܛܣܝܣ ܬܘܒ ܕܠܐ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܡܫܪܟܝܢ ܥܠ ܩܢܘܡܗ 21 ܐܢܫܝܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ: ܒܝܕ ܠܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܐܢܫܝܐ.
Already Ephrem had argued that a *qnoma* denotes a true existence and that something without a *qnoma* is therefore not true. A similar line of thought was followed by Nestorius, see section 1.2.2 and 1.5.3.
[118] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 287.
ܘܗܟܢܐ ܬܘܒ ܐܦ ܠܚܫܝܫܘܬܐ ܘܠܡܝܘܬܘܬܐ܆ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܩܒܠ ܐܝܟ ܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܩܢܐ ܕܝܠܢ: ܗܢܘܢ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܥܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܗ: ܐܠܐ ܥܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܡܫܪܟܝܢ ܠܗܝܢ. ܠܚܫܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ: ܡܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܡܥܪܩܝܢ ܒܠܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܘܥܠ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܠܘ ܕܝܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܪܟܝܢ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܒܝܫܬܐ.

> The immortality that is given to our *kyana* through the principal part of us (Jesus Christ), they withdraw from our *kyana* (acting) like enemies of our *kyana*. If our death in Christ our Lord was not by *qnoma* part of our *kyana* (ܐܕܝܢ ܠܘ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܢ), then there is for our *kyana* also no participation in the immortality of Christ our Lord, (that is) the hope of immortality[119] These false Christians deprive us of the hope for resurrection and immortality, and even attribute a fantastic, erroneous opinion to the whole Gospel.[120]

In this last letter, Ishoʿyahb III clearly expressed that it was an error not to acknowledge the divinity of Christ. Although this was already an old criticism, it also could be interpreted as straightforward criticism of Islamic theology, something which Ishoʿyahb III seems to have avoided so far. It is not sure to what extent this contradicts the earlier findings or can be explained by being written at a time when he might no longer have had much to lose.

When discussing the second and opposite group, which claimed that Christ is God and not human, Ishoʿyahb III referred twice to people who used the phrase 'son of the nature of the Father' (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܒܐ). He accused such people of Theopaschism. He further stated that Christ had a divine nature and *qnoma*, but emphasized that it was his human part that was accountable for his suffering and death.

Ishoʿyahb III used the expression *bar kyana* a third and last time in this letter, but then in relation to the human nature. In a difficult to understand sentence, he considered it a prerequisite for salvation that 'our death in our Lord Jesus Christ' was by *qnoma* part ('son') of our nature (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܢ), as it was connected with our immortality.[121] Another letter of Ishoʿyahb III, sent to comfort an unnamed believer, probably explains what he meant by 'our death in our Lord Jesus Christ'. Ishoʿyahb III stated that death is the entrance to a better life and is a kind of birth, which brings silence and peace. Concerning the deceased, God will give rest in the haven of the Saints to the believer who 'girds himself faithfully when he is clothed in the garment that is put on the sons because of the mystical baptism (ܐܣܛܠܐ ܐܪܙܢܝܐ), and on Judgment's Day he will purify him in his mercy from all the blemishes in the human nature' and he will be in heaven.[122]

[119] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, pp. 287-88.
ܘܠܐ ܡܝܘܬܘܬܐ ܕܐܬܝܗܒܬ ܠܟܝܢܢ ܒܝܕ ܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܢ܆ ܡܣܠܩܝܢ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܢ ܐܝܟ ܒܥܠܕܒܒܐ ܕܟܝܢܢ. ܐܕܝܢ ܠܘ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܢ: ܗܘܐ ܡܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܪܢ ܕܝܠܢ ܐܦܠܐ ܠܟܝܢܢ ܠܐ ܡܝܘܬܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ [288] ܡܪܢ ܕܝܠܢ: ܐܝܬ ܠܟܝܢܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܣܒܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܝܘܬܘܬܐ.

[120] According to Ishoʿyahb III, the whole Gospel (ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ, *evangelion*) consisted of Matthew, Marc, Luke, John and most of all Paul.

[121] The end of the extant manuscripts of C-22 consists of a quotation from the first verses from John 1, but the rest of the text is missing. The version kept in Paris contains a slightly longer quotation of this passage. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 288.

[122] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-25, pp. 194-96.

Soteriology thus seems to have played a major role in Ishoʿyahb III's defence of the two *qnome*. Only through the human *qnoma* of Christ, Christians could be saved and could they participate 'in the hope of resurrection because of the participation in the prime resurrection'. The soteriological necessity of Christ having a human nature which experiences suffering and death belonged to Antiochene Christology and may have fostered the acknowledgment of the two *qnome* in Christ by the Church of the East.

4.3.4. The Life of Ishoʿsabran and its Christology

The incomplete manuscript in which the hagiography of Ishoʿsabran is preserved shows that it was ascribed to 'Ishoʿyahb of Adiabene, Catholicos Patriarch of the East'. This probably is correct. Ishoʿyahb III wrote the history of this popular Persian martyr for the brothers of Bet Abe. Ishoʿsabran was a Persian from Adiabene who had converted to Christianity and was therefore killed c.620-21 after fifteen years of imprisonment in Arbela. His relics were kept in this town in a new church which became famous. It is not known when Ishoʿyahb III wrote this hagiography. Chabot doubts Ishoʿyahb III could have done it when he was Catholicos, because by that time he was in conflict with Bet Abe, and Chabot opts therefore for the period during which Ishoʿyahb III was metropolitan of Adiabene, residing in Arbela.[123] The fact, however, that Ishoʿyahb III spent his last years in Bet Abe allows a later date. Moreover, the possibility is not to be excluded that Ishoʿyahb III wrote it already when he was bishop. This might be of interest, as some names in the *Life of Ishoʿsabran* also occur in letters of that period. It would add something to our understanding if these persons were the same as their namesakes in Ishoʿyahb III's letters.

One name is Ishoʿzeka, which also appears in a letter to the monks of Bet Abe (E-18) concerning the contested succession of Jacob, its founder. This letter was written after the death of the monastery's founder Jacob, when Ishoʿyahb III seems to have become bishop recently, as he wondered why they did not consult him on the succession of the late Jacob, now that he was bishop.[124] The *Life of Ishoʿsabran* describes Ishoʿzeka as the holy monk who had known Ishoʿsabran from his conversion to his death and had assisted Ishoʿyahb III in writing this biography. Later we learn that it also was Ishoʿzeka, the young son of the local village priest, who taught Ishoʿsabran how to read scripture after the latter had returned home from exile where he had lived an ascetic life. Now Ishoʿsabran wanted to become a martyr by provoking

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[123] The biography of Ishoʿsabran has been preserved in one manuscript, Vat. Syr. 161. Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', pp. 488-89, 494 and 500-504.
[124] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-18, pp. 30-31.

the ‘Magians’ through the discussion of Scripture.[125] As he only knew the prayer *Our Father,* he needed to study more.[126] Ishoʿzeka taught Ishoʿsabran in the correct order of Christian learning: one started with the learning the letters (of the alphabet) and their pronunciation; next the Psalms were repeated and gradually all scriptures were read, followed by their interpretation. A small detail in the learning process was the specific way of memorizing. Ishoʿsabran was not used to the transmission of written religious knowledge, as Zoroastrians transmitted this orally and he ‘was accustomed to take from the mouth the murmuring of Magianism’.[127] Ishoʿzeka then taught him orally as well, and Ishoʿsabran repeated while working hard and ‘moving his neck like the Magi do’, but was instructed to do it at peace and only with his mouth.[128]

The other name that figures both in the *Life of Ishoʿsabran* and in a letter is that of Shabor. Ishoʿyahb III informed his catholicos in E-24 about the festive rehabilitation of a Shabor and Ishoʿyahb III seemed to connect this with an improved situation of the Church.[129] The return of Shabor to the Church of the East might have had a great impact, as he might have belonged to a powerful Persian aristocratic family which had many members bearing this name and which had been involved earlier in supporting Khosrau against Hormizd and in 634 fought the Arabs.[130] Although there were many apostates with the name Shabor, Fiey suggests that he might have been the same as the heretic ‘of the house of the Severians’ (ܕܫܒܘܪ ܚܐܪܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܣܘܝܪ̈ܐ) and the ‘apostate of the village of Bet Kudid’ (ܟܦܘܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܟܘܕܝܕ). He further suggests that the missing end of the hagiography might have contained the conversion of Shabor.[131] This Shabor would have tried to influence the theologically unlearned Ishoʿsabran who was ‘pure by the spiritual engravings of the (Nestorians?) and was magnificently united with the rays of orthodoxy’.[132]

The Christology in this biography is not elaborated. The term *qnoma* appears nine times, but hardly in a Christological context. This can be seen in the following table in which the occurrences are listed according to the pages in Chabot’s edition and an accompanying fragment is given.

[125] Chabot, ‘Histoire de Jésus-Sabran’, Preface, p. 505 and Chapter 4, pp. 524-25.
[126] Chabot, ‘Histoire de Jésus-Sabran’, Chapter 3, p. 521.
[127] Persian for ‘murmuring’ is ‘zamzama’. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest,* p. 284.
[128] Chabot, ‘Histoire de Jésus-Sabran’, Chapter 4, p. 525; Becker, *Beginning of Wisdom,* p. 206.
[129] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* pp. 45-46.
[130] Nöldeke, ‘Die syrische Chronik’, pp. 8-9.
[131] Chabot, ‘Histoire de Jésus-Sabran’, Chapter 17 and 19, pp. 571 and 578; Fiey, ‘Īšōʻyaw le Grand’, p. 330.
[132] ܡܕܟܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܪ̈ܘܫܡܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ ܕܒܝܬ... ܘܡܬܚܝܕܐ ܡܫܒܚܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܙܠܝܩܐ ܕܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܐ. Actually, there is a lacuna in the text, and the name ‘Nestorian’ is not given here. Chabot comments that the name had been erased, and referring to p. 573, he suggests that one should read: ܒܝܬ ܢܣܛܘܪܝܣ. Chabot, ‘Histoire de Jésus-Sabran’, Chapter 17, pp. 571 and 573.

Forms of *qnoma* in the biography of Ishoʿsabran			
P.	Ch.		I/C/T/S
504		ܕܟܕ ܗܘ ܒܚܫ̈ܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܘܒܚܘܫܒܐ ܕ ܠܚܒܪܘܬܐ ܢܦܫܗ܀	I-S
508		ܟܕ ܠܚܝ̈ܐ ܟܝ ܗܘ، ܒܩܢܘܡܗ [509] ܕܡܚܘܐ ܕ ܠܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ. ܠܣܗ̈ܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܩܒܥ ܒܨܠܝܒܗ ܢܝܫܐ ܕܙܟܘܬܐ.	I
509		ܘܟܕ ܗܝ ܟܕ ܒܕܡܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܡܫܚܐ ܡܒܣܡܐ܆ ܥܒܪ ܠܚܝ̈ܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ.	I
513	1	ܘܟܕ ܚܠܨ ܡܢܟ ܗܘܐ ܕܓܕܪ ܠܗ ܓܥܡ ܠܡܡܥܪܘܗ ܐܝܟ ܚܕܐ ܕܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ܆ ܗܘ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܐܬܐ ܐܘܕܝ ܒܥܕܬܐ.	I
520	2	ܠܒܘܒܐ ܝ̣ܒ ܗܘܐ ܠܡܣܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܐ ܒܐܝܕܘܗܝ܇ ܗܘ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܦܓܪܗ ܐܝܟ ܡܬܠܘܢܐ ܒܪܝܐ.	I
534	8	ܘܐܬܬ ܒܪ ܠܩܢܘܡܗ ܚܘܣܪܢܐ ܕܒܗܬܬܐ.	S
542	10	ܗܪ ܕܒܡܒܟܗ ܟܠ ܗܘܐ ܢܬܪܐ ܕܩܢܘܡ̈ܝܗܘܢ.	I-S
565	15	ܘܒܗܘܢ ܒܒܢ̈ܝܐ ܒܫܘܪܝܐܬܐ ܠܒܪܗ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ: ܠܗ ܕܒܪ ܠܒܘܒܐ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܐܬܐܡܪܬ܀	S
572	17	ܘܒܣܝܡܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܡܠܟܠ: ܟܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܝ܀	C

In most instances, *qnoma* signals an individual. Some occurrences of *qnoma* seem to be associated with the soul and its purification and salvation and should therefore preferably not be translated, in order to show that the ascetic work on the substance of the soul is implied. A short discussion of each occurrence might explain this. Only the last instance refers to Christology.

In the introduction, which described Ishoʿsabran's ascetic practices and his fight for the truth, it is expressed that he endured the torments of nature for many years by the 'sufferings of his *qnoma* and the strength of his soul'.[133] Some pages later he is presented as an example for all Christians who want to reach the righteous life by the exertion of labour. Ishoʿyahb III distinguished here between two groups: for salvation Ishoʿsabran 'showed the practices of perfection in his very *qnoma*', and 'for the martyrs he impressed the sign (ܢܝܫܐ) of victory by his cross'. This is concluded by the remark that 'when he was immersed in his own blood (ܒܕܡܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ) as with sweet oil, he went to eternal life'.[134] In the latter instances, *qnoma* seems to be rendered best with 'person' and 'own'. *Qnoma* also seems to indicate the person in the first chapter, where it is reported that when Ishoʿsabran had openly converted from Zoroastrianism to East Syrian Christianity, he became by his person (*qnoma*) an example (ܐܬܐ) in the Church.[135] His brother, however, did not agree with him and contrived his imprisonment.

Chapter 2 describes how Ishoʿsabran confessed the real God during his interrogation by the judge. Here also appeared the powerful Yazdin, the 'head of the believers', who had the authority to set him free. The brother of Ishoʿsabran received his just punishment and died by an

[133] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Preface, p. 504.
[134] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Preface, pp. 508-509.
[135] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 1, p. 513.

accident in which he injured himself: 'he himself (ܒܩܢܘܡܗ) did this'.[136] Later, Ishoʿsabran is interrogated again and Chapter 8 includes the account of his confession and the subsequent imprisonment in Arbela. Ishoʿsabran ended his confession by warning that someone who denied this faith 'has acquired the sentence of death for his *qnoma*.'[137] As Ishoʿsabran is talking to judges of this world and refers to God, the sentence of death for the *qnoma* seems here to imply the perdition of the soul.

The story continues with a description of his life in prison. Ishoʿsabran voluntarily reduced eating, drinking and sleeping to the bare minimum, and at night he recited the psalms, hymns and made prostrations. Many people came to see his hardships and his demonstration of faith which was for their instruction and 'benefit of their *qnoma*.'[138] Here, 'their *qnoma*' might be translated as 'themselves', but could also refer to their souls. Chapter 15 gives an account of how numerous monks came to visit him to be encouraged by his works and how Ishoʿsabran, who was put in heavy chains, insisted on staying in them even when his limbs were paralysed. He did many other mortifying exercises and treated his body as if it could not suffer. By those works, Ishoʿsabran 'made perfect with the free will in his *qnoma* that, which the blessed Apostle said: "Therefore I rejoice in weaknesses, insult, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ"'.[139] As the free will is part of the human soul, *qnoma* seems to be interpreted in that context here as well.

The last time *qnoma* occurs is the most complicated one. It appears in the account of the discussion between Ishoʿsabran and Shabor on the Trinity. The confrontation with Shabor offers a view on some ideas current at that time. Chabot does not translate these but summarizes them as 'passages curieux au point de vue de l'exposé des doctrines nestorienne et monophysite'.[140] The chapter starts with an enumeration of its main points: the kind of diligence Ishoʿsabran had for 'the exactness of the true belief of orthodoxy' (ܥܠ ܚܬܝܬܘܬܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬܐ ܕܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܐ).[141] The qualities of Ishoʿsabran are praised. He was not very educated in the divine books and the teaching of the saints, but in 'the light of the spiritual understanding

[136] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 2, p. 520.
[137] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 8, p. 534.
[138] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 10, p. 542.
[139] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', pp. 496-97 and Chapter 15, p. 565.
ܕܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܠܡ ܚܕܐ ܐܢܐ ܒܟܘܪܗܢܐ. ܒܨܥܪܐ. ܒܐܘܠܨܢܐ. ܒܪܕܘܦܝܐ. ܒܚܒܘܫܝܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܦܝ ܡܫܝܚܐ.
This is a fairly accurate version of 2 Cor. 12:10, which follows Paul's statement that the tormenting thorn in his flesh was given, because 'power is made perfect in weakness'.
[140] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', p. 498.
[141] This description reminds one of Sahdona's treatise: '*about the true faith and the sound profession of orthodoxy*' (ܥܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬܐ ܘܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܫܠܡܬܐ ܕܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܝܐ).

the true exactness of belief shone greatly'. He further rejected corruptions of his mind, such as by Shabor.

Ishoʿyahb III recorded how 'in our times' Shabor visited Ishoʿsabran in prison 'when the impiety of his heresy was not clear to everyone yet', and that everyone else was sent outside. Once in private, Shabor asked him whether he had heard anything about his belief that was displeasing. Ishoʿsabran first did not want to enter into such a discussion as he himself was not knowledgeable in these things, but then Shabor explained his belief in the Trinity. In his explanation he used metaphors we have not seen in the former chapters.

> I do not add to the worship of the three 'fingers' (ܨܒ̈ܥܬܐ), which are from one body (ܦܓܪܐ), a signet ring (ܥܙܩܬܐ), which (is) on one of them and is from another nature. But I throw the signet ring away as alien and I honour the three 'fingers' as of one nature in one worship. This is the worshipped Trinity.[142]

When Ishoʿsabran told his pupil, who was better informed in theology,[143] about this conversation, the latter recognized the teaching behind Shabor's words and interpreted it as the denial of the assumption of the human nature in Christ:

> Do you not know what this is? This now is the denial of the assumption of our nature.
> For this of 'fingers and signet ring' he told you, is the word of one of the Fathers, which used it as in an example (ܐܝܟ ܕܒܬܚܘܝܬܐ). Just as a signet ring 'that was put on one of the fingers' is honoured together with the body (ܦܓܪܐ) although it is not part of it (sc. this body) by nature, likewise also the humanity of our lord is honoured and worshipped with God the Word who puts it on, although it belongs to us by nature. That insane one, who denied the assumption of our humanity and the union of the *qnome* without confusion, for that reason said to you: 'I throw the signet ring away, and I worship the three fingers'.[144]

Ishoʿyahb III further narrated that Ishoʿsabran was shocked by this and refused to meet anyone else who sympathized with Shabor, such as 'Nestorians who lived in Adiabene in the name of the monastic life'.[145] This fragment informs us that Shabor's ideas had been accepted for a

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[142] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 17, p. 572.
ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܘܣܦ ܐܢܐ ܒܣܓܕܬܐ ܕܬܠܬ ܨܒ̈ܥܬܐ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܡܢ ܚܕ ܦܓܪܐ· ܠܥܙܩܬܐ ܕܒܚܕܐ ܡܢܗܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܠܥܙܩܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܢܘܟܪܝܬܐ· ܠܗܠ ܫܕܐ ܐܢܐ: ܘܠܬܠܬ ܨܒ̈ܥܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܚܕ ܟܝܢܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܣܓܕܬܐ ܡܝܩܪ ܐܢܐ. ܗܢܘ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܕܬܐ.

[143] The name of this pupil is not given here, but Ishoʿyahb III probably referred to Ishoʿzeka.

[144] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 17, p. 572.
ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܬ ܡܢܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܗܕܐ· ܟܦܘܪܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܕܢܣܝܒܘܬܗ ܕܟܝܢܢ. ܗ̇ܝ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܨܒ̈ܥܬܐ ܘܥܙܩܬܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܟ: ܡܠܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܕܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܒܗ̈ܬܐ· ܕܐܬܚܫܚ ܒܗ̇ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܬܚܘܝܬܐ. ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܠܡ ܕܥܙܩܬܐ ܕܣܝܡܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܨܒ̈ܥܬܐ ܡܬܝܩܪܐ ܥܡܗ ܥܡ ܦܓܪܐ ܟܕ ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܗ̣ܝ ܒܟܝܢܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ. ܡܬܝܩܪܐ ܘܡܣܬܓܕܐ ܥܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܠܒܫܗ̇· ܟܕ ܡܢܢ ܗ̣ܝ ܒܟܝܢܐ. ܗܘ̇ ܕܝܢ ܫܢܝܐ ܕܟܦܪ ܒܢܣܝܒܘܬܐ ܕܐܢܫܘܬܢ. ܘܒܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܘܡ̈ܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܘܠܒܠ: ܥܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ· ܕܫܕܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܗ ܠܥܙܩܬܐ ܠܗܠ· ܘܣܓܕ ܐܢܐ ܠܬܠܬ ܨܒ̈ܥܢ.

[145] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 17, pp. 571-73, quotation esp. p. 573.

while and that according to Ishoʿyahb III even a holy and orthodox man was not immediately aware of the heresies it contained, but that some Nestorian monks in Adiabene continued to accept them. It is not clear whether the term ‘Nestorians’ is used here pejoratively or not.[146]

The Christology in this text is not easy to follow. Unfortunately, the pupil did not say which Father Shabor might have referred to. His explanation of Shabor’s Christology starts with the Trinity and then moves over to Christology whereby it seems that the ‘union of the *qnome*’ implies Christology. The three parts of the Trinity are called ‘fingers’ of which one puts on (ܠܒܫ) a ring. Although the metaphor of God the Word ‘putting on’ man, as used in the pupil’s explanation, is familiar in the Church of the East, it would not allow the view that the human part could be thrown away, since the human nature would form an insoluble union with God the Word. The pupil could therefore say that Shabor was insane. The addition ‘without confusion’ to the ‘union of the *qnome*’ seems to indicate that the pupil recognized a strict form of Miaphysitism that would emphasize the whole divine Trinity and denied the human nature in Christ. However, in this account Shabor did not explicitly mention the one *qnoma* in Christ and merely stated that he only worshipped the Trinity. The fact that Christ’s humanity was compared here to a signet ring which represented the authority of the owner when his face or symbol is pressed into wax or gold reminds one of the metaphors used in the School of Nisibis and by Babai, is an indication that such images might have been rather common.

4.3.5. Indications for adaptations in themes and terminology?

Generally Ishoʿyahb III defended the doctrine of two *kyane* - two *qnome* - one *parsopa*. In this formula, the two *kyane* indicated the divine and the human nature of Christ, while the two *qnome* (*qnoma* being the individual nature which is stable) in Christ were essential for explaining that Christ had a divine and a human nature with distinct properties. The two *qnome* were also necessary in Ishoʿyahb III’s soteriology, according to which human beings could only partake in Christ’s immortality through his human *qnoma*. A denial of two *qnome* would therefore lead to the loss of salvation.

As most of his letters were written during times of war and conflicts, when letters could be intercepted, Ishoʿyahb III had to be careful about what he wrote and cautiously omit information that could be used against him or others. The letters could have a very personal character, but especially those written as Catholicos could be meant for a wider audience. These fac-

ܕܟܡܬ ܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ ܕܟܬܒܝܢ ܒܚܘܒܐ ܒܥܡܐ ܕܢܣܛܘܪܝܢܐ.

[146] Here on p. 573, the context is negative, but on p. 571 the term ‘Nestorians’ was used in a very positive sense. However, as we have discussed in note 132, the term does not appear there in the manuscript, but—referring to p. 573—has been suggested by Chabot in order to fill a lacuna.

tors influenced the information given, but still provide useful material for some further analysis. This, however, hardly applies to his earlier letters in which he barely discussed Christology.

The earlier letters show Ishoʿyahb III's strong antipathies against Miaphysitism which undermined the position of the Church of the East considerably, but he started to elaborate this dogmatically in his metropolitan letters concerning Sahdona. Since Sahdona propagated one *qnoma*, Ishoʿyahb III aligned him with the Miaphysites. During the conflicts with those in Nisibis who might have allied with Sahdona and whom he accused of having Chalcedonian sympathies while they in turn condemned him, Ishoʿyahb III clearly professed the two-*qnome* Christology once more.

When Maremmeh was Catholicos (646-649/50), Ishoʿyahb III seems to have reacted only once to the virulent discussions in the Byzantine Empire on the number of will and energy in Christ. In a Christological context, Ishoʿyahb III mentioned 'energy' (or 'energies') only in letter M-30, but did not explicitly mention will(s). He wrote that Cyril was the founder of doctrine of one *qnoma*, property (ܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ) and energy (ܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ) in Christ.[147] Ishoʿyahb III further approvingly stated that by now the 'great Rome' and other areas supported the doctrine of two *qnome*, two energies and properties of Christ. He may have been informed about the growing opposition against the more Miaphysite direction promoted in the Byzantine Empire, which officially was expressed in 641 at a synod in Rome. He also may have been aware of the prolonged preparations there for the Synod of 649, when the Roman pope Martin I emphasized the dual nature of Christ with the resulting two energies and wills. It is not sure whether this later synod had taken place when Metropolitan Ishoʿyahb III wrote this letter. In any case, Ishoʿyahb III either ignored the mentioning of wills or hinted covertly to 'one will'.

Ishoʿyahb III also defended the two-*qnome* Christology strongly during his catholicate when the Church of the East in Nisibis was mainly in conflict with Miaphysites. In his argumentation, he could further apply Aristotelian logic to Christology or to other topics, if provoked by his opponents.

The above description is taken mainly from his explicit statements. Some more implicit indications might be drawn from his nomenclature for Christ, especially considering his relation to God. The themes being used, or avoided, can provide additional information. Apart from the continuous rejection of Miaphysitism, it would be interesting to see whether there is some adjustment towards Byzantines or Muslims discernible.

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[147] Ishoʿyahb III's description of Cyril's doctrine does not contain nature, but *qnoma* instead. This seems to indicate that Ishoʿyahb III actually equated *qnoma* and nature as he also had suggested in his letter to Sahdona. See on the interpretation of ܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ as 'property', section 4.1.

The name 'Christ' occurs about 107 times. Throughout his letters, it occurs about 18 times in connection with the name Jesus (Ishoʿ), often expressed as 'our Lord Jesus Christ'.[148] In several variations, Christ is named in the same breath as God. About 14 times Ishoʿyahb III spoke of Christ as 'our (merciful and good) God'.[149] Letters E-26 and M-3, which are written to monks, have a similar opening: 'to the God-loving brothers', who are 'offering the sacrifice of the ascetic life to God who is above all, in our Lord Jesus Christ'.[150] Here, however, it seems that he followed Pauline language, seeing Christ as a kind of mediator.

Elsewhere he seems to identify Christ and God more clearly. As we have seen above, this is explicitly stated in M-6: 'the one adorable and glorious *parsopa* of our Lord Jesus Christ who is God over all'.[151] In M-30 he argued how 'even our God and our Lord Jesus Christ' drove Sahdona away from 'the *politeia* of our living place' (ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܕܬܘܬܒܘܬܢ).[152] The other instances appear in the letters he wrote while he was Catholicos. In C-3, he spoke of the spirit of Christ, 'the hope of our life and the origin of our salvation and the Lord of our glory and our adorable God', expressing his hope that this might live in the people he was writing to.[153] In C-13, which was written to people in Jerusalem, Ishoʿyahb III spoke again of 'God above all', moreover seeming to identify him with Christ: 'in our Lord Jesus Christ, God above all'.[154] This also applies to the other letters. C-18 gives 'to inherit eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ: head of our life and Lord of our Glory, venerated God'.[155]

In C-20 and C-22, he spoke in an almost identical way of 'our Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of glory, (and) our venerated God and our King full of mercy'.[156] In C-22, finally, he clearly stated that Christ is both truly God and truly human, but also that he is 'the power of God and the wisdom of God'. Thus, even in Islamic times, although incidentally, and it might be differently interpreted, Ishoʿyahb III could speak of Christ as God and even as 'God above all'.

Similar expressions concerning God's transcendence and omnipotence appear in other letters. The most well-known is E-48, because of its reference to the Islamic rejection of The-

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148 For instance Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-20, p. 33. ܒܠܒܘܫܬܗ ܘܒܪܚܡܘܗܝ ܕܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ.
149 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-6, p. 8; E-28, p. 55; M-3, p. 120; M-9, p. 142; M-30, p. 210; C-3, p. 225; C-6, p. 236; C-10, p. 242; C-14, p. 254 .ܐܠܗܢ ܡܪܚܡܢܐ ܘܛܒܐ; C-20, p. 276; C-22, pp. 283, 284 and 288.
150 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-26, pp. 47-48; M-3, p. 111.
ܠܐܚܝ̈ܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܪܚܡܐ [...] ܕܒܚܬܐ ܕܕܘܒܪܐ ܡܫܬܪܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ ܡܩܪܒܝܢ ܒܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ.
151 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, pp. 124-25.
152 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-30, p. 210.
153 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-3, p. 225.
ܕܬܫܪܐ ܒܟܘܢ ܪܘܚܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܣܒܪܐ ܕܚܝܝܢ ܘܪܫܝܬܐ ܕܦܘܪܩܢ: ܘܡܪܐ ܕܬܫܒܘܚܬܢ ܘܐܠܗܢ ܣܓܝܕܐ.
154 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-13, p. 245. ܒܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ.
155 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, p. 266.
ܠܡܐܪܬ ܚܝܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ ܒܗ ܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ: ܪܫܐ ܕܚܝܝܢ ܘܡܪܐ ܕܬܫܒܘܚܬܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܣܓܝܕܐ.
156 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-20, p. 276; C-22, p. 284.
ܕܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܪܐ ܕܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ: ܐܠܗܢ ܣܓܝܕܐ ܘܡܠܟܢ ܡܠܐ ܪ̈ܚܡܐ:

opaschism. Twice the expression 'God the Lord of All' (ܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܟܠ) appears and once 'God almighty' (ܐܠܗܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ).[157] Ishoʿyahb III explained in M-6 how Christ could be perceived as both human and as God: the eyes see Christ as human, but the mind sees him as God Almighty.[158] A variant expression was 'God above all' (ܐܠܗܐ ܥܠ ܟܠ), which we just saw appearing in E-26, M-3 and C-13. In M-23 the expression 'almighty' probably referred to the catholicos, but as we have discussed above, this also might refer to God as it seems to have concerned the debate on who were allowed to call God 'God' (*Alaha*).[159]

The nomenclature in Ishoʿyahb III's letters thus hardly seems to permit firm conclusions concerning his adaptation to other parties the Church of the East dealt with. All the expressions concerning the omnipotence of God appear from E-26 onwards. This might have had to do with increasing Islamic presence, but could also be explained by the fact that Ishoʿyahb III scarcely wrote on Christology before that time. During the early years of Islam, he made only one statement concerning their religion. This was their rejection of Theopaschism, which they shared with the Church of the East and which Ishoʿyahb III utilized in his conflicts with the Miaphysites.

It could be suggested that Ishoʿyahb III avoided specific names for Christ like 'Son of God' during these Islamic times, and rather used 'Son of Mary', 'the Word of God' or 'servant' as they appear in the Qurʾan.[160]

An analysis of his letters shows that Ishoʿyahb III did not use the expression 'Son of God', although a biblical quotation in M-15 might have been a hint at this. After he had encouraged Abbot Abraham to guard the unity in his monastery and to strive for spiritual love, he partly quoted Eph. 4:13 that spoke of 'the fullness of Christ'. He may have hinted here at the preceding part: 'until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God'.[161] Ishoʿyahb III used the expression 'sons of God' in two earlier letters (E-6 and E-26) while referring to believers, probably monks. E-26 may already have been written during the first invasions, but this probably still was a generally acceptable expression for people consid-

[157] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, pp. 95-97.
[158] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, p. 125; C-1, p. 219. ܠܥܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܢܬܚܙܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܠܗܘܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܟܠ. ܘܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ ܕ ܠܟܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܟܠ ܢܫܬܘܕܥ ܠܐܠܗܐ. ܘܟܠ ܒܘܪܟ ܬܟܘܦ. ܘܟܠ ܠܫܢ ܢܘܕܐ ܠܗ.
[159] Duval (trans.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, p. 134; C-18, p. 190 (cf. ed. idem, pp. 182 and 262). See for further discussion on M-23, section 3.8.
[160] Cf. Palmer, review of *Muslime und Araber*, p. 185.
[161] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-15, p. 161.
ܕܒܗ ܬܬܪܒܘܢ ܠܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܓܡܝܪܬܐ:27 ܕܩܘܡܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܫܘܡܠܝܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ.
Eph. 4:13: Peshitta: ܥܕܡܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܟܠܢ ܚܕ. ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܒܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܘܚܕ ܓܒܪܐ ܓܡܝܪܐ ܒܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܕܩܘܡܬܐ ܕܫܘܡܠܝܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ:

ered holy.[162] Thereafter, Ishoʿyahb III may have avoided this expression. It is moreover remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III hardly thematized the old accusation against the Church of the East of teaching two sons. He did so probably only in reaction to Sahdona when he indignantly claimed that Sahdona accused the Church of the East of teaching two sons.[163] Where Babai had still employed the distinction made by Theodore between the nature of the 'Only-Begotten' (ܝܚܝܕܝܐ) and 'First-Born' (ܒܘܟܪܐ), Ishoʿyahb III did not use these terms in a Christological context at all. He further did not thematize the controversial question of whether or not God the Word 'became' man, as Babai had also continued to do.

The Sonship was mentioned only twice. In his letter to his supporters in Nisibis (M-9), Ishoʿyahb III had rejected the teaching of one *qnoma*, but approved of the doctrine of two natures and *qnome* in the one *parsopa* of the single Sonship of the Lord (ܕܝܚܝܕܝܘܬ ܒܪܘܬܐ ܡܪܢܝܬܐ).[164] In C-3, he stated that the human nature of Christ is created, but he did not mention the Sonship of the divine nature. This possibly may have been an adaptation to the Islamic rejection of Christ being born of God. Ishoʿyahb III's formulation is rather opaque and might be an attempt to profess his Christological view without causing too much doubt on the side of the Islamic governors. The question whether Christ was created or begotten is not further touched upon. As we have seen in the discussion of his last letter (C-22), which sometimes is also rather ambiguous, Ishoʿyahb III did use the phrase 'son of the nature of the Father' (ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܒܐ) twice in the traditional way, indicating that their natures were the same.[165] However, in explicit contrast to Islam, he now rejected the view that Christ is not God.

Ishoʿyahb III sometimes used the expression 'Word of God' referring to the Gospel and twice he used John's 'the Word was God'. In C-18, his letter to the people of Qatar, he warned those who despised the 'word of our Lord'.[166] It is, however, not clear whether he referred to the Gospel or to Christ. The same applies to M-15, where he spoke of 'the Word of God, which is ministered by us'.[167] Only in the hagiography he put the term 'God the Word' in the mouth of an apostate who also mentioned the Trinity.

It becomes clear from the above examples that Ishoʿyahb III hardly brought up Christ's relation with the Father, the Son or Word and the Holy Spirit. It is moreover remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III did not mention the Trinity, except for one negative reference. One might there-

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162 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-6, p. 7; M-28, p. 203.
163 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-28, p. 203.
164 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-9, p. 142.
165 ܒܪ ܟܝܢܐ further only appears in a non Christological context in E-11, Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, p. 15.
166 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, p. 267.
167 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-15, p. 169

fore suggest that Ishoʿyahb III tended to avoid the concept of the Trinity, which was rejected by the Qurʾan, and consequently also avoided to write in more specific terms about the relation between God and Christ.

Ishoʿyahb III did not mention Mary at all, although he would remain in line with the Qurʾan if he called Christ 'the son of Mary'. One reason might be that this would imply a reduction of the traditional Christian view and that he therefore avoided any discussion. Only in one biblical quotation given in C-22 where he accurately cited Luke 2:34, he might have alluded to her when he omitted the reference to how Simon first had blessed Christ and said to 'Mary his Mother': '*This one is appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed*'.[168]

Ishoʿyahb III further did not call Christ a 'servant' (ܥܒܕܐ), although Islamic theology did so and previous East Syrian Christology had made ample use of the phrase 'God assuming the form of a servant'. He did not even refer to this verse, as this formula might have been unacceptable to Islam. The same might apply to other expressions for the incarnation, such as the clothing metaphor, which are absent as well.[169] He used the verb for the assumption (ܐܬܢܣܒ, *etnassab*) once only in C-22, when describing one of the Christological errors.[170]

The cross is mentioned only in three letters. In an early letter, it referred to the name of a monastery. The cross was described as 'the adorable anchor and sign of salvation', which is able to 'keep the ship of your mind without violent disturbances in the storm of this time'. It was said to have 'shaken the earth and killed death the moment it was set up, and afterwards it daily troubled legions of demons while it was faithfully served'.[171] The other letter referred to the sign of the cross which people should have made when their sanctuary was defiled, and finally it appeared several times in the description of Maremmeh lifting the cross during a synod in Kirkuk.[172] The death on the cross, which according to the Qurʾan was an illusion, is hardly thematized. Once it was mentioned in C-7, just before advising Jacob, bishop of Siarzur to go to the new authorities if he still had problems with the Magians (*magushe*).

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[168] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 285. The English translation given here differs marginally from the NRSV.

[169] In one instance, in M-6, the term *mdabbranuta* might have been used in the sense of 'incarnation'. Ishoʿyahb used the term here when he warned that the doctrine of the one *qnoma* in Christ would lead to 'many forms of blasphemies against God and his *mdabbranuteh*'. (ܘܡܢ ܡܚܠܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܥܝܐ ܕܚܕܢܝܘܬ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ: ܠܘܬ ܪܒܘܬܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܓܘܕ̈ܦܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܥܠ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܗ. ܡܫܬܪܐ ܚܠܦ ܒ̈ܢܝܢܫܐ ܕܗ̈ܘܐ). It is not clear whether Ishoʿyahb III referred here to God's incarnation or to his guidance, but the latter seems more applicable. Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-6, pp. 128-29 (cf. trans. idem, p. 97).

[170] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 286. See also above, section 4.3.3.

[171] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-8, pp. 8-10.

[172] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, p. 93 and M-21, pp. 170-71.

Ishoʿyahb III told Jacob that his problems stood in sharp contrast to the crucified 'father of your father'. This might have been an allusion to Christ, but could also refer to a local martyr.

> For it is very bad when the father of your father—so to speak on the priestly throne— endured the death on the cross by the hand of the impious on behalf of the fear of God at the very time that error was strong, while you at a time of rest and prosperity of faith, sleep quietly and cry to me in writings about the severity of the dead persecutor (the Persians).[173]

The hagiographic story of Ishoʿsabran also informs us that he 'impressed a sign of victory by his cross' for the ascetics and then went to eternal life.[174]

Christ taking the sin of men is hardly thematized. Only in M-23 this is briefly brought up when Ishoʿyahb III compared the contempt he received to that of 'him, who carries the sin of the world, is rejected by the world.'[175] The special role of Christ's death, one of the reasons why Ishoʿyahb III defended the two *qnome* Christology, is described in a brief but concrete way in M-32, where Ishoʿyahb III mentioned 'the holy blood of the eternal Savior in the earth, and the holy body that put death to death'.[176] In C-3 he similarly spoke of the life of faith 'for which the holy blood was shed that vitalizes the world'.[177] He mentioned the resurrection briefly in a further opaque statement in E-30, written to Maremmeh and Narsai, in which he acknowledged his mistakes and shame and was grateful that they still remembered him after he had been forgotten for a long time: 'grace to the mercy of our Lord, who renews in us the smell of his familiarity from time to time in the symbol of resurrection'.[178] In C-3 he was clearly in line with Babai when he also stated that only through the human *qnoma* of Christ, Christians could be saved and participate 'in the hope of resurrection because of the participation in the prime resurrection'.[179]

Ishoʿyahb III's reference in C-14 to Judgement Day, and the advice to pray and thus strengthen the hope in 'God the Lord of All' might have fitted in Islamic thinking.[180]

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[173] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-7, pp. 236-38. See for a further discussion on this letter also section 3.3.
ܗܟܢ ܓܝܪ ܒܝܫܐ: ܐܢ ܐܒܐ ܕܐܒܘܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܐܡܪ ܒܟܘܪܣܝܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ: ܒܗ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܕܒܗ̇ ܥܫܝܢ ܕܛܥܝܢ: ܡܘܬܐ ܕܙܩܝܦܐ ܣܝܒܪ
ܥܠ ܕܚܠܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܢ ܐܝܕܐ ܕܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ: ܘܐܢܬ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܕܢܝܚܐ ܘܕܫܝܢ ܠܫܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܬܕܘܡ ܫܠܝܐܝܬ ܘܬܩܥ ܠܘܬܝ، ܒܟܬܒܬܐ:
ܡܢ ܩܫܝܘܬܐ ܕܪ̈ܕܘܦܐ ܡܝܬܐ.
[174] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Preface, pp. 508-509.
[175] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, p. 188.
[176] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-32, p. 216.
ܘܡܬܠܝܢ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܕܡܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܚܝܢܗ ܕܥܠܡܐ: ܘܦܓܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܡܝܬܢܘܬܗ ܕܡܘܬܐ.
Duval notes that V has ܡܡܝܬܢܗ.
[177] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-3, p. 223. See also above, section 3.7.3.
[178] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-30, p. 56.
[179] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-3, p. 224.
[180] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, pp. 95-96.

The above examples give the impression that Ishoʿyahb III made scarce use of several expressions that may have been unacceptable to Muslims, even though the letters preserved are not addressed to them. It cannot be assessed, however, whether this actually was a reaction to the conquering Arabs during the first decades of nascent Islam. As most references to Christology are found in the extant letters written after the first Arab invasions, the possibility to discern a development is limited. It can be speculated that the absence of several terms that were familiar in the Church of the East was coincidental in his first letters and more deliberate later.

The basic tenets of his Christian belief do not seem to have been affected: Ishoʿyahb III insisted on Christ's soteriological role, which required full acknowledgment of both his human and divine nature and *qnoma*. The very concept of *qnoma* itself might sometimes have enabled him to make ambiguous statements concerning the divine nature of Christ, which possibly found more acceptance among Muslim governors. One might therefore cautiously suggest that to some extent Ishoʿyahb III could have adapted the formulation of his Christology to Islamic thinking, or that some aspects of his Christology were still somehow acceptable for his Islamic counterparts. An explanation for the more explicit Christological elements that deviated from Islamic Christology and which appeared mainly in his last letter, might be that this was written when he (or his Church) realized that a strategy of emphasizing some basic common grounds and covering crucial differences was no longer effective.

When comparing Ishoʿyahb III's extant Christological texts to those of Sahdona, it is remarkable that Sahdona had been freer in his terminology for the incarnation and still used terminology dear to the Church of the East.[181] Sahdona further spoke several times of 'God the Word', whereas Ishoʿyahb III used it only once in the hagiography. As we have seen, their well known rivaling views on the number of *qnome* in Christ depended partly on their different use of several Christological terms. Many other factors may have played a role in their ongoing conflict. It seems that the gap between their stand points was widened when Sahdona sought to harmonize the Christology of the Church of the East with that of other Christians in the former Byzantine areas close to Nisibis, whereas Ishoʿyahb III seems to have tended to protect this Christology against the Arab governors by obscuring it. He hardly spoke of the Sonship, sometimes used the concept of the two *qnome* in a confusing way, and stated that Christ's nature was created in a divine image. This may have strengthened Sahdona's opposition against Ishoʿyahb III in which he was joined by others. Sahdona criticized the idea of one

[181] It should be noted that Sahdona probably had written this before the Arab invasions, but that it was made public thereafter.

parsopa in two *qnome* as explained by Babai, because this would imply that Christ was not really divine, which he rather seems to have emphasized, while Ishoʿyahb III may have been inclined to conceal Christ's divinity. Ishoʿyahb III also may have tried to protect the concept of two *qnome* for mystical reasons similar to those of Babai. This will be investigated in the next section on monasticism.

4.4. Ishoʿyahb III and monasticism

4.4.1. Contacts with the monasteries

The relations with Bet Abe, Ishoʿyahb III's former monastery, do not seem to have been unproblematic. After the death of its founder, Abbot Jacob, who had had tight relations with Ishoʿyahb III's father, Ishoʿyahb III wrote to the monks in order to advise them on a new abbot, namely the old monk John. This was somebody else than the one preferred by themselves and Ishoʿyahb III was disappointed that they had not consulted him before and he stated that he would inform the metropolitan and the patriarch about this. He claimed that Jacob had destined John as his successor in an oral testimony given to him, and moreover that the appointments of abbots were God-given and that opposition was therefore unacceptable. One might wonder what the reasons were to reject the preferred candidate of the monks and whether this might have been Sahdona, who must have had a significant status as he had written the funeral oration. Ishoʿyahb III's influence must have been strong though, as his candidate in fact became the new abbot. But it was not strong enough to grant success: John left the monastery secretly after half a year.[182]

In another rather early letter, Ishoʿyahb III advised Paul, the new and third abbot of the monastery of Bet Abe who had come from another monastery and was uncertain of his new task.[183] Although there are some problems in dating this letter, what interests us here most is the content of his advice. Ishoʿyahb III commended the new abbot by stating that Paul was esteemed because of the 'great simplicity of your customs; the "teaching of kinds", the way of life, and of "name"'.[184] He advised him to stick to the commandments of 'our Lord' and to the

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[182] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-18, pp. 30-34; Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors*, pp. lxxvi-viii; (cf. trans. idem, p. 112). According to Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 320, this letter should be placed between E-11 and E-13.

[183] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-13, pp. 17-18. The fact that E-18 concerned the choice of the second abbot is puzzling. Fiey holds that Paul died as abbot of Bet Abe. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 321.

[184] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-13, p. 17. ܦܫܝܛܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܕܥܝܕܝܟ. ܘܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܕܓܢܣܐ ܘܕܘܒܪܐ ܘܕܫܡܐ. The translation of this fragment is not clear. Did 'teaching of kinds' refer to philosophy or some kind of higher education? Could this also apply to ʿname', or did Ishoʿyahb III simply refer here to the Apostle Paul?

rules of the Fathers. If the monks kept on resisting, Paul should leave. This remark shows that the worries of Paul were quite understandable. Ishoʿyahb III further advised that old and bad customs should be changed little by little by confirming what is good and rejecting what is bad. Paul should especially teach, give good sermons and live by them, so that the monks would understand better.[185]

It is not known how long Paul remained in office as abbot. Budge only mentioned him as successor of John, without giving more details. The letters give contradictory indications on the chronology. A Paul turned up as abbot of 'our monastery' in M-7 which was written to Sahdona. Since Sahdona also had joined Bet Abe, Ishoʿyahb III probably referred to this monastery and Paul who was its third abbot.[186] But earlier—during his episcopate—Ishoʿyahb III had also written a short letter to Qamishoʿ who recently had become (the fourth) abbot of Bet Abe.[187]

Here again, what interests us most are the kind of problems addressed. Qamishoʿ had concerns about expected poverty. Ishoʿyahb III answered that he should trust the Lord and be in harmony with others. Qamishoʿ was also uncertain about his ministry. And here Ishoʿyahb III told him that he should not be afraid of his reputation and be patient. Further he advised him on the neighbour who caused problems. Qamishoʿ should be very careful and was advised to go quickly to the metropolitan, although Ishoʿyahb III acknowledged that he was very negligent, or to the Catholicos. It is not clear who this neighbour was. Fiey suggests it was the bishop of the diocese of Marga, since only the metropolitan of Adiabene could stop him. Fiey further suggests that the Paul mentioned above as a participant in the deputation to Heraclius in 630 was still metropolitan; that Qamishoʿ went to Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II, who thereupon withdrew Bet Abe from the episcopal jurisdiction and put it under his own; and that Ishoʿyahb III might have intermediated.[188] The same Qamishoʿ, however, later took pains to prevent Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III from building a school near the monastery as this would interfere with the necessary quiet.[189]

The relations with the Great Monastery were difficult as well. After the decease of Babai, Ishoʿyahb III sent a letter of condolence to its monks. He wrote that he was very sad, asked them to visit him and warned that they should guard the truth of faith in the right confession (ܫܪܪܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܒܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܦܐܝܐ). He called Babai the greatest and most shining leader and

[185] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-13, p. 18.
[186] Budge (trans.), *The Book of Governors,* Chapter 2.1, pp. 118-19; Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* M-7, p. 132.
[187] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-19, pp. 34-36. Qamishoʿ was preceeded by Jacob, John and Paul.
[188] Fiey, 'Īšō'yaw le Grand', p. 322.
[189] Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors,* Chapter 2.7 and 2.8, pp. 73-76 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 131-32 and 147-50).

reckoned him among the Saints who 'taught the liturgy of the spiritual service in the appearance of angels to the people of the East and ascended from the carnal world to an incorruptible life.' The subsequent description of the Fathers is of interest because Ishoʿyahb III used here a metaphor dear to Babai: 'They impressed (ܛܒܥܘ) in you—as in pure gold—the image (ܛܘܦܣܐ) of their way of life and the excellent image (ܨܠܡܐ) of the Fear of God that is the profit of their diligence for you as successors of their works'.[190] This metaphor referring to the more mystical aspect of monasticism, which was elaborated by Babai, finds here a deliberate expression. Ishoʿyahb III finally restated the hope that they would hold on to the true faith.[191] This gives the impression that he was not so sure about this. One year later he wrote them a letter (E-12), of which two folios are missing, complaining that they had not replied.[192]

In letter E-17 to the monks in the Great Monastery, in which he confirmed that he had written twice but that they had not answered, his fears seems to have come true as he heard about a schism and the tradition of Abraham and Babai being at stake. One of the brothers was excommunicated and others thereupon had left the monastery. It has been assumed that Narsai, the disciple of Babai who later became the new abbot of the Great Monastery, was the person driven out and that the brothers ʿAnanishoʿ and Ishoʿyahb therefore moved to Bet Abe.[193] Ishoʿyahb III wanted to heal the schism and recognized that the parties blamed each other, but he warned the monks that they were accused of the same thing for which the others already had been punished. Ishoʿyahb III compared the remaining monks to the sons of Jacob who wanted to get rid of their brother Joseph.[194] He was very troubled by the schism in this monastery, which should be the prime example of harmony, but was 'trampled by all the polluted feet of the impious'. In a rhetorical sequence of questions Ishoʿyahb III wondered 'who entered the fortified courtyard' (ܕܪܬܗ ܕܚܣܝܢܐ) and he went on giving the answer himself: it was the *enemy of man*, who had cast the seed of disobedience in paradise and thereafter he cast corruptions in every generation with the help of evil ministers. He now had divided the community of the monastery and obscured the truth.[195]

Ishoʿyahb III gave two names of monks he considered instruments of Satan, but of whom we do not know much more. One was 'Babai the son of Jonan' who seems to have discredited

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[190] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-11, p. 14 (cf. trans. idem, p. 16). ܒܟܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܕܗܒܐ ܕܟܝܐ ܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܕܘܒܪܗܘܢ. ܘܨܠܡܐ ܡܝܬܪܐ ܕܕܚܠܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܝܘܬܪܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܚܦܝܛܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܟܘܢ ܒܡܩܒܠܢܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܝܗܘܢ.
[191] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-11, p. 15.
[192] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-12, pp. 16-17.
[193] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-17, pp. 22-29; Budge (trans.), *The Book of Governors,* Chapter 2.11, pp. 174-76; Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 326; Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 22.
[194] Genesis 37:27.
[195] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-17, p. 23

the Fathers by giving new (Miaphysite) interpretations. Ishoʿyahb III sarcastically noted that the Fathers apparently lacked the wisdom of their successors.[196] When Ishoʿyahb III wrote that this Babai 'confused' (ܒܠܒܠ) the way of the lord, he might have alluded to a Miaphysite inclination, since the Church of the East strongly rejected any kind of confusion (ܒܘܠܒܠܐ) between the natures of Christ.

The other person was Isaac, 'the demon of the North', who came from outside and had a bad influence. More is not known about him.

> (Satan) went a distance away from you and found the demon of the North, who is called Isaac. He troubled him with the fume of his evil and mingled him in your peaceful crowd for the destruction of his (sc. Isaac's) *qnoma* and for your misfortune.[197]

Ishoʿyahb III asked the monks to invite the others back and to heal the schism that was worked by Satan. The monks should repent and make a petition to the metropolitan and patriarch. Finally Ishoʿyahb III asked them to write to him what their position was, but we do not have information on this.

The relations do not seem to have improved. Ishoʿyahb III wrote a letter to the Great Monastery and included Narsai (whom he probably had defended in the former letter) and a Maremmeh in the list of addressees. Ishoʿyahb III wanted them all to take a position more favourable to him on a matter he did not clarify.[198] We have seen that this had to do with Maremmeh being chosen metropolitan of Bet Huzaye.[199] Ishoʿyahb III complained that they should have examined the logical thoughts (ܒܝܬ ܐܬ ܪܘܚܫܒܐ ܡܠܝܠܐ) before judging from afar without knowing the situation as it was.[200] What kind of influence the monks of Izla had by this time is not known, but they seem to have some impact on the choice of metropolitans. It might have been incidental, however, as it had to do with the fact that Maremmeh had belonged to their monastery. If, however, this letter was written around 641 (or, less probably, around 637), one might

[196] Ovidiu Ioan suggests he might have been the same as Babai of Nisibis, mentioned above in section 2.1.3.6. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 23. Although Babai of Nisibis was an opponent of Babai, the fact that he had left the Great Monastery and founded a succesful monastery himself contradicts this suggestion, unless one accepts the possibility that he had acquired an influential position in the Great Monastery later.
[197] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-17, p. 28. ܒܪܡ ܕܠܒܪܝܘܬܐ ܡܢܟܘܢ ܥܒܪ. ܘܐܫܟܚ ܠܓܪܒܝܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܕܡܫܬܡܗ ܐܝܣܚܩ. ܘܠܗܘ ܒܬܢܢܐ ܕܒܝܫܘܬܗ ܘܚܠܛܗ ܒܟܢܫܟܘܢ ܫܝܢܐ: ܠܐܒܕܢܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܗ ܘܠܒܝܫܬܐ ܕܝܠܟܘܢ.
[198] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-51, pp. 100-101. See also above, section 3.6.3.
[199] Although it is very probably, it is not sure whether the Maremmeh in the Great Monastery (E-51) was the same as the new Metropolitan in E-52 and M-1.
[200] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-51, pp. 100-101. According to Fiey, this is his first metropolitan letter. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand', p. 14.

also speculate that this important monastery close to Nisibis could have been involved in negotiations with Arab groupings concerning the control over the Christians and tax collection.

The monastery might also figure in Ishoʿyahb III's letter to the people of Nuhadra, a northern diocese of Adiabene. The copyist noted at the beginning that the 'Persian part was missing'.[201] The remaining part discussed the ownership and the treasuries of the monastery of 'our Father Abraham'. Ishoʿyahb III suspected both their bishop and the *ad interim* procurator, the wealthy Qardawaya, of financial malpractice. The Nuhadrians, however, had asked Ishoʿyahb III to confirm Qardawaya's position. This situation embarrassed Ishoʿyahb III. The bishop, whose name is not given, was very old and is said to have contributed to the prosperity of the monastery for about fifty years.[202] Apparently he acted as head of the monastery and he seems to have bequeathed wealth and possessions to Qardawaya in order that these could be inherited elsewhere.

> […] the blessed bishop placidly took all the wealth and possessions that pleased him to bequeath to Qardawaya but would give it him without the name of the monastery, so that they may inherit outside the monastery as they want.[203]

Ishoʿyahb III was very concerned about the possible loss of the treasure of the monastery itself when Qardawaya and his family would inherit the monastery. He suggested that the Nuhadrians agreed with this arrangement and therefore had avoided him when he crossed their country during a trip of about fifty days. Ishoʿyahb III wrote therefore that Qardawaya should not be procurator anymore and not have 'the possessions of the monastery, which are given by the whole world to God in his holy monastery of our Father Abraham'.[204] Lending more authority to his decision, Ishoʿyahb III added that the patriarch had anathematized Qardawaya and expelled him from this leadership. Ishoʿyahb III further advised the Nuhadrians that their bishop would choose among the believers a new procurator of the monastery to watch its material

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[201] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, p. 145. (ܦܘܠܓܐ ܦܪܣܝܐ ܐܬܚܣܪ). Duval comments that the Paris version has 'Nuhadrian' (ܢܘܗܕܪܝܐ) instead of 'Persian'.

[202] In the short letter M-16 a very old bishop called Babai also appears. Ishoʿyahb III's old friend Hormizd had sent him and asked what Ishoʿyahb III wanted to do. Ishoʿyahb III made a reference to the 'Abrahamic meeting' (Gen. 18:1) and wrote he would ask the Catholicos and, if necessary, would take Babai to him. Given the involvement of the Catholicos, could this be the same bishop as the one in M-10 and had his situation become untenable in the monastery?

[203] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, p. 148.

[204] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, p. 149.
ܕܠܦܘܪܢܘܣܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܩܢܝܢܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ. ܕܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܥܠܡܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܝܗܒ: ܒܕܝܪܗ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܕܐܒܘܢ ܐܒܪܗܡ.

possessions and the taxes. The bishop should not intermingle in these affairs, ‘even if he got that wealth that he acquired for himself on account of God or the monastery’.[205]

An identification of this monastery ‘of our Father Abraham’ with the Great Monastery is contradicted by the fact that the Great Monastery did not belong to Bet Nuhadra (in Adiabene), but was located close to Nisibis (in Bet ʿArabaye). Fiey suggests that the fact that the letter is incomplete causes this confusion, and he holds that it does refer to the Great Monastery after all. He moreover suggests that Ishoʿyahb III visited it during his journey to Aleppo in 630, when he still was bishop.[206] If Fiey is right, which seems likely, the letter has been assigned to the wrong period.[207]

Even if the case does not refer to the Great Monastery, it not only forms an example of the personal wealth of individuals that was invested in churches and monasteries, but also of its contested ownership. To the possessions of the monastery also belonged lands including mills, houses, and cattle and so on. Ovidiu Ioan points at a later source describing the further developments of this contested inheritance. He further suggests that monasteries and churches were in charge of collecting taxes for the Arabs, as long as they still lacked their own infrastructure for this.[208] This may coincide with the role of the Persian nobility described above, because of their involvement in clerical affairs.

In describing the tasks of a good treasurer, Ishoʿyahb III made a distinction between the financial concerns of a monastery and the monastic life per se:

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[205] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, pp. 145-49.

[206] Fiey, ‘Īšōʿyaw le Grand’, pp. 8 and 326.

[207] It is very probable that Ishoʿyahb III travelled through Bet Nuhadra on his journey to Aleppo, and in that case the Great Monastery would have been on his way. Moreover, the claim that the ‘whole world’ had given these possessions to ‘God in his holy monastery of our Father Abraham’ and the warning that this monastery ‘of our Father Abraham’ could be deprived of its ‘title and power of leadership’ seem to form additional indications that the famous Great Monastery was referred to. The warning, however, also might have had to to do with some official recognition for the exercise of regional functions, such as the levying of taxes.

[208] Ovidiu Ioan refers to further developments of this monastery during the time of Catholicos Henanishoʿ I. In 689, a Qardawaya is mentioned again (ܩܘܪܕܝܐ or ܩܘܪܕܝ̈ܐ, here rendered ‘Kardoja’). He had been the head of the ‘monastery of our father Abraham’ (ܪܝܫ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܐܒܘܢ ܐܒܪܗܡ) and this account also deals with its contested possessions. It was now decided that all the goods and lands belonged to the monastery and not to the heirs of the deceased Qardawaya. As the text also states that Qardawaya had continually opposed Ishoʿyahb III, he most probably can be identified with the Qardawaya Ishoʿyahb III spoke of. However, Ioan’s identification with a monastery of Abraham of Risha in Bet Nuhadra, seems to need more substantiation. Ioan refers here to the *Livre de la Chasteté*, which mentions a monastery that Abraham of Meʿare built on the top of the mountain of Bet Nuhadra. Sachau presumes that Qardawaya belonged to the *shaharijans*, the Persian nobility, and he therefore suggests that the monastery might have been in Adiabene, their heartland. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, pp. 34 and 88; Chabot, *Livre de la Chasteté*, No. 106, p. 47 (trans.) and 56 (ed.); Eduard Sachau (ed. and trans.), *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2. *Rechterliche Urteile des Patriarchen Chenanisho. Gesetzbuch des Patriarchen Timotheos. Gesetzbuch des Patriarchen Jesubarnun* (Berlin, 1908), pp. 6-11 and 182-83; See also Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 101-102.

> The bishop will elect from you, the believers, one who is the best of you and he will make him procurator (ܐܦܛܪܘܦܐ) of the monastery and he will watch over the worldly possessions of the monastery. He will give taxes (ܡܟ̈ܣܐ) and tribute (ܡܕܐܬܐ) to the temporal secular leaders (ܫܠܝܛ̈ܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܒܙܒܢܗܘܢ) as is due. The bishop will sit in tranquillity and will rest as he wants, while the monastery is served monastically and steadfastly as is right for monasteries.[209]

A letter written during his catholicate, finally, shows that ties with the Great Monastery had become very weak and nobody seemed to remember him. He therefore asked them to contact him.[210]

4.4.2. Regulating monasticism

As bishop, Ishoʿyahb III already had to deal with other conflicts in monasteries, but this seems to have stayed on an ad hoc basis. Letter E-26 was addressed to the brothers on Mount Alfaf after a monk was expelled and went to live in an isolated cage. Ishoʿyahb III tried to reconcile them and urged the monks to make peace with the dissident without scandal, rather than Ishoʿyahb III having to resort to human authority, which might provoke more scandal and schism. He appealed to their sense of loyalty and the memory of the Fathers,[211] and described the signs of real Christian discipline, which apparently were lacking, most of all humility:

> Now, in my opinion, it is neither possible nor useful (ܡܘܬܪܐ) that someone is a worshipper of Christ in truth, who is not full of love for Christ, as this is the sign of Christian discipleship (ܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ). Neither is it possible that someone is not humble and sound, who confirmed this spiritual law in his soul, which is the great love our Lord taught; nor is it possible (ܡܫܟܚܢܐ) and can it be (ܫܘܝܐ), that someone is not reconciliatory and pleasant who acquired the foundation of his actions (ܣܘܥܪ̈ܢܘܗܝ) in this humility as great as this great commandment.[212]

When he was metropolitan of Adiabene, Ishoʿyahb III attempted to regulate monasticism in the whole area and to restore orthodoxy at the same time. As we already have seen in his *Life of Ishoʿsabran,* he was critical about 'Nestorians who lived in Adiabene in the name of the monastic life', while they accepted the teaching of Shabor. Moreover, some monasteries had become lucrative investments and 'unskilled leaders wanted to grow rich by means of the number of brothers'.[213]

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209 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, p. 148.
210 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-8, pp. 238-39.
211 The same argumentation appeared in E-17 and E-48.
212 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-26, p. 48.
213 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-3, p. 119.

Ishoʿyahb III wanted therefore to bring all the monks under the control of monasteries and supervisors, as becomes clear from his long letter to all the monks in Adiabene (M-3).[214] Ishoʿyahb III's descriptions of the aberrations resemble those formerly ascribed to Messalians, but he did not explicitly call them 'Messalians'. Ishoʿyahb III held that the traditions of the Fathers should be kept and that this meant a sober, strict and quiet life with works of charity. He rejected the self-indulgence of many monks who went their own way in villages and houses with a broad variety of customs, while they begged or even took forcefully the belongings of the inhabitants and travelled on. According to Ishoʿyahb III, disobedience was the source of all this evil and he urged the monks to go back to their former monasteries and comply with the habits there. Instead of begging, the monks should work for a sober living. Ishoʿyahb III tried to convince the monks of the necessity of the measures by reminding them of their special position in God's house, and wrote:

> Therefore it is necessary for you to hate disobedience and for us to persuade you to obey the words of God, since we are the ministers of the word of life and legal vindicators of our Lord's vitalizing commandments in God's big house, which is the holy Church. We are house lords, that is to say, caretakers, or whatever someone might want to say. And we must handle you with the highest care as precious vessels in this house, so that the sanctuary of the Lord will remain in the glory that becomes him. […] For you are our joy and our pride and the crown of our head, if you are established well in our Lord. So be like our hope (which we put) in you, O God lovers, so that through you our glory that is in our Lord Jesus Christ will increase for the eye of all the people and within the holy Church of our good God.[215]

The monks should not live scattered anymore, but return to the living place where they were educated, or choose a place themselves while being submitted to legal heads. These heads should be a good example in everything. They should lead the community with the paternal laws. While tolerating weakness and enduring difficult habits, they should patiently turn everyone to the labour of the spiritual life. 'And *in all things* they *present* themselves (their *qnoma*) as a beautiful *example, in all* their *good works and in teaching*, as is written' (Titus 2:7).[216] Ishoʿyahb III further emphasized the enlightening influence monks could exert:

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[214] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-3, p. 111.
[215] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-3, pp. 114 and 120.
[216] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-3, p. 115.
ܘܒܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܫܦܝܪܬܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗܘܢ ܢܚܘܘܢ ܒܟܠ ܥܒܕ̈ܐ ܛܒ̈ܐ. ܘܒܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܟܬܝܒ.
The Peshitta has 'your soul' (ܢܦܫܟ) instead of 'their *qnoma*'.

> The soul of the distressed may receive comfort; the weak will be strengthened with power; the Church of our Lord will flourish; those who err will be turned to the light of divine knowledge by your hand; and through you there will always be glory for the priests and people of the Lord, amen.[217]

Ishoʿyahb III gave an extensive list of rules for monks aimed at ending the unwanted practices, but it hardly contained comments on the ascetic practice itself. As he claimed that the rules came from the Fathers, he underpinned the regulations by many quotes from them and the Bible, especially on the necessity of working. Up to a certain degree, however, one was allowed to add deviant customs, but only behind closed doors, out of sight and hearing and not affecting the community.[218]

The following letter (M-4) also belonged to Ishoʿyahb III's attempts to regulate monasticism. He asked here Chorbishop Terisishoʿ to make the monks study his letter. Whoever resisted should be expelled from the territory. The necessity for the reform was formulated positively again as it stated that monks were highly valued and should be taken care of. Their special role lay in being a mirror which reflected the light of the Gospel (ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ) and thus led to prosperity of all.[219]

Another letter from this period is directed to Bishop Jacob of a city not mentioned, to warn him against two unnamed celebrities who did not comply with Ishoʿyahb III's regulations and had therefore settled in Jacob's diocese, as they thought that they had more freedom there. Ishoʿyahb III wanted to prohibit this by having the rules applied there as well, so that the offenders could be chased everywhere. As Ishoʿyahb III had to be careful with his letters, he did not give the names of the famous persons who had to be excommunicated, but stated that the carrier would provide these. He further promised to forgive the offenders when they repented.[220]

Ishoʿyahb III guarded the orthodoxy of the monasteries. He wrote approvingly, for instance, to Abbot Bar Hadbeshabba and his brothers of a monastery not further specified, that they had shown their orthodoxy by expelling someone ('the angel of Satan') from their monastery and thus restoring orthodoxy (ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܝܐ).[221] Because of this, Ishoʿyahb III was willing to meet

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[217] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-3, p. 116.
ܘܬܬܒܝܐ ܒܟܘܢ ܢܦܫܐ ܕܡܟܐܒܐ. ܘܡܚܝܠܘܬܐ ܢܬܚܝܠܘܢ ܒܚܝܠܐ. ܘܬܦܪܥ ܒܟܘܢ ܥܕܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ. ܘܛܥܝܐ ܢܬܦܢܘܢ ܒܐܝܕܝܟܘܢ ܠܘܬ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ. ܘܢܗܘܐ ܒܟܘܢ ܫܘܒܗܪܐ ܕ ܠܥܠܡ. ܠܟܗܢܐ ܘܠܥܡܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ..

[218] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-3, pp. 115-16.

[219] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-4, pp. 120-21.

[220] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-5, pp. 121-23.

[221] Ovidiu Ioan identifies Bar Hadbeshabba with the one mentioned by Thomas of Marga. This Bar Hadbeshabba had been a monk at the Great Monastery who had left it together with Jacob the founder of Bet Abe. For a while

him at 'our Sinai', 'our Bet Shekinta' (ܒܝܬ ܫܟܝܢܬܐ), which most probably was the Great Monastery.[222] Ishoʿyahb III called the monks 'spiritual' and emphasized that the right belief and right actions belonged together. He seemed to want to mobilize them as spiritual soldiers who openly expressed their faith by celebrating the liturgy.

> Know therefore, O chaste, as I think you know, that just as the word of the Lord ordained the practice of the virtues (or: asceticism, ܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ) under a secret covering (ܬܚܦܝܬܐ ܕܟܣܝܘܬܐ),[223] it also gives the freedom of speech to proclaim the glory of the faith above the candlestick and on rooftops, and before kings and leaders, and the liturgy (ܬܫܡܫܬܐ) of the Lord elevates it up to the position of glory. For those who think that life can be found by other work, apart from the strength and glory of the faith, think so in vain. It is even said that 'nobody acts righteously, if he does not believe correctly'.[224] And while we invert it, we say: 'Nobody believes correctly, if he does not act righteously'.[225] Therefore the right way of life (ܕܘܒܪܐ) is the impulse for a life out of faith; and the faith that vitalizes all is the soul of the spiritual way of life. The effort in both is good and very noble for spiritual soldiers, which means firmness in both, which means victory in both.[226]

The recommendation to express faith openly by the liturgy is remarkable when compared to letter E-39, where Ishoʿyahb III mentioned that he was only able to perform a 'moderate liturgy'.[227] It might have been a theme that concerned him by then. Whether he differed in his reaction from others is not clear. He also gave some recommendations:

he stayed there, but returned to the monastery he had founded himself before in Hadod. He stayed there until his death. Ioan, *Muslime und Araber*, p. 33; Budge (trans.), *The Book of Governors*, Chapter 1.15, pp. 68-69.

[222] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-13, pp. 155-56. The Izla Monastery was called 'the house of the *Shekinta* of the revelations of the Lord', see Nau, 'Histoires d'Abraham de Kaskar et de Babai de Nisibe', pp. 162 and 168. A Syriac variation of the term *Shekinta* is *Shekina*, see Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* 2, col. 4154-55. This corresponds with the Hebrew term *shekinah*, which describes the presence of God in finite places. See also section 1.4.3. For the Qurʾanic resonances of *sakina* (سَكِينَةٌ), see T. Fahd, 'Sakīna', *EI*[2] 8 (1995), pp. 888-89.

[223] Compare Matt. 6:6: ܐܢ̱ܬ ܕܝܢ ܡܳܐ ܕܡܨܠܐ ܐܢ̱ܬ: ܥܘܠ ܠܬܘܢܟ: ܘܐܚܘܕ ܬܪܥܟ ܘܨܠܝ ܠܐܒܘܟ ܕܒܟܣܝܐ. ܘܐܒܘܟ ܕܚܙܐ ܒܟܣܝܐ ܢܦܪܘܥܟ ܒܓܠܝܐ.
NRSV: 'But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.' The Peshitta adds: 'openly'.

[224] Compare Rom. 1:17 (referring to Hab. 2:4): NRSV: 'For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written: "The one who is righteous will live by faith".'

[225] As we have seen in section 3.9.2, the Kharajites also rejected the doctrine of justification by faith without works, but there are no further indications here that allow speculations on possible connections.

[226] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-13, pp. 156-57.
ܕܥܘ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܘ ܢܟܦܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܡܣܒܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ. ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ: ܬܚܝܬ ܬܚܦܝܬܐ ܕܟܣܝܘܬܐ ܦܩܕܬ ܡܠܬܐ ܡܪܢܝܬܐ: ܗܟܢܐ ܠܡܟܪܙܘܬܐ ܕܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܥܠ ܡܢܪܬܐ ܘܥܠ ܐ̈ܓܪܐ ܘܩܕܡ ܡ̈ܠܟܐ ܘܪ̈ܫܢܐ: ܝܗܒܐ ܦܪܗܣܝܐ ܠܡܬܬܪܘ. ܘܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܡܪܢܝܬܐ ܠܡܘܪܒܐ ܕܫܘܒܚܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܗ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܡܪܝܡܐ. [157] ܡܬܐܡܪܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܝܟ ܐܡܪ ܕܐܡܪ: ܕܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܚܝܠܐ ܘܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܐܝܬ ܠܡܫܟܚܘ ܚ̈ܝܐ ܡܢ ܦܘܠܚܢ ܐܚܪܢ. ܐܦ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܠܒܪ. ܕܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܬܬܪܨ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ: ܐܢ ܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ. ܘܟܕ ܡܗܦܟܝܢ ܠܗ ܐܡܪܝܢ. ܕܐܦܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܗܝܡܢ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ: ܐܢ ܠܐ ܡܬܬܪܨ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ. ܟܕܝܢ ܙܘܥܐ ܗܘ ܕܚ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܕܘܒܪܐ ܬܪܝܨܐ. ܘܢܦܫܐ ܗܝ ܕܕܘܒܪܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ: ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܡܚܝܢܝܬ ܟܠ. ܘܠܐܝܐ ܗܝ ܘܫܦܝܪ ܝܬܝܪ ܠܦܠܚ̈ܐ ܪ̈ܘܚܢܝܐ: ܫܩܝܠܘܬܐ ܕܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܫܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܙܟܘܬܐ ܕܒܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ.
ܐܡܪܝܢ: correction of Duval's ܐܡܪܝܡ (see Vat 156, folio 68v).

[227] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-39, p. 65.

> Persevere in prayer, for it is the mother of virtue. Be diligent in it and be confident, because for a sleepy mind even the (right) confession is without fruits! Let the spiritual invocations (ܩܪ̈ܝܢܐ, *qiryane*) always be bread for you; because the force of the soul is hidden in them. […] Illuminate beautifully the lamp of your mind with the oil of discernment so that you may see the stronghold correctly in the truth of the Gospel. For there is much darkness of errors at this time […]. We need therefore at this time much caution and the vision of an enlightened mind, so that maybe we deserve mercy and will find eternal salvation. Our Lord is near and if we want to seek him in his secret inner room, we will be found easily, if we take good care of our soul.[228]

Ishoʿyahb III insisted that his rule should be obeyed. In M-15 he also wrote Abbot Abraham that he should not listen to stupid men (especially a specific old man who seems to have been very disturbing), but demand obedience from the monks and send the disobedient away. They are, however, allowed to appeal to the Bishop.[229]

As catholicos, Ishoʿyahb III counted on the effort of monks and explained what happened if they were driven away. In his second letter to the people of the rebelling province of Qatar (C-19), he described the problems which arose after Bishop Abraham broke with the Church, drove the monks violently away and threatened anyone who helped Christians. Ishoʿyahb III now urged them to stay with the Saints of God (the monks) living there, so that the monks were not compelled to leave their land, as they played a valuable role for the people and the bishops: the monks guarded the example of the heavenly way of life in Christianity; they also offered a place of refuge for the oppressed; they were hidden helpers for the bishops in the struggle of prayer to fulfil the ecclesiastical ministry.[230]

In his short letter to the monks of Qatar themselves, whom he also called 'doctors in theology', Ishoʿyahb III attempted to mobilize them. He wrote about the spiritual arms against impiety of which he considered the zeal for truth the most important. He gave biblical examples and brought to mind that Peter had started his apostleship after suffering from injustice by others. Ishoʿyahb III stated that those who in the past had rejected worldly honour for God were now a source of help. In this time of trial, the monks should follow this example of spiritual struggle

[228] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-13, pp. 157-58.
ܒܝ ܠܨܠܘܬܐ ܐܬܐܡܢܘ. ܗ̇ܝ ܗ̇ܝ ܓܝܪ ܐܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ. ܘܐܬܚܦܛܘ ܒܗ̇ ܘܐܬܠܒܒܘ. ܠܗܘܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܡܟܐ: ܕܠܐ ܦܐܪ̈ܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܐܦ ܗ̇ܝ ܬܘܕܝܬܐ. ܩܪ̈ܝܢܐ ܪ̈ܘܚܢܝܐ: ܠܚܡܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܟܘܢ. ܒܗܘܢ ܓܝܪ ܛܡܝܪ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ. [...] ܐܢܗܪܘ ܫܦܝܪ ܫܪܓܐ ܕܬܪܥܝܬܟܘܢ ܒܡܫܚܐ ܕܦܘܪܫܢܘܬܐ. ܕܬܚܙܘܢ ܠܬܪܥܐ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ ܒܫܪܪܗ ܕܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ. ܐܦ ܣܓܝ ܠܗ ܓܝܪ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܚܫܘܟܐ ܕܛܘܥܝ̈ܐ. [...] ܠܙܗܝܪܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ. ܘܠܚܙܘܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܢܗܝܪܐ: ܣܢܝܩܝܢ [158] ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ. ܕܟܒܪ ܢܫܘܐ ܠܪ̈ܚܡܐ. ܘܢܫܟܚ ܦܘܪܩܢܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ. ܩܪܝܒ ܡܪܢ ܗܘ. ܘܐܢ ܨܒܝܢ ܚܢܢ ܠܡܒܥܝܘܗܝ: ܠܓܘ ܡܢ ܡܛܠܠܐ ܕܬܘܢܗ ܡܛܫܝܐ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ ܦܫܝܩܐܝܬ. ܐܢ ܢܛܪ ܚܢܢ ܢܦܫܢ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܝܠܢ.

[229] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-15, pp. 159-62.

[230] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-19, pp. 271.
ܘܠܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܚܣܝ̈ܢܐ ܕܐܬܬܘܬܒܘ ܒܗ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܕܬܬܒܬܒܘܢ: ܐܝܟ ܡܘܕܝܢܐ ܡܩܒܠܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܟܠ ܟܠ: ܘܢܦܩܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܐܬܪܗܘܢ ܠܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܕܘܒܪܐ ܫܡܝܢܐ ܠܡܫܝܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܢܛܪܝܢ ܠܗ: ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܐܬܪܐ ܕܡܦܠܛܐ ܠܟܠ ܚܒܝܫܐ ܕܐܠܝܨ̈ܐ: ܘܠܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܕܡܦܠܛܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܦܘܪܢܣܐ ܕܒܣܝܡܐ ܕܢܘܚ ܠܕܘܪܐ ܕܐܬܚܡܣܢܘܬܗ ܕܚܕ: ܘܠܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܥܕܪܢܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܛܫܝܐ ܗܘܘ ܡܥܕܪܢܐ ܒܥܩܬܐ ܒܐܓܘܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܗܬܐ: ܠܡܫܡܠܝܘ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܥܕܬܐ ܒܐܓܘܢܐ ܕܒܥܘܬܐ ܠܗ.

in order to put the so-called bishops to shame.[231] This mobilization to fight does not seem to have been confined to monks. As we have seen above, Catholicos Ishoʿyahb III incited both the nobles (ܪ̈ܘܪܒܢܐ) and the clerics of Nisibis to fight against the 'blasphemer of the adorable mystery of the salvation of the world'. They should fight for the sake of the future world and the honour in this world.[232]

4.4.3. Mysticism

Babai had been abbot of the Great Monastery emphasizing the ascetic way of life. His commentary on Evagrius' work emphasized the purification of the soul and its *qnoma* in order to see a temporary reflection of the Trinity. We have argued in Chapter 2 that this might have been an additional reason to defend the doctrine of two *qnoma*. As we have seen in the descriptions of monks in M-3, Ishoʿyahb III connected purification with *qnoma*. He stated that those with desire for perfection 'made their *qnoma* pure vessels'.[233] In the next letter (M-4), which has been briefly discussed above, he also described monks as 'vessels'. They were a 'mirror place' reflecting the shining Christian way of life:

> For we know that when those who are a mirror place (ܕܘܟܬ ܡܚܙܝܬܐ), that is to say a faithful image (ܨܠܡܐ) of the Christian way of life, are purified and fair shining with the virtues which are pleasing to the will of God, the whole ecclesiastical body walks in the light of the Gospel: priests rejoice, the nation (*ʿamma*) profits, deceivers are converted, pagans are educated and the glory of God is honoured greatly by the faith of many.[234]

Here we have thus also indications that the concepts of *qnoma*, soul, purification and mirror could belong closely together and enlighten the ascetics and hence the whole Church. The *Life of Ishoʿsabran* also offers such indications. The hardships he endured were aimed at salvation, for which he had 'to be made perfect in his *qnoma* by the free will' (ܘܡܛܠ ܡܬܓܡܪܢܐ ܒܚܐܪܘܬܐ ܠܡܬܓܡܪܘܬܗ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ).[235] This seems to stand in the tradition as formulated by Babai. Another example of the interpretation of *qnoma* connected with the reflection of the glory of God in vessels might be found in the first letter Ishoʿyahb III wrote as catholicos. In rather cryptic language he first spoke of the witnesses of God's word and guidance to humanity. During the 'interval'

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[231] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-20, pp. 273-76.
[232] As shown in letters C-3 and C-4, discussed above in section 3.7.3
[233] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-3, p. 112. This quotation refers to 2 Tim. 2:21. On M-3, see section 4.3.1.
[234] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-4, p. 121.
ܝܕܥܝܢ ܓܝܪ ܕܟܕ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܕܘܟܬ ܡܚܙܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܟܝܬ ܨܠܡܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܠܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ: ܡܬܕܟܝܢ ܘܡܫܦܪܝܢ ܘܡܨܚܝܢ ܒܡܝܬܪ̈ܬܐ ܕܫܦܝܪ̈ܢ ܠܨܒܝܢܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܟܠܗ ܓܘܫܡܐ ܥܕܬܢܝܐ ܒܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܡܗܠܟ. ܟܗܢ̈ܐ ܚܕܝܢ. ܘܥܡܐ ܡܬܝܬܪ. ܘܛܥ̈ܝܐ ܦܢܝܢ. ܘܚܢ̈ܦܐ ܡܬܬܠܡܕܝܢ. ܘܫܘܒܚܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܝܕ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܡܬܝܩܪ.
[235] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran', Chapter 15, p. 565.

(ܘܒܗܐ ܕܡܫܝܚ ܐܬܐ), the Church originated and was full of light which was reflected in wonderful vessels.

> Whenever the almighty God loses a rational (ܡܠܝܠܐ) witness, O our Brother, he appoints to heaven and earth trustworthy witnesses of his word to humans. Sometimes then, when he needed corporeal angels, if it is not impious to speak thus, he used the ‘insensitive mediators’[236] to guide the rational (ܡܠܝܠܐ) according to the wisdom of his *mdabbranuta*. And in the short time of the interval he transformed our nature by a miraculous change towards a heavenly way of life (ܕܘܒܪܐ) and he called it Church, and the light of the immortal life and the wisdom of his eternal power filled her. We tasted and saw a reflection (ܒܡܚܙܐ) of the glory of our Lord in wonderful vessels. And not long after these events, […] and no longer as the measurement of our short cut life, he withdrew, as is manifest, from the middle of his Church, full of light, the glorious rays (ܙܠܝܩܐ) of his eternal power, if it is right that we also speak this way.[237]

Ishoʿyahb III realized that now people had put their hope in him and he was embarrassed that God’s holy people had sunk so deep, but he trusted in God’s grace. He asked Isaac therefore to pray for the Church in total submission, to begin with prayer for the salvation of Ishoʿyahb III’s *qnoma.*

> Ask God in fervent prayer that he will send the help of his power from the height of his inaccessibility (ܡܢ ܪܘܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܩܪܒܢܘܬܗ), first for the salvation of the life of my *qnoma*, for the grandeur and honour of his holy Church and for the glory of his honourable and adorable name for ever.[238]

The *Life of Ishoʿsabran* can give some other indications of the way Ishoʿyahb III valued asceticism, because he presented him as a great example for all Christians who wanted to reach the righteous life by the exertion of labour (ܒܪܗܛܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ). Ishoʿsabran ‘showed the practices of perfection in his *qnoma* (ܚܘܝ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ) and for the martyrs he impressed (ܨܒܥ) a sign of victory by his cross’.[239] The many extreme hardships Ishoʿsabran sought for himself are approvingly reported, as they were done for the sake of Christ. Was this given as an example and was this allowed in the monasteries? It is further remarkable that these actions seem to be valued higher than the study of the books. Probably Ishoʿyahb III wrote this hagiography

[236] The description ‘insensitive mediators’ (ܡܨ̈ܥܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܪ̈ܓܘܫܬܐ) is difficult to translate in English. Here, it probably refers both to angels who are considered to be rational beings without the senses, and to ascetics who strive not to be affected by the impressions of the physical world.
[237] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-1, p. 219.
[238] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum,* C-1, p. 220.
ܘܐܦܢܘ ܒܬܫܚܬܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ. ܕܒܨܠܘܬܐ ܕܚܝܠܬܐ ܢܫܕܪ ܡܢ ܪܘܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܩܪܒܢܘܬܗ: ܠܥܘܕܪܢܐ ܠܦܘܪܩܢ ܚܝ̈ܐ ܕܩܢܘܡܝ.
[239] Chabot, ‘Histoire de Jésus-Sabran’, Preface, pp. 508-509.

for a wider audience, including a wide range of monks, not all of whom could have had received higher theological education.

4.5. Philosophy and Divine Paideia

4.5.1. Philosophy

Several letters of Ishoʿyahb III show an ambivalent attitude to philosophy: he both rejected and employed it. In a random sample of ten pages in the Duval edition, Sebastian Brock found 44 instances of Greek words, representing 28 different words.[240] This use of philosophical terms that are derived from Greek is especially clear in M-23. Here, Ishoʿyahb III applied philosophical terminology to demonstrate the fallacies in the arguments of his young opponent, and he scorned therefore the 'opinion of the present Athenian youth'.[241]

He might have used Aristotle's *On Interpretation* and its commentaries. As has been discussed in Chapter 1, this was not uncommon among educated Christians in the Church of the East. We also have noticed some Aristotelian influences in the work of Babai and Ishoʿyahb II. During Ishoʿyahb III's lifetime, in 645, the Miaphysite Athanasius of Balad made a revision of the *Eisagoge*.[242] Several other Aristotelian commentaries that seem to have been studied earlier were replaced by newer versions in the seventh and eighth centuries.[243] Although these texts originated mainly in Miaphysite circles and were only to become familiar in the Church of the East somewhat later, it is not impossible that Ishoʿyahb had already some knowledge of at least Athanasius' revision of the *Eisagoge*. A further analysis of Ishoʿyahb III's dependence on the translations and versions that circulated during his lifetime falls beyond the scope of this study.

Philosophy was not an aim in itself for Ishoʿyahb III. It should serve spirituality, was necessary to judge thoughts and arguments, and could also be used to refute opponents. This can be seen in the following selection from his letters. When Ishoʿyahb III was still a monk in Bet Abe, he wrote a letter (E-5) to Daniel of Arbela, a doctor in theology, who also corresponded with Abbot Jacob. Without being more specific, Ishoʿyahb III praised Daniel for being promoted to 'the position of that famous theologian' and having 'absorbed the imprints' of his

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240 Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning', p. 18.
241 Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-23, pp. 176-89.
242 Sebastian Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition', in Ch. Burnett (ed.), *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts: The Syriac, Arabic and Medieval Traditions* (London, 1993), pp. 3-5, also in idem, *From Ephrem to Romanos*, Chapter 13.
243 Henri Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d'Aristote du grec au syriaque: Études sur la transmission des textes de l'Organon et leur interprétation philosophique* (Paris, 2004), pp. 91-97.

judgments in his rational nature'.[244] The learning process is seen here as an imprint in the rational nature, which reminds one of the language of Babai.

Ishoʿyahb III then briefly judged two statements on the congruence between being and perception, which he did not elaborate: 'First, I am seen from that which I am; this is unscientific. Second then, I am as I am thought; this is a fugitive from vainglory.' Whether this arose from a struggle with the concept of *parsopa* or not is not clear. Ishoʿyahb III further struggled with some philosophical remarks of Daniel on 'use'. Ishoʿyahb III gave several examples of various forms of 'use', culminating in logic: 'And for the intellect that generated many fatal thoughts that do not belong to the species, rationality (ܡܠܝܠܘܬܐ) is used as something that is for you the greatest of all these distinctions'.[245]

In M-1, the enforced letter of commendation for Maremmeh, Ishoʿyahb III gave four interdependent criteria of good priesthood: faith, discipline, learning and reason.[246] Reason, finally, is needed to gather 'all the sophisms (ܣܘܦ̈ܣܡܐ) of the heretics with its net of thoughts' and to defeat 'the erring under the foot of his tongue'. One should therefore know the order of all the rational faculties (ܡܠܚܡܘܬܐ ܕܟܠ ܪ̈ܘܚܐ ܡܠܝ̈ܠܬܐ). This culminated in and was perfected by the 'great principle adorning them all', namely 'a composed mind and love of truth.'[247]

Ishoʿyahb III ridiculed in some letters the inappropriate and vain use of philosophy of his opponents. In E-20, the letter in which he refuted the arguments of Yazdshabor, a mighty nobleman who was fond of syllogisms and dialectic, he portrayed him as someone not considered a nobleman, but rather an accuser raising his voice.[248]

Some of Ishoʿyahb III's remarks seem to play with well-known ways of arguing. In E-26, for instance, he distinguished between 'possible' (ܡܫܟܚܢܐ) and 'it can be' (ܡܫܟܚܐ), which expressions also figure in a Syriac version of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*. In letter M-23 he discussed several logical errors, due to confusions between necessity and possibility and he

[244] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-5, p. 7.
ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܠܦܘܠܦܘܣܐ ܕܬܐܘܠܘ ܓܒܗܘ ܗܘ ܡܫܡܗܐ ܐܬܟܠܝ: ܘܒܚܢܐ ܕܡܠܝܠܘܬܗ ܐܬܝܠܕ ܠܦ̈ܬܓܡܐ ܕܒܘܝܢ̈ܗ، ܐܬܥܛܦܬ ܢܦܫܐ:
[245] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-5, p. 7.
[246] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-1, p. 107. ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܕܘܒ̈ܪܐ. ܝܘܠܦܢܐ. ܗܘܢܐ. Faith 'is the foundation of spiritual life and without it we can neither live nor participate in the heavenly possessions'. Discipline is the 'spiritual nourishment that guards the life of faith in the spiritual mind. And just as we neither can live without nourishment nor can be nourished without life, so can discipline not vitalize without faith'. Learning is necessary 'for a faithful man who possesses the spiritual discipline, so that when he opens his mouth he has the word of truth, which is collected from the spiritual *theoria* (ܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܕܪܘܚ) of all the godly writings and from the complete teaching (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ) of the Saints'. See on this ܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܕܪܘܚ also above, section 2.1.3.4.
[247] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-1, pp. 107-108.
[248] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-20, p. 37.

used many philosophical terms.[249] Ishoʿyahb III seemed to take some (possibly deformed) knowledge of the first chapters of Aristotle's *Categories* for granted when he wrote in M-7 of a definition which has many distinctions (or *differentia*) 'above' it, and on how things should be named.[250]

In C-3, Ishoʿyahb III insisted on a correct and stable use of terminology and he opposed those who 'preach the wandering of unstable names'. As we have seen, he held that 'every appellation is unstable that is not attributed to a true *qnoma* with the unchangeable property of the distinct peculiarity of his *qnoma*'.[251] Here, *qnoma* was not directly used in a Christological context, but it shows in general its significance for Ishoʿyahb III. The required relation between name and *qnoma* reminds one again of Ephrem's view. A last example is found in C-21 where Ishoʿyahb III used some formal philosophical language to indicate that faith is necessary. Starting with the proposition that '*all things can be done for the one who believes*', he explained that a proposition (ܡܬܬܦܝܣܢܘܬܐ) in opposite analogy (ܚܘܫܒܢܐ ܡܩܘܒܠܐ) would imply that without faith nothing would be possible.[252]

4.5.2. Divine Paideia

Earlier chapters have discussed the concept of God's pedagogical measures in life, aimed at finding and acknowledging him as the transcendent cause of all, and the special role of philosophy here. Aspects of this divine *paideia* can also be found in the work of Ishoʿyahb III. The word *mdabbranuta* appears 17 times in his letters, although this is not always in context of God's guiding, and variations of the word 'learning' (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ) appear 53 times. Ishoʿyahb III was also concerned with monastic life, which essentially should be aimed at reflecting the light of Christ.

The close relation between philosophy and the superior divine *paideia* is especially discernible in letter E-22 to Yazdgard. This otherwise unknown person had written an admirable essay to which Ishoʿyahb III had contributed, although he refused to be recognized for this. The essay was on ratio, soul, body, virtue and the ability to know. God had provided the means enabling people not to be deceived concerning God's virtue and to keep the virtue in them un-

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[249] Compare Hoffmann, *De Hermeneuticis apud Syros Aristoteleis*, p. 49. Greek terms used by Aristotle: δυνατὸν and ἐνδεχόμενον, see Immanuel Bekker (ed.), *Aristoteles. Graece.* 1 (Berlin, 1831), p. 22.

[250] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-9, p. 135; King, *The Earliest Syriac Translation of Aristotle's Categories*, pp. 98-103 and 106-107.

[251] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-3, p. 224.

[252] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-21, p. 277. ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܡܫܟܚ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܕܡܗܝܡܢ This is an exact quotation of Mark 9:23.

spoiled. The highest virtue is love, while God is greater than all science and should be glorified.[253]

In a very short letter to a priest called John, Ishoʿyahb III gave a step-by step résumé of the beauty of several concepts. He described how the highest virtue could be found—by the grace of God—via a process in which the ratio searches nature; wisdom is found by learning; and finally love is found in the spiritual law. This description stood in the ascetic tradition that was also promoted by Babai.

> One beauty for the corporeal beings is the word (ܡܠܬܐ); one beauty for the rational (ܡܠܝܠܐ) is wisdom; and one beauty for the wise is love: and the three of them are from the gift of the grace of God. The first is in nature; the second in learning (ܝܘܠܦܢܐ) and the last in the spiritual law.[254]

The importance of study can be found in letter M-11 sent to people in prison:

> A few books of nature and many books of the spirit brought a vitalizing support for weak reasoning thought:. And remember well: the world, time, actual leadership, the many common sufferings, the continuous changes of corrupt things, the hasty transition of temporal conquerors, the fall of honourable power and the ruin of praiseworthy wisdom […], the escape by death from the pains of the troubles, especially from sin itself.[255]

Learning and purification was thus brought in connection with the sufferings of the times. This can already be seen in an early letter on 'temptation' in which Ishoʿyahb III wrote: 'By the power of the disasters that occur, we are measured against the growth of fruits by chastisement.' He compared this to the ploughing of the earth which first makes painful gashes, but results in useful fruits later. Referring to Heb. 12:7 he concluded that one should therefore 'endure the chastening because God deals with you as with sons (ܒܢܝܐ).'[256]

This purification by means of trials was also clearly expressed when Ishoʿyahb III wrote in E-38 to a certain bishop Aba, who suffered mentally and physically for the sake of truth, that many others probably were about to suffer the same. Referring to Dan. 12:10, he stated that in this time of injustice people 'will be elected, tried and made clean'.[257]

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[253] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-22, pp. 42-44.
[254] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-33, p. 58. ܚܕ ܫܘܦܪܐ ܠܦܓܪܢܐ ܡܠܬܐ. ܘܚܕ ܫܘܦܪܐ ܠܡܠܝܠܐ ܚܟܡܬܐ. ܘܚܕ ܫܘܦܪܐ ܠܚܟܝܡܐ ܚܘܒܐ. ܘܬܠܬܝܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܡܘܗܒܬܐ ܕܛܝܒܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܗ̇ܘ ܡܢ ܒܟܝܢܐ. ܗ̇ܘ ܕܝܢ ܒܝܘܠܦܢܐ. ܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܢܡܘܣܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ.
[255] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-11, p. 151.
[256] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-6, pp. 8-9. Cf. Heb. 12:7 (NRSV): 'Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline?'
[257] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-38, p. 64.

According to East Syrians, disasters and wars could fit in the divine *paideia*, as they believed that God gave every period the lesson it needed in order to reach salvation. As we have amply demonstrated above, apocalyptic thinking permeated Ishoʿyahb III's letters from the beginning and might even have fostered the importance attached to salvation. His apocalyptic thinking can be summarized as follows: the end times would be preceded by the coming of Satan to the world with the accompanying great distresses and the loss of discernment and virtue, which one could see everywhere around. It was a punishment for sin but could also be a chance to be perfected and find salvation.

In his first letter as catholicos, Ishoʿyahb III spoke of God's *mdabbranuta* of people during history in a very general and summarizing way. God would always provide a rational witness of his word. The Church played an important role in this and had been full of light, but during Ishoʿyahb III's life time it would be obvious that God had withdrawn the rays of his eternal power.[258]

Already during the time of Persian-Byzantine wars, which Ishoʿyahb described as a 'storm of barbarians', he linked the terrible events and the problems caused by the rivalling Miaphysites to the rebellion of Satan against God. He could, however, interpret this in a positive way. For believers who were predestined, these afflictions would rather form an opportunity for salvation while being made perfect by the 'sons of disobedience'.[259] In one of his later episcopal letters, he considered the lack of defending the true faith a sign of the present-day end times.[260] Somewhat later, during devastating internecine Arab wars around Nisibis, Ishoʿyahb III thought that the community quickly might come to an end. As we have seen, he compared the situation to that of the stubborn Egyptians who suffered from the ten plagues.[261] In M-30, he warned bishops about the imminent destruction of the world.[262] Possibly around the same time, when Nisibis was afflicted by pestilence, he explained this as an example of God's *mdabbranuta* in which the plague was a 'chastising filled of unspeakable mercy' which the Nisibenes deserved for their sin. He advised them therefore to ask God for mercy.[263]

The idea of living at the end times also can be seen in Ishoʿyahb III's view as Catholicos on the deterioration in Jerusalem. After people there had unsuccessfully sought help from the Church of the East, he wrote to them that he had been startled that they even had to ask for gifts from his *politeia*. He compared this to the past, when 'nations had turned to the life that

[258] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-1, p. 219, see for full quotation also above section 4.4.3.
[259] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-2, pp. 2-3.
[260] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-48, pp. 94-96.
[261] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-9, pp. 141-44. See also above, section 3.7.1.
[262] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-30, pp. 211-14.
[263] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-31, pp. 214-15.

shone from Jerusalem as the light from the Gospel'. Now, however, 'the shadows of the world lower to go down to the end' that was foretold and 'the distress already laid hold of the world as a severe illness, from which also that very glorious sanctuary suffers as is seen: it sends a request out of her poverty to desert borders of the settlements of this house of the community.' He regretted that his *politeia* itself was very poor and had nothing to give them, except for a small symbolic coin and for prayer.[264] He also saw the apostasy and the destruction of churches in Fars as the symptoms of old age and ruin of the world.[265]

Ishoʿyahb III further spoke of the 'barbarians who opposed us (because of) our sins',[266] and it was also God who gave the *Tayyaye* 'the leadership over the world this time'.[267] In these end times, the Arabs played their own God-given role and therefore had to be submitted to and be paid taxes.[268]

All the examples give the impression that Ishoʿyahb III not so much gave instances of God's *mdabbranuta* in history, but rather concentrated on the present situation in which Satan had come and the end times were anticipated. Notwithstanding this highly apocalyptic view he did not fall into a passive fatalism, but fostered missionary activities, adjusted liturgy, encouraged people to stay firm in their belief and even wanted to build a school at the end of his life,[269] which must have been aimed for a new generation.

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[264] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-13, pp. 245-46.
[265] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, pp. 247-48.
[266] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, E-39, p. 66
[267] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-14, p. 251.
[268] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-18, pp. 268-69.
[269] Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors,* Chapter 2.7 and 2.8, pp. 73-76 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 131-32 and 147-50).

CHAPTER FIVE

OTHER CATHOLICOI OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST UNTIL 700

5.1. Early Arab rule and its contested succession

Ishoʿyahb III's apocalyptic view may have found further confirmation by the end of his life when the internal rivalries between the Arabs escalated and resulted in the first civil war (656-61).[1] This war continued under his pupil and follower George I, who reigned until the second civil war and who also tried to solve the problems in the Church of the East around the Persian Gulf. Because the circumstances surrounding the civil wars may have affected Ishoʿyahb III's immediate successors in a similar way, more information about the decades after Ishoʿyahb III's death until the establishment of a more pronounced and restrictive Islamic rule might further elucidate the relations between the Church of the East and nascent Islam.

After Muʿawiya (661-80) had won the first civil war, he moved the caliphate to Damascus. Under his dynasty a relatively stable and organized state developed. Members of the former ruling class here lost their status and identity. They seem to have forgotten their past, which stood in contrast to the *dihqans* in Iran and Iraq who rather successfully emphasized their former administrative and cultural values in the Sasanian Empire. Muʿawiya based his position in Syria on troops who mainly belonged to a confederacy headed by the Kalb. These Kalb were Miaphysite Christians who had assisted the Ghassanids in defending the desert borders of Byzantium. The elite of the Kalb retained the Christian religion and Muʿawiya won their support by marrying one of their daughters. The son of this marriage was Yazid, who was to succeed Muʿawiya. The confederacy of Kalb was strengthened by immigrants. The Ghassanids had also supported Muʿawiya from an early stage on and joined therefore the new elite in West Syria.[2]

The death of Muʿawiya in 680 gave rise to the second civil war (680-92) as the succession by Yazid was contested by several groups. The Shiʿites, mainly centred in Kufa, held that ʿAli's son Husain was the rightful successor. Their army, however, was defeated and Husain was slain in the same year. They revolted again since 685 under the leadership of Mukhtar

[1] See also above, section 3.9.2.

[2] M. Hinds, 'Muʿāwiya I', *EI*^{2} 7 (1993), pp. 263-68; Hugh Kennedy, 'Syrian Elites from Byzantium to Islam: Survival or Extinction?', in John Haldon, *Money, Power, and Politics in Early Islamic Syria. A review of current debates* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 194-98.

who claimed to act for another son of ʿAli. Mukhtar's movement is important because it was for the first time that *mawali* (non-Arab 'clients', mainly prisoners of war and their descendants) played a prominent role. The revolt of Mukhtar lasted until spring 687 when it was crushed by Musʿab, the Zubayrid governor of Iraq.[3]

The Zubayrids (centred in Basra) had already been involved in the first civil war, because ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Zubayr (c.624-c.691), the grandson of Abu Bakr, also claimed his right to Muhammad's succession. He proclaimed himself 'commander of the believers' (*amir al-muminun*).[4] Both the people of Medina and the Kharajites supported him against Yazid. Yazid initially defeated the Medinese, but after his death in 683, Ibn al-Zubayr gained power over most of the conquered lands while only central and southern Syria were left to the Umayyads. Ibn al-Zubayr appointed his brother Musʿab governor of Iraq. Starting 684, the situation reversed and around 691 Ibn al-Zubayr was killed during the final siege of Mecca by Umayyad troops.[5] After the fall of Zubayr, the Kharajites, who were especially active in Kufa and Basra, gained temporary control over Kerman, Fars and other eastern provinces.[6] The rival parties also had fought for the command over Kufa and a large area around Mosul, each appointing their own governors. The control over upper Mesopotamia was finally gained by the Umayyads/Marwanids who brought Mosul under Syrian rule and incorporated it into the presumably new northern province Jazira.[7]

During the civil wars, religious claims were highly important among the parties opposing the Umayyads. The victorious Umayyad ʿAbd al-Malik (685-705) may have adopted these in order to legitimate his power. Since 691 religious writings became more numerous and with new content. From now on citations from the Qurʾan started to appear, as especially seen in the inscriptions in the newly built Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (692) and new coins.[8] It probably was at this time that most Arab conquerors started to call themselves 'Muslims' which would have been a break with a more diffuse earlier movement in which they called themselves 'believers'.[9] ʿAbd al-Malik developed propaganda which both emphasized the Islamic identity and criticized the Christians at the same time. Sura 112 became well known

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[3] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 49-53.
[4] H.A.R. Gibb, 'ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr', *EI*^{2} 1 (1960), pp. 54-55.
[5] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 46-49. According to Hoyland, Zubayr died in autumn 690 or 691. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 554.
[6] Levi Della Vida, 'Kh̲āridj̲ites', pp. 1074-77.
[7] Robinson holds that this was a new province, as no Jaziran governors would have been known before; Robinson, *Empire and Elites,* pp. 33-39 and 54-62; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 135-36.
[8] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, pp. 552-54 and 695-702.
[9] See also above, section 2.4.

in the propagation of this Islamic identity.[10] The still strong belief that the Last Judgment was at hand enhanced the conviction that God would judge the Christians according to the messages contained in the Qurʾan. Umayyad mosques also appeared on other holy sites belonging to Jews and Christians. Before this time, it was not uncommon for Christian churches to be shared as a place of prayer by Christians and Muslims.[11]

An early witness of Arab rule in Northern Mesopotamia was the East Syrian monk John bar Penkaye. In his history ranging from Creation to the year 686 he described the Arab invasion as a punishment for the Church of the East, because Miaphysitism had spread among them. John connected all the events around the civil wars to the imminent apocalyptic end,[12] his history being marked by an emphasis on God's *paideia* and having a highly eschatological character. It was strongly influenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia and the School of Nisibis,[13] and also seems to be a continuation of the apocalyptic thoughts as expressed by Ishoʿyahb III.[14] John often alluded to biblical stories in his description of recent events.[15]

According to John, God would have sent a barbarian kingdom (ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܒܪܒܪܝܬܐ)—which was not described favourably—because of the ongoing laxity and heresy of the Christians. As it would be right that the 'sons of Hagar' were punished as well, God divided their kingdom in a western and an eastern part, which both claimed superiority. Where the growing hostility and polarity among the Arab tribes is traditionally divided in 'northern' versus 'southern' groupings,[16] John discerned hostilities between 'Easterners' and 'Westerners'. The 'Westerners' (ܕܡܥܪ̈ܒܝܐ), 'whom they call the sons of the Ammaye' (the Umayyads), won and Muʿawiya became king of the Persian and Byzantine kingdom. He brought peace while pro-

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[10] Gerrit Jan Reinink, 'An early reference to Qurʾān 112?', in H.L.J. Vanstiphout et al. (eds.), *All those Nations… Cultural Encounters within and with the Near East* (Groningen, 1999), p. 126, also in idem, *Syriac Christianity*, Chapter 16.

[11] Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 303-304; Suliman Bashear, 'Qibla Musharriqa and Early Muslim Prayer in Churches', *The Muslim World* 81 (1991), pp. 281-82.

[12] Alphonse Mingana (ed.), *Sources syriaques* 1. *Mšiḥa-Zkha (texte et traduction); Bar-Penkayé (texte)* (Leipzig 1908), pp. 141-68. English translation of end of book 14 and complete book 15 by Brock, 'Book XV of John Bar Penkaye', pp. 57-74. See also Gerrit Jan Reinink, 'East Syrian Historiography in Response to the Rise of Islam: The Case of John Bar Penkaye's "Ktābā d-rēš mellē"', in Jan J. van Ginkel, H.L. Murre-van den Berg and T.M. van Lint (eds.), *Redefining Christian Identity. Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam* (OLA 134; Leuven, 2005), pp. 77-89.

[13] Bruns, 'Von Adam und Eva bis Mohammed', pp. 51-52; Reinink, 'East Syrian Historiography' pp. 83-89; Reinink comments in another article that John bar Penkaye used the word *marduta* for *paideia*, idem, 'Paideia: God's Design in World History', in E. Kooper (ed.), *The Medieval Chronicle II. Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle, Driebergen / Utrecht July 1999* (Amsterdam–New York, 2002), pp. 192 and 195, also in Reinink, *Syriac Christianity*, Chapter 7.

[14] See on Ishoʿyahb III's view, section 4.5.2.

[15] Michael G. Morony, 'History and Identity in the Syrian Churches', in Van Ginkel, Murre-Van den Berg and Van Lint (eds.), *Redefining Christian Identity*, pp. 5-6.

[16] Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 53-55; Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, pp. 280-81. See also Montgomery Watt's critical remarks on such divisions given above in section 1.14.3.

tecting anyone, including the Christians as long as they paid him tribute (ܡܕܐܬܐ, *madata*). John gave some further information about these Arabs:

> They held […] some command (stemming) from the man who was their leader (ܡܕܒܪܢܐ), concerning the people of the Christians and concerning the monastic order. Also as a result of this man's leadership they held to the worship of the one God in accordance with the customs of ancient law. At their beginnings they kept to the tradition (ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܗ) of Muhammad, who was their instructor (ܬܪܐܐ), to such an extent that they inflicted the death penalty on anyone who was seen to act brazenly against his laws.

John added that many Christians belonged to them, including both 'heretics' (Miaphysites) and people from the Church of the East.[17] The Miaphysites would have taken advantage of Muʿawiya's protection. Instead of converting the pagans, they turned the former Byzantine churches to their own point of view and brought it about that the majority 'of the Westerners' were regularly using the words 'immortal, who was crucified for us', which John considered to have been rightly abolished.[18]

The fact that John used the term 'Westerners' both for the Umayyads and for those who used the words 'immortal, who was crucified for us', raises the question whether this implies that the Umayyads also spoke these words. This is hardly feasible as it would be in great conflict with Islamic views. Earlier, John had put these terms in a clear-cut inner Christian context, with the 'Easterners' representing the true faith, and the 'Westerners' the heretic version.[19] Further on, John referred most probably to all the people in the West in general, in-

[17] Mingana, *Sources syriaques* 1, pp. 145-47, quotation esp. pp. 146-47; Translation with some adjustments after Brock, 'Book XV of John Bar Penkaye', pp. 60-61.
ܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܓܝܪ [...] ܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܡܕܡ: ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܕܒܪܢܐ: ܥܠ ܥܡܐ ܕܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܘܥܠ ܛܟܣܐ ܕܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ. ܘܚܣܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܗܘ: ܐܦ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܚܕ ܐܠܗܐ: ܐܝܟ ܥܝ̈ܕܐ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ. ܒܫܘܪܝܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ: ܗܟܢܐ ܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܗ ܕܡܚܡܕ: ܗܘ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܬܪܐܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܓܒܪ ܕܢܚܙܘܢ ܕܡܬܚܨܦ ܥܠ ܗܘ ܕܢܬܚܙܐ ܕܡܬܚܨܦ ܥܠ ܢܡܘܣܘ̈ܗܝ.

[18] As we have seen in section 1.11, the Church of the East rejected the addition 'immortal, who was crucified for us' to the *Trisagion*, which Severus of Antioch had made standard in the Miaphysite liturgy. Brock, 'Book XV of John Bar Penkaye', pp. 52-53 and 61-62; Reinink, 'East Syrian Historiography', p. 79.

[19] John divided Christianity into three divisions. The 'Easterners' confessed the true and Orthodox doctrine of Christ. They stood in the tradition of the apostles, Nicaea and Diodore. 'The Easterners confessed that the one Son of God is God and man: man who was deified and God who was inhominated (ܐܬܒܪܢܫ); two natures and two *qnome* in union, one *parsopa of filiation* that perfected the *mdabbranuta* for our salvation while they kept their properties. This *parsopa* of two natures is willingly united: he is the Lord Christ and God above all'. The Westerners consisted of two groupings. One confessed the dogma of the passibility and mortality of the Divine Being. The other confessed the dogma of the two natures, but of one *qnoma* and avoided therefore this 'two *qnome*'. John may have referred here to the Miaphysite and Neo-Chalcedonian groupings. Cf. Reinink, 'Tradition and Formation', pp. 217-18; Mingana, *Sources syriaques* 1, pp. 139-40.
[181] ܡܕܢܚܝ̈ܐ ܐܘܕܝܘ: ܐܠܗܐ ܘܒܪܢܫܐ ܚܕ ܒܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܐܬܐܠܗ. ܘܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܬܒܪܢܫ. ܬܪܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܝܢ ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ: ܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܒܪܘܬܐ: ܕܒܗ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܝܠܝܬܗܘܢ: ܠܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܦܘܪܩܢܢ ܫܠܡ. ܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ: ܗܘ ܗܢܐ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܬܪܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܝܢ ܕܚܝܕ ܒܨܒܝܢܐ: ܗܘ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ: ܗܠܝܢ ܗܢ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܐ. ܕܡܥܪ̈ܒܝܐ ܕܝܢ: ܡܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܦܠܓ̈ܘܢ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܦܠܓܘ: ܚܕ ܕܝܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܘܕܝ ܚܫܐ ܘܡܘܬܐ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܝܢ: ܐܘܕܝ ܬܪܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܝܢ: ܐܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܒܪܡ ܡܟܝܠ ܥܪܩ ܡܢ ܗܘ: ܕܬܪܝܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ:

cluding the Miaphysites. He may have associated the Miaphysite Arabs around him with Umayyad rule, because tribes such as the Ghassanids and Kalb had allied with Muʿawiya and took high positions while being able to retain their Miaphysite Christianity. Moreover, many Miaphysite Taghlib lived in the Diyar Rabiʿa, the area in which John's monastery was located.

Mukhtar also appears in John's report, which connects him with the *shurte* (ܫܘܪ̈ܛܐ), a term 'signifying their zeal for righteousness'. According to John, Mukhtar had released the slaves of his Kufan soldiers in order to replace them. These new soldiers would have fought without hardly any equipment besides sword, spear or club. After they had conquered Mesopotamia and took Nisibis, they turned against Mukhtar himself.[20] Brock comments that the term *shurte* probably refers to the *šurāt* (Sura 4:74), people who had 'sold' their life for the cause of God.[21] As the Kharajites also called themselves after this Qurʾanic verse, John may have referred to Kharajites.[22]

John brought his story to an end. The situation had worsened terribly and one only had to await the Antichrist and the end times. John still expected that the Ishmaelites could be beaten by the *shurte* who came from all parts of the world, but this still would not be the end of all the afflictions.[23] By now, the Lord had definitively withdrawn his care.[24] Reinink holds that John's interpretation that the second civil war would result in the downfall of the Arab Empire not only reflects the current view of the Church of the East, but also those of other Christian communities in North Mesopotamia.[25] Morony similarly describes that the apocalyptic expectations were strengthened by the second civil war and the accompanying natural disasters, but adds that these could even undermine the authority of the Syrian Churches among their believers. This might have been a reason for Church leaders and monks to write their chronicles in order to 'maintain communal solidarity, doctrinal identity, and ecclesiastical authority through a particular interpretation'.[26]

The situation under Arab rule was not everywhere the same and fluctuated over time. In the former Persian regions, the two rival Christian groups initially had hoped that the conquering Muslims would support them in either keeping or regaining their ascendancy. From the

[20] Mingana, *Sources syriaques* 1, pp. 145-59. Quotation esp. pp. 157-58.
ܫܘܪ̈ܛܐ: ܠܗ ܠܫܡܐ ܕܡܚܘܐ ܥܠ ܛܢܢܗܘܢ ܒܟܐܢܘܬܐ:
[21] Brock, 'Book XV of John Bar Penkaye', p. 66.
[22] As we have seen above, Ishoʿyahb III may have been acquainted with views which were to become the hallmark of the Kharajites.
[23] Mingana, *Sources syriaques* 1, pp. 141-68; Brock, 'Book XV of John Bar Penkaye', pp. 57-74.
[24] Mingana, *Sources syriaques* 1, p. 166; Brock, 'Book XV of John Bar Penkaye', p. 72.
[25] Reinink, 'East Syrian Historiography', p. 88.
[26] Morony, 'History and Identity in the Syrian Churches', pp. 13-15, quotation esp. p. 15.

beginning they accused each other therefore before the new authorities.[27] Morony argues that the habit of influential Persian aristocracy of bringing their case before the authorities led to this pattern persisting under Arab rule.[28] This is not improbable. As we have seen, the rival groups debated already around 500 before a governor and the Emperor, while the 612 debate is another example showing that already in Sasanian times each competing Christian denomination had to convince the Emperor that their own denomination had preserved the Christian tradition best.

5.2. The position of the Christians in nascent Islam

The Arab leaders held the military and political power, while non-Muslims enjoyed some degree of religious freedom. Christians and Jews received as 'People of the Book' the status of *dhimmi*. The conditions were settled in a treaty, ascribed to ʿUmar I (634-44), which became normative. Like many other works ascribed to him, however, it most probably stems from the legal schools in the eighth or ninth century and is therefore not very useful for the present study. It probably replaced more tolerant earlier covenants, which mainly demanded the payment of the *jizya* of the conquered people in order to be safe while keeping their religion.[29]

Where powerful Arab tribes before Islam could already exact tribute and protection money,[30] the Muslims brought *jizya* in connection with their theocratic view on the conquest. As can be seen in Sura 9:29, Christians and Jews should 'pay the *jizya* out of hand, degraded' until they submit to Islam.[31] Claude Cahen suggests that the term may have been connected with an Aramaic original. It was probably used in a 'somewhat loose sense, corresponding with the root of "compensation" (for non-adoption of Islam), and in any case as collective tribute, not differentiated from other forms of taxation'. Initially, it was therefore not restrict-

[27] Fiey, 'Naṣārā', pp. 970-73.
[28] Morony, *Iraq after the Conquest,* p. 383.
[29] Milka Levy-Rubin, 'The Pact of ʿUmar', in Thomas and Roggema (eds.), *A Bibliographical History* 1, pp. 360-62.
[30] See above, section 1.14.1.
[31] This verse has also been regarded as justification for the humiliating measures that have been preserved in several versions of the covenant ascribed to ʿUmar. Abdel Haleem, however, argues that the whole verse should be read in the context of the time and this rather would show that the Qurʾan teaches that Christians had to be treated with respect. The *jizya* was only a compensation for not participating in the fight and not paying *zakat* and moreover for protection. Later misinterpretations and negative attitudes would have arisen among Islamic scholars because of some early bad examples; the enmity between Muslims and Christians in Iraq and Syria (among others); and the subsequent crusades and colonialism. The alleged 'humiliation', for instance, would only indicate that everyone was subject to tax and it would not have the negative connotation it acquired later. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, 'The *jizya* Verse (Q.9:29): Tax Enforcement on Non-Muslims in the First Muslim State', *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 14.2 (2012), pp. 74-78 and 85-87.

ed to a poll tax but could also imply land tax. Its meaning varied and it could be applied in different ways. Generally, it would signify the lower status of those who had to pay it.[32] Robinson comments that sources of the Church of the East would only begin to mention this in the aftermath of the second civil war.[33] This concurs at least with our finding that both Ishoʿyahb III and John bar Penkaye (still) used other terms for taxes than *jizya*. Ishoʿyahb III used the term *ksep resha* for poll taxes and the further unspecified *maksa*, *shqala* and *madata*.[34] The Synod of 676 and the Rulings of Catholicos Henanishoʿ I (685-700) similarly used only the terms *ksep resha* and *madata* for taxes which already existed in Sasanian times.[35] Both the poll tax and the land tax thus probably resembled taxes levied by the Sasanians. According to Morony, Christians already had to pay *ksep resha* (poll tax) and *madata* (land tax) in the fourth century. In the sixth century the poll tax in Iraq had become more institutionalized and was levied yearly from most non-Persians and non-Magians, while it was brought in connection with protection. ʿUmar (634-44) would have regularized the land tax while raising the rates.[36]

Several other terms for tax existed and it is difficult to reconstruct how the different types of taxes actually were applied in the first decades after the conquests. One reason is that later legal scholars had employed earlier accounts ‘to provide precedents for their own systematization of tax laws applying to non-Muslims’. Nomadic tribesmen would have had to pay *sadaqa* (usually in form of camels); sedentary Muslims paid *zakat* (alms) and non-Muslims paid *jizya.* Even within these subdivisions there were many exceptions. The Christian Ghassanids, for instance, demanded to pay the *jizya* instead of the *sadaqa*, because they did not want to be treated like nomads.[37] Moreover, we have seen that according to Tabari the Taghlib had to pay a double *sadaqa* in order to remain Christian.[38]

The taxes of non-Arabs provided the Arabs with income, which was used for further conquests. Taxation probably was not introduced everywhere at the same pace. During the first decades of the conquest, each province generally was ruled by a small Arab/Muslim elite of conquering tribesmen under a governor and had a garrison of tribesmen in or near an already

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[32] Claude Cahen, ‘Dj̲izya (i)’, *EI*^{2} 2 (1965), pp. 559-62; Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, pp. 46-49.
[33] Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, p. 46.
[34] Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, p. 148.
[35] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 225-26; Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, pp. 18-19. In his translation, Sachau also gives Arabic terms (خراج, *kharaj* and جزْية, *jizya*), although the Syriac version only mentions *madata* and *ksep resha*. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 194.
[36] Cahen, ‘Dj̲izya’; Morony, *Iraq After The Muslim Conquest*, pp. 99-111.
[37] Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, pp. 252-53 and 265, quotation esp. p. 253. Robinson warns that ninth century sources on the seventh century contain anachronistic conceptions of territory and power. Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, p. 33.
[38] Donner, *Ṭabari. The Conquest of Arabia*, p. 62.

existing town or city. The taxes and tribute were levied by the already existing Byzantine or Sasanian administrative system supervised by the Arab elite.[39] The new province Jazira that was later enlarged with Mosul may have been organized differently.[40] Robinson holds that these regions started to be subject to systematic taxation after 684.[41]

As Muslims were warned not to take non-believers for friends or to trust them, there was an increasing tendency to exclude *dhimmis* from public functions, although there were exceptions. Especially in the beginning the *dhimmis* were indispensable for the administration of the huge non-Muslim population. Generally, the situation of churches under nascent Islam was one of decline. This probably had to do with the growing number of conversions to Islam of rich benefactor Christians, who had contributed significantly to the finances of the Church. This tendency was especially noticeable in the eighth century.[42]

Since the Qurʾan demands that Christians judge by what God had revealed in the Gospel,[43] Christians under Islamic rule had to develop Christian law codes which not only addressed strictly ecclesiastical affairs, but also included 'chapters on divorce, dowries and settlements, inheritances, degrees of consanguinity, and on debts and loans, selling and buying, contracts and partnerships, pledges and oaths etc.'[44] Because the Arabs initially employed the existing Roman and Persian administrative and judicial organization for the conquered peoples, Christians could maintain their laws and tribunals. However, they also could seek judgment at the Muslim courts, which the Churches tried to prevent. The Muslim courts were sometimes preferred because they had greater means of enforcement and could be more attractive, for instance in cases of inheritance.[45] In contrast, the juridical measures the Catholicoi were allowed to employ generally became increasingly restricted.[46] The Church mainly would have had to rely on persuasion and cooperation with lay elites.[47] This may have been another factor

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[39] Robinson, *Empire and Elites,* p. 36.

[40] Against accounts from Abbasid times that stated differently, Robinson argues that Islamic rule in the Jazira was not established before 680. Only from 685 to 695 this would have changed under the Marwanids. The province of Jazira would be an invention of the Marwanids as it did not exist administratively before as such. Robinson, *Empire and Elites,* pp. 33-39.

[41] Robinson, *Empire and Elites,* pp. 44-45.

[42] R. Stephen Humphreys, 'Christian Communities in Early Islamic Syria and Northern Jazira: the Dynamics of Adaptation, in Haldon (ed.), *Money, Power, and Politics in Early Islamic Syria*, pp. 54-55.

[43] Sura 5:47: 'So let the People of the Gospel judge according to what God has sent down therein. Whosoever judges not according to what God has sent down -- they are the ungodly.'

[44] Averil Cameron and Robert Hoyland (eds.), *Doctrine and Debate in the East Christian World, 300-1500* (The Worlds of Eastern Christianity, 300-1500, volume 12; Farnham, 2011), pp. xxix-xxx; Richard B. Rose, 'Islam and the Development of Personal Status Laws among Christian Dhimmis', *The Muslim World* 72 (1982), p. 159.

[45] Uriel Simonsohn, 'Seeking Justice among the "Outsiders": Christian Recourse to Non-Ecclesiastical Judicial Systems under Early Islam', in Ter Haar Romeny, *Religious Origins of Nations?*, pp. 203-206 and 215.

[46] Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, pp. v-vi.

[47] Richard E. Payne, *Christianity and Iranian Society in Late Antiquity, ca. 500-700 CE* (Princeton, 2010), pp. 198-201.

for the Churches under Islamic rule to further emphasize the specific value of their own community in contrast to that of outsiders.[48]

The development of the distinct identity of each Christian grouping may have increased after the second civil war, which for Bar Penkaye formed already the end times but strengthened his hope that Arab rule would end as well. However, around the time of ʿAbd al-Malik (685-705), it had become clear that the Muslims were not going to disappear and that they were even intensifying their religious claims at the expense of others. While being cut off from the West, Christian writers of each denomination therefore started to develop a theological and apologetic response to this new religious challenge.[49] Especially the Miaphysites experienced that they no longer belonged to the Byzantine Empire and their hopes that it would become Miaphysite disappeared. This brought the earlier rather fluid situation to an end.[50]

Reinink suggests that the oldest known Syriac apologetics in response to Islam were a reaction to ʿAbd al-Malik's reforms and religious claims because they formed a direct threat to the Christian communities. By now, it also had become clear to Christians that the 'Sons of Ishmael' had strengthened their rule and did not share the Christian view of their religion. Instead of considering their monotheism an immature form of Christianity, the Muslims now openly propagated that their form of monotheism was a restorative improvement.[51]

Although most of the Christian apologies stem from the time after 692, and therefore hardly apply to the period covered in this study, some characteristics will be given briefly, as they might represent a continuation of earlier views. The Christian polemics against Muhammad may be seen as attempts to keep the self-image intact and to play down the achievements of the Arabs, while still hoping that they could soon be beaten. Most writings on Muhammad emphasized therefore that Muhammad's monotheistic religion was nothing new, but rather primitive, whereas the Christians would have developed much further. Muhammad would have had a relatively advanced knowledge, but could not teach this to the immature Arabs. The most important claim was that Muhammad's religion could not have been from God, because he was not announced in the scriptures, he had not performed miracles, and his follow-

48 Simonsohn, 'Seeking Justice among the "Outsiders"', pp. 215-16.

49 These newer developments belong more to the next centuries and are therefore not discussed here. Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque. Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, 2008), pp. 32 and 129-31.

50 Bas ter Haar Romeny et al., 'The Formation of a Communal Identity among West Syrian Christians: Results and Conclusions of the Leiden Project', in idem, *Religious Origins of Nations?*, p. 48.

51 Gerrit Jan Reinink, 'The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam', *OC* 77 (1993), pp. 184-87, also in idem, *Syriac Christianity*, Chapter 13. See also Robert G. Hoyland, 'Earliest Christian writings on Muḥammad', in Harald Motzki (ed.), *Muḥammad. The Issue of the Sources* (Leiden, 2000), p. 288.

ers were mainly attracted by material gains.[52] About a century later, the apology of the famous East Syrian Catholicos Timothy I (780-823) would show a high command of Aristotelian logic.[53] He further used testimonies from the scriptures, not only referring to the Old and New Testament, but—possibly as one of the first Christians to do so—also referring to specific sayings from the Qurʾan.[54]

5.3. George I (661-80)

5.3.1. Life and works

Not much is known about George of Kapra's life. The main source is Thomas of Marga's well-known history of the Monastery of Bet Abe. According to Thomas, George came from Kapra (in Bet Garmai) and before he entered the monastery of Bet Abe he took care of the lands of his wealthy father, which he donated later to the monastery. It was thanks to his close friendship with Ishoʿyahb III that George successively was elevated in the hierarchy of the Church exactly following Ishoʿyahb III's steps.[55] Mari mentions George as Metropolitan of Bet Huzaye (Elam). It is not clear whether George was Metropolitan of both Elam and Adiabene, or only one of them.[56]

Before George became Catholicos in 658 or 660/61,[57] his election was challenged by two aristocratic Persian bishops, also named George. Each party claimed to be the George whom Ishoʿyahb III would have appointed as his successor. One came from Nisibis and seems to have consented quite early with the situation, but the other from Perat d-Maishan (Basra) still sought the help of the 'heathen' (ܚܢܦܐ), probably the Arab government, before he was reconciled.[58]

[52] Hoyland, 'Earliest Christian writings on Muḥammad', pp. 286-88.

[53] Vittorio Berti, *Vita e Studi di Timoteo I. Patriarca Cristiano Di Baghdad. Ricerche sull' Epistolario e sulle Fonti Contigue* (Studia Iranica 41, Chrétiens en Terre d'Iran 3, Paris, 2009). p. 331.

[54] David Bertaina, 'The Development of Testimony Collections in Early Christian Apologetics with Islam', in David Thomas (ed.), *The Bible in Arab Christianity* (HCMR 6; Leiden, 2007), pp. 158-60.

[55] Budge (trans.), *The Book of Governors*, Chapter 2.12, pp. 179-83; Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum,* pp. 119-21, with references. Almost the same information on George and his Christology also reappears in a later article. Dietmar W. Winkler, 'Giwargis von Kaphra und sein Christologischer Brief an Mina. Ein Beitrag zum "Nestorianismus" des 7. Jahrhunderts', *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 60 (2008), pp. 297-310.

[56] According to a short statement by Mari, George had been metropolitan of Gundeshapur (in Elam) before becoming Catholicos. Gismondi (trans.), *Maris*, p. 55; Fiey holds that George was Metropolitan of Elam first and thereafter of Arbela. Fiey, *Répertoire des diocèses syriaques*, pp. 83-84

[57] Lucas Van Rompay, 'Giwargis I (d.680/1)', *GEDSH*, p. 175; Herman G.B. Teule, 'Ghiwarghis I', in Thomas and Roggema (eds.), *A Bibliographical History* 1, p. 151.

[58] Budge (trans.), *The Book of Governors*, pp. 183-89; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, p. 352.

Thomas of Marga synchronized the reign of George I with that of King Hasan b. ʿAli (the son of ʿAli and Muhammad's daughter Fatima). Despite some apparent confusion, it is noteworthy that Thomas associated George's reign rather with that of the sons of ʿAli, who were supported most in Kufa/Hira, and not with that of Muʿawiya, the dates of whose reign actually concur with those of George. Is this a sign that Muʿawiya's reign was not fully recognized in the eastern parts during Thomas's time? Thomas further noted that George died in 'Hira, the city of the Arabs'.[59]

It is moreover remarkable that where George I has been associated with Kufa (a Shiʿa bulwark), one of his rivals was associated with Basra (connected with al-Zubayr), and the other with Nisibis, which may have been associated more closely with the Umayyads. This rivalry between the candidates may somehow have reflected the political instability of the time. Not much more is known about George's direct contacts with the Arabs.[60]

Of George's writings only the Christological letter to the priest and Chorbishop Mina 'in the land of the Persians' (probably the province Fars) is preserved.[61] It was written in 679/80 ('the year 60 of the *Tayyaye*').

5.3.2. Rebellion in Bet Qatraye: the Synod of 676

Ishoʿyahb III already had to cope with apostasy and rebellion in the Gulf area, but during his life the problems were not solved. In May 676 ('the year 57 of the *Tayyaye*'), George also dealt with these problems during the synod on the Isle Dairin in the Persian Gulf.[62] It was attended also by Thomas the Metropolitan of Bet Qatraye and by the bishops of Dairin, Trihan, *Marawnaye*, Hagar and Hatta.[63] The list of participants not only shows that this synod had a rather local character (although far reaching decisions were being made), but also that the bishops had formed a new metropolitan see, which was independent of Fars.

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[59] Thomas of Marga followed here the *Ecclesiastical History* of Mar Atqen who would have stated that the king (ܡܠܟܐ) reigning in his time was named Hasan b.ʿAli in the kingdom of the Arabs (ܚܣܢ ܒܪ ܥܠܝ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܛܝܝܐ); that Hasan began to reign in the same year in which George was appointed; and that both would have reigned 22 years. Atqen must have been wrong here, since Hasan b. ʿAli abdicated quite early and died around 669. His brother Husain, however, has been brought forward as his successor until he was slain in 680. Budge (ed.), *The Book of Governors*, p. 88 (cf. trans. idem, pp. 207-208); Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, p. 38.

[60] As we have discussed above in section 3.10.2, the imprecise note of Bar Hebraeus' suggesting that George I and the Church were punished by an Arab governor, probably referred to Ishoʿyahb III.

[61] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 227-45.

[62] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 215-26, trans., pp. 480-90; Braun, *Synhados*, pp. 336-48.

[63] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 216.
ܐܢܐ ܓܘܪܓܝܣ ܒܛܝܒܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܩܬܘܠܝܩܐ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܝܣ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ. ܘܐܢܐ ܬܐܘܡܐ ܕܒܛܝܒܘ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܡܝܛܪܦܘܠܝܛܐ ܕܒܝܬ
ܩܛܪܝܐ. ܘܐܢܐ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܕܒܛܝܒܘ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܬܠܗ ܕܕܝܪܝܢ ܠܐܬܪܐ. ܘܐܢܐ ܦܘܣܝ ܕܒܛܝܒܘ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܛܪܝܗܢ: ܘܐܢܐ
ܐܣܛܦܢܘܣ ܕܒܛܝܒܘ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܡܪܘܢܝܐ. ܘܐܢܐ ܦܘܣܝ ܕܒܛܝܒܘ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܗܓܪ. ܘܐܢܐ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܒܛܝܒܘ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܚܛܐ.
The attendants belonged to the entire coast of northeast Arabia and the islands. It resembles the area we referred to before as 'Bahrain'. As discussed in 4.2.8.1, *Marawnaye* may be identified with the inhabitants of Oman.

The canons show moreover that the Church of the East in the Peninsula was still relatively active with clergy and one or two monasteries in each town, while new churches and monasteries were being built. In the eighth century the Church of the East still seems to have flourished in Fars and in Bet Qatraye, where many important writers came from.[64] Although heavy taxation resulted in numerous conversions to Islam, especially in Bahrain and Oman, there were still Christians in Yamama and Bahrain towards the end of the ninth century.[65] The early Muslim governors in Bet Qatraye do not seem to have interfered with the lucrative Christian-dominated pearl trade and the sea-trade between Mesopotamia and India, content possibly with the tax revenues. This might explain further the survival of some Christian communities in the Gulf region.[66]

The introduction of the 676 Synod centred on God's care in reminding every generation in every place of the fear of God and offered the familiar account of God's warnings to Adam, Noah, and Abraham up to Moses; the laws God gave to Moses; the coming of God's Son, the Gospel and the Church; the apostles and the teachers after them who taught every new generation to walk the path of justice. It was concluded that as each nation and land required specific measures, the bishops now tried to adjust the divine laws to the present difficult times, which to them formed the end of the world (ܫܘܠܡܗ ܕܥܠܡܐ).[67] They emphasized the apostolic mission to teach and baptize all the nations (Matt. 28:19) and decided therefore on several measures, put down in nineteen canons. Some of these will be discussed below in more detail.

Sermons should teach the believers more about their Christian faith, in order to enable them to reply to questions of 'heretics' (ܗܪܣܝܘܛܐ).[68] During this time of poverty, the clergy should not demand financial contributions from new believers. Apparently, the recruitment of new clergy had been faltering, because it was also ordained that new clerics or monks did not have to contribute either, so that they would not have to look for another job out of poverty.[69] Christian women were not allowed to marry without the consent of their parents and the mediation of the cross.[70] Similar to Islamic decrees concerning Muslim women, the synod in Dairin forbade women from marrying outside their religion. Further, possibly in reaction to Islamic law, but certainly in continuation of practice under the Sasanians, the synod allowed

[64] Hainthaler, *Christliche Araber*, p. 100; Sebastian Brock, 'Syriac Writers from Beth Qatraye' (*Aram*, 1999), pp. 88–95.
[65] Fiey, 'Naṣārā', pp. 970-73.
[66] R.A. Carter, 'Christianity in the Gulf during the first centuries of Islam', *Arabian archaeology and Epigraphy* 19 (2008), pp. 104-105.
[67] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 215-16.
[68] Canon 1: Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 217; Braun, *Synhados*, pp. 333-36.
[69] Canon 8: Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 220-21; Braun, *Synhados*, pp. 340-41.
[70] Canon 13: Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 223; Braun, *Synhados*, pp. 343-44.

only monogamous relations.[71] Bishops were further to be exempted from tribute (ܡܕܐܬܐ, *madata*, probably a kind of land tax) and poll tax (ܟܣܦ ܪܫܐ).[72]

A separation of the tasks of clergy and secular leaders was envisaged. The bishop should concentrate on the spiritual life of the believers and should therefore not be burdened with financial business. Although this canon was positively formulated, it seems that the main aim was to prevent financial malpractices by bishops. Ishoʿyahb III already had advised such a separation of the duties.[73] Ideally, elections and ordinations of new bishops were only to be conducted by their fellow clerics and should not be hampered by secular authorities (ܫܠܝ̈ܛܢܝ ܥܠܡܐ), believers or threat letters.[74] In general, the bishops had to settle juridical conflicts within their community. Only the bishop or the secular authorities could demand that the case should be brought to a judge of the pagans or unbelievers (ܚܢ̈ܦܐ ܐܘ ܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ).[75]

5.3.3. George's Christology

The account of the canons of the 676 Synod does not contain any Christological statement. In 680, George I explained the 'orthodox' Christology to the Chorbishop of Mina in the land of the Persians. In his introduction, George wrote that Mina had asked him to write on the right belief in God and his *mdabbranuta*, and on salvation. George continued with a description of the 'one God of truth, the being (ܐܝܬܝܐ, *itya*) since eternity'. In line with the practice at former Synods, God's incomprehensibility and transcendence were first emphasized and then the Trinity was explained, a term which Ishoʿyahb III seems to have avoided. George introduced the Trinity by explaining how Christians acknowledge the one nature of the divinity in a trinity of names and *qnome*, also called '*qnomatic* names', while worshipping one divinity in the unity (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ) of nature, power, will and authority. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are eternally one without separation. This unity is compared to the unity between body and soul, and between the sun and its heat and light. But as it is impossible to really understand the divine nature, he only can be praised.[76] Possibly, the connection made by George between the names

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[71] Canon 14 and 16: Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 223-24; Braun, *Synhados*, pp. 344-47.

[72] Canon 19: Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 225-26; Chabot identifies the *madata* with *harag* (خراج), idem, p. 490; Braun, *Synhados*, p. 347. As we have seen in section 3.9.4, Ishoʿyahb III used several terms for taxes, including the Syriac terms used here.

[73] Duval, *Liber Epistularum*, M-10, pp. 148-49. See above, section 4.4.1.

[74] Canon 7: Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 220; Braun, *Synhados*, p. 340.

[75] Canon 6: Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 219-20; Braun, *Synhados*, p. 339. See also Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East. An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London, 2006), pp. 148 and 296. Richard Payne holds that this canon would show for the first time that 'the bishops conceived of their judicial authority as a coercive power to which Christians should, ideally, be compelled to submit'. He admits, however, that this power was rather limited. Payne, *Christianity and Iranian Society*, pp. 198-201.

[76] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 227-28; Braun, *Synhados*, p. 349.

of God and the *qnome* could find some acceptance among Muslims and he felt therefore freer to discuss the Trinity.

The attitude of this first part of George's letter reminds one of Ephrem. Dietmar Winkler supposes that the emphasis on the one God at the beginning may have been a reaction to discussions in an Islamic environment with widespread apostasy among the Christians. Mina may have had difficulties explaining to them the view of the Church of the East.[77]

George continued with a description of God's *mdabbranuta* during history. This started with Creation which served the instruction of rational minds and enabled them to use their independence and free will. It culminated in the coming of Christ, the saviour, in the last times. The divinity lived in this saviour, who would renew the world.[78]

One example concerning Abraham is remarkable. George wrote that God's relation to mankind was most specifically shown in his blessing of Abraham: 'In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed' (Gen. 22:18). Approvingly George quoted Paul the Apostle who explained that the Bible did not speak of seed in the plural form, but only in the singular form (Gal. 3:16). This would indicate that it was Christ who was referred to and with him all the Christians. He concluded: 'Therefore, all nations that are raised in Christianity call Abraham "Father"'.[79] Here, George seems to have claimed Christianity as Abraham's only rightful heir, and thus to have deliberately denied such a status for Islam (and Judaism).

The saviour is further described as the Word, who voluntarily dwelt in a body with an intellectual soul. The Son of God has two natures and two *qnome*.

> The saviour of the universe appeared for our salvation, at the end times, according to the predictions by the prophets. Who could perfect (ܢܓܡܘܪ) our salvation,[80] but God the Word, who is our Creator and by whom our salvation is being perfected? For very fittingly by the will of his Father and for the salvation of us humans and for the renewal of all creatures and to turn us from error to knowledge about his divinity, God the Word has come voluntarily, without leaving the lap of his Father, to the lap of Mary the holy virgin. In a wondrous, supernatural way he formed him, who is from the seed of Abraham and David, according to the predictions of the prophets; a body in which is an intellectual (ܡܣܬܟܠܢܝܬܐ) soul. And he dwelled in him and united with him in one union (ܚܕܝܘܬܐ) of his Sonship […] We confess one Son of God and we say that he exists in his divinity and in his humanity. And although (he is) of two natures—God in nature and in *qnoma*, and human in nature and in *qnoma*—we acknowledge and praise one Son of God, now and also at his second coming,

[77] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, pp. 122-23.
[78] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 229-35.
[79] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 232.
[80] As we have seen in previous chapters, perfection (ܓܡܝܪܘܬܐ) was the ultimate aim of the ascetical monks, which only could be attained after the resurrection.

> and in eternity. Now who do we say Christ is? He is the man anointed with the divinity and the divinity who anointed humanity.[81]

George went on to explain that although Christ is (ܐܝܬܘܗܝ) God, one cannot always reverse this statement. He explained that the Father and the Holy Spirit are also God, but not Christ. This only would apply to God the Word, who has united with Christ in one *parsopa* and has made him his eternal living place.[82] At first sight the discussion of God being Christ or Christ being God may seem a little redundant. However, when taking into account that Babai had accused Henana of similar statements, and that the Qurʾan scorned Christians for stating that God is Christ, George's explication may have been highly relevant.[83] George may have provided arguments against attacks from Islam. As the bishops had had to explain at the 612 debate, he further clarified that this Christology would not be the fabrication of the 'blessed' Nestorius and Theodore, but was expressed by Christ himself. George gave several biblical quotations, which confirmed that Christ was both human and divine, including for example, Christ's comparison with the destroyed temple that would be rebuilt in three days. The temple and the 'I' would represent the two *qnomatic* natures (ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܝܐ).[84] Moreover, the miracles done by Christ were another sign of his divinity. The union of two natures did not mean that the divinity changed (ܐܫܬܚܠܦܘܬ݂), diminished or dissolved in the humanity; neither was the humanity absorbed by the divinity.[85]

The union of the two natures in one *parsopa of filiation* was further considered indispensable, as both natures had a different function in the soteriology according to the Church of the East. The divinity is needed because salvation of believers takes place in Christ's divinity, while his humanity is needed for the revelation of the divinity and for the atonement for human sins. Opinions that opt for only one nature are therefore rejected. Similar to what Ishoʿyahb III had written in his letters C-3 and C-22, George stated that people who deny Christ's humanity and claim that God died and rose again would cut believers from the hope for resurrection and renewal. Any other form of Theopaschism is also rejected.[86] In line with what the Church of the East had required before, and was also expressed by Ishoʿyahb III,

[81] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 234. An expression similar to this last sentence appeared in the Synod of Mar Aba I in 544.
[82] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 234-35.
[83] See above, section 3.5.1.
[84] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 234-36. Compare John 2:19, 22. NRSV: 'Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." […] But he was speaking of the temple of his body.'
[85] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 236.
[86] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 236-38.

George thus insisted on a strict distinction between the divine and human nature of Christ because of the soteriology.

George scorned those who proclaimed the humanity of Christ at the expense of his divinity. Not only the many miracles would prove his divinity, but especially the beginning of John's gospel would show that 'Christ in his divinity is true God with a perfect *qnoma* from true God.'[87] Using more biblical quotations, George argued that Christ's divinity would allow believers who 'received the light that had come to the world', to be 'children of God' who are 'born from God', and even to 'become Gods'. This last expression, however, would not mean that human nature could be transformed into a divine nature, in the same way that God the Word does not change in his nature.[88]

George quoted and commented the verses up to John 1:14, which had been subject to hot debates on the question of whether they implied that God had changed or not. The introductory lemma by the compiler probably centred on this verse when he summarized it as follows: 'On the divinity of Christ and his humanity; and not—as the corruptors of the orthodoxy of the Church think—that God the Word was changed and became flesh in his *qnoma*.'[89] Abramowski notes that this formula with the additional 'in his *qnoma*' is not mentioned in the actual letter, but fits in the tradition of Habib and Narsai, who rejected such an addition that was used by defenders of the notion that God the Word had changed.[90] Similarly to Narsai and Babai, George held that 'became flesh' should be interpreted as 'took flesh'.[91]

George also mentioned Paul's well-known metaphor of the servant, which Ishoʿyahb III seems to have avoided. After quoting it George added: 'If the form of God is nature and *qnoma*, it is clear that also the form of man is nature and *qnoma*. Two *qnomatic* natures in one Christ: one Son of God.'[92] George thus used this metaphor to explain the two natures and *qnome*. He further argued that the books of the Gospel, the apostles and even the prophets were full of examples which supported the view that 'just as Christ is truly consubstantial to

[87] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 238-39.
ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܐ܇ ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܫܠܡܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ܇
[88] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 239-40.
[89] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 227. ܕܒܗ ܡܥܕܪ ܥܠ ܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܐܢܫܘܬܗ܇ ܘܕܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܪܢܐ ܡܚܒܠܝ ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܝܐ ܕܒܥܕܬܐ܇ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܐܫܬܚܠܦ ܘܗܘܐ ܒܣܪܐ ܒܩܢܘܡܗ܀
[90] According to Abramowski, this would be an indication that the compiler was aware of this older tradition. Abramowski, 'Die nachephesinische Christologie', p. 9. However, as Chabot notes that some words may be missing, it is not impossible that the compiler actually did refer to such an expression in the text.
(ܒܗ܆ ܕܗܘ ܒܣܪܐ ܠܝ [?] ܒܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ). Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 240.
[91] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 239-40.
[92] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 240.
ܗܘ ܕܒܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ܇ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܢܣܒ: ܘܗܘܐ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ. ܘܐܢ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܝ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ:
ܓܠܝܐ ܕܐܦ ܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܗܝ ܘܩܢܘܡܐ. ܬܪܝܢ ܟܝܢܐ ܩܢܘܡܝܐ ܒܚܕ ܡܫܝܚܐ: ܚܕ ܒܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ.
The Peshitta version of Phil. 2:6-8 has been given above in section 1.3.

our nature in his humanity, he is truly consubstantial to the nature of God the Father in his divinity: two true *qnomatic* natures in one Christ, Son of God.'[93] This emphasis on the true *qnome* had also been expressed by Ishoʿyahb II and Ishoʿyahb III in order to denote the full reality of both natures.

George thereupon elaborated the metaphor of the king and his cloth in order to reject the opinion that God suffered or was born from Mary. Just like a king remains one king although he is clothed with signs of honour, so is the Son of God one, although he is covered with the cloth of humanity in order to hide the splendour of his divinity. If the cloth is torn, his body remains unblemished, even if the shame affects the honour of the king. Similarly, the sufferings and passions of human nature do not affect the divine nature. Even demons would not say so. Instead, everything being said about the *mdabbranuta* which God the Word accomplished in his 'inhomination' (ܒܡܬܒܪܢܫܘܬܗ) should be about the names Christ and Son, which indicate his two natures. George compared this to the one general term for man, who consists of body and soul. If the body dies or one of its parts is damaged, this does not apply to the soul or to the name. Similarly, just as one knows what to ascribe to the body and what to the soul, this would apply even more to the *mdabbranuta* of Jesus Christ, who accomplished salvation for 'us', partly by his divinity and partly by his humanity.[94] George's Christology may thus be summarized as follows:

> His humanity that was formed in the lap of the holy Virgin Mary is inseparably united with his divinity in one *parsopa of filiation* from the beginning of creation to eternity. While together with the human *qnoma* God the Word is, infinitely and without separation in the whole *mdabbranuta*: in birth, in growth, in sufferings and in death; is together with the body in the grave the divinity, and with the soul in paradise, but infinitely. And we confess one son of God in two natures.[95]

When George taught that Christ is one and that his natures and *qnome* are united into one *parsopa,* he used the same terminology in the same context as Babai, Ishoʿyahb II and Ishoʿyahb III. Unlike them, however, he did not elaborate these expressions. This may be an indication that these terms were being considered a part of common knowledge already.[96]

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[93] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 240-41. ܕܡܫܘܕܥܝܢܢ ܫܘܬܐܦܬ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܫܝܚܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܒܪ ܟܝܢܢ ܒܐܢܫܘܬܗ: ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܒܪ ܟܝܢܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܒܐ ܒܐܠܗܘܬܗ. ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܝܐ: ܒܚܕ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ܀

[94] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 241.

[95] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 242; Winkler, 'Giwargis von Kaphra', pp. 309-310.
ܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܐܬܬ ܓܒܠܬ ܒܥܘܒܗ ܕܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܡܪܝܡ: ܡܚܝܕܐ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܐܠܗܘܬܗ ܠܐ ܡܬܦܪܫܢܐܝܬ ܒܚܕ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܒܪܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܪܝܐ ܕܒܪܝܬܐ ܘܠܥܠܡ. ܟܕ ܥܡܗ ܥܡ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܐܠܗܐ ܡܠܬܐ܆ ܠܐ ܡܣܬܝܟܢܐܝܬ ܘܕܠܐ ܦܘܪܫ ܒܟܠܗ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ: ܒܡܘܠܕܐ ܘܒܬܪܒܝܬܐ ܘܒܚ̈ܫܐ ܘܒܡܘܬܐ. ܘܥܡ ܦܓܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܒܩܒܪܐ܆ ܘܥܡ ܢܦܫܐ ܒܦܪܕܝܣܐ: ܠܐ ܡܣܬܝܟܢܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܒܪܡ. ܘܚܕ ܒܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܘܕܝܢܢ ܒܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ܀

[96] Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 126.

George mainly emphasized the two natures in Christ and therefore he also quoted sayings from the 'Fathers of the *politeia* of the Romans'. Even Cyril, 'the disturber of the churches and the destroyer of the true belief of Christians in the land of the Romans', would have been forced to acknowledge the two natures (and *qnome*) in Christ. In a rather inaccurate reference to Cyril, George explained that when God ordained Moses to build the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 25:10-11), the two different materials of the Ark referred to the two natures of Christ. This statement may foremost be considered to represent George's own thinking:

> 'Let that Ark, which God had ordered Moses to build, be for you a *typos* of the union of the two natures of Christ. Instead of the incorruptible wood: let it be for you the human *qnoma,* who did not do wrong and was found without sin, and instead of the gold, with which the Ark was covered outside and inside, the divine *qnoma*, which is united and connected outside and inside with the humanity. And just as there are two natures in the one Ark, there are two natures in the one Christ, the Son of God'.[97]

George probably attempted to show the conformity in the Christian faith, although he rejected Theopaschism. One of his last remarks in his letter was that 'our' faith is the same as that of Rome and the whole of Italy, and further of Constantinople, Jerusalem and other cities and churches of the Romans that are not contaminated by heresy. This true confession would not only acknowledge the Son of God who was for salvation, but also the two natures with their properties and energy (ܒܕܝ̈ܠܝܬܗܘܢ ܘܒܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܗܘܢ) in the one Christ. It is remarkable that the text preserved has 'properties' in plural but 'energy' in singular. It is not clear why this definition would differ from that of Ishoʿyahb III, who deliberately spoke of two energies.[98] Miaphysitism as such is further not explicitly disqualified here, but implicitly it is.

George further claimed that the true confession (ܬܘܕܝܬܐ) was preserved best in 'this *politeia* of the East, namely in the land of Fars and the surrounding areas'.[99] It is noteworthy

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[97] George named Ignatius, Athanasius of Alexandria, Ambrose of Milan, Gregory the Theologian (of Nazianzus), Amphilochius and Chrysostom. Chabot comments that George referred to Cyril's commentary on the Gospel of John, but that he developed the metaphor in far less precise terminology. Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 243-44 and 512-13.
ܕܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܠܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܚܝܕܘܬܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܘܗܝ، ܕܡܫܝܚܐ܆ ܩܒܘܬܐ ܗܿܝ ܕܦܩܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܡܘܫܐ ܠܡܥܒܕ. ܩܝܣܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܚܒܠ: ܢܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܚܠܦ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ܆ ܗܿܘ ܕܥܘܠܐ ܠܐ ܥܒܕ ܘܫܠܝܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܟܚܬ ܒܗ. ܘܕܗܒܐ ܕܐܬܚܦܝܬ ܩܒܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܠܒܪ ܘܡܢ ܠܓܘ: ܚܠܦ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ܆ ܗܿܘ ܕܡܚܝܕ ܘܡܬܢܩܦ ܠܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܠܒܪ ܘܡܢ ܠܓܘ. ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܒܚܕܐ ܩܒܘܬܐ: ܗܟܢܐ ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܟܝ̈ܢܐ ܒܚܕ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ܀

[98] Chabot's translation reflects this difference ('leurs propriétés et leur opération'). Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 244. and 614. Referring to the same text in the *Synodicon Orientale*, Dietmar Winkler gives the plural form ܡܥܒܕܢܘ̈ܬܗܘܢ instead of ܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܗܘܢ and also translates it in plural ('Energien'), but does not further discuss it. Winkler, *Ostsyrisches Christentum*, p. 129. Oscar Braun also translates it in plural ('in ihren Eigenschaften und Energieen'), Braun, *Synhados*, p. 370.

[99] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, p. 244. ܒܗܕܐ ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ܆ ܗܿܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܦܢܝܬ ܦܪܣ ܘܕܦܢܝ̈ܬܐ ܕܚܕܪ̈ܝܗ̇܀ George distinguished the *politeia* of the Romans from this *politeia* of the East (Fars and adjacent regions). It is therefore not clear whether he subdivided the *politeia* of the East or not. Moreover, as he ascribed several histor-

that George seems to have restricted the once extended area of the Church of the East to these regions. This raises several questions: was this mainly for persuasive reasons, flattering Mina (and probably the bishops who had attended his Synod); did George make subdivisions within his *politeia*; was George actually in doubt of the orthodoxy in the more northern provinces, such as in the Jazira or Adiabene, or was his authority actually restricted to the southern provinces and was the local character of his synod an indication for this? In the latter case, the reconciliation with the Metropolitans of Nisibis and Perat d-Maishan (Basra) as reported by Thomas of Marga would become doubtful. However, the possibility is also not to be excluded that it was difficult to travel during these times or that the other Metropolitans actually considered this synod to be of local interest only. Unfortunately, there seem to be no other reports available that could solve these uncertainties.

Finally, George stated that faith cannot be confirmed without enquiry and thinking. One should therefore study the works of the predecessors as far as they were not contaminated by heretics. He closed his letter by recommending Mina to study. When in doubt, the solution would only be found in 'the holy Gospel, the book of Paul, Acts of the Apostles and the rest of all the other books of the Pentateuch and the Prophets'.[100]

Although George acknowledged two *qnome* in Christ, he did not explicitly censure others for not doing so or claiming only one *qnoma.* The possibility is not to be excluded that George tried to emphasize the beliefs shared in Christianity in order to enhance Christian reliability, although he insisted on rejecting Theopaschism and defending Christ's soteriological role as Son of God. In the latter aspect, he seems to have expressed himself far more clearly than Ishoʿyahb III had done. Moreover, where Morony holds that it was due to Heraclius' policies that both Ishoʿyahb III and George I believed that they shared their Dyophysite belief with the entire Western Church, the above findings rather indicate that these catholicoi were aware of the more recent Christological movements in the West that emphasized the two natures.[101]

ical figures from the former Byzantine Empire to this Eastern *politeia*, it is also not clear how he interpreted their borders during his life time.

[100] Chabot, *Synodicon Orientale*, pp. 244-455. ܐܠܐ ܡܢܗ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ܆ ܘܡܢ ܟܬܒܗ ܕܫܠܝܚܐ ܦܘܠܘܣ ܘܦܪܟܣܝܣ ܕܫܠܝܚܐ܆ ܘܫܪܟܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܘܕܢܒܝܐ. ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܘܢ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܟܬܒܘ.
Compare Ishoʿyahb III's description of the Gospel, Duval (ed.), *Liber Epistularum*, C-22, p. 288. He names Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, but foremost Paul, 'the mouth of Christ'.

[101] Morony, *Iraq after the* Conquest, p. 358.

5.4. John I Bar Marta (680-83)

The short reign of John coincided with that of Muʿawiya's son Yazid (680-83), whose contested election had elicited the second civil war. During John's reign, the orthodoxy of the Western Church officially acknowledged at the Council of Constantinople (681) the two natures, two wills and two energies (ἐνέργεια, *energeia*) in Christ. It is not known to what extent John may have been aware of this or even been influenced.

Mari devotes only a few lines to him.[102] Amri and Slibae offer some more information. John would have come from a noble family in the Ahwaz region (in Bet Huzaye). He was a monk and studied in Gundeshapur, where he became metropolitan bishop at an old age. Soon thereafter he was chosen Patriarch and ordained in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. He was in office for two years, after which the Catholicate remained vacant for another two years.[103]

5.5. Henanishoʿ I and John of Dasen, 'the Leper' (685-700)

Henanishoʿ I and John of Dasen are discussed here in one section, because John managed temporarily to become Catholicos instead of Henanishoʿ I. According to John bar Penkaye, Henanishoʿ had been an interpreter, a teacher in biblical exegesis (ܡܦܫܩܢܐ, *mpashqana*), before he was elected Catholicos.[104] Henanishoʿ wrote many theological works and also some commentaries on Aristotelian philosophy, such as Aristotle's *Analytics*. Brock lists him under the 'main Syriac scholars'.[105] A *memra* on Ishoʿyahb III is attributed to Henanishoʿ I, but this is seriously contested and may also belong to a later period. It is therefore questionable whether Henanishoʿ I had been a pupil of Ishoʿyahb III, as was claimed in the same text.[106] Most of Henanishoʿ I's works which have been preserved deal with canonical and legal matters, especially on inheritance. The church claimed its right to inherit the estates of those who died without heirs.[107]

Concerning his Christology only one fragment seems to have been preserved. It comments on Matt. 21:9. and may have belonged to his *On the exegesis of the pericopes of the Gospel,*

[102] Gismondi (trans.), *Maris,* p. 55.
[103] Gismondi (trans.), *Amri et Slibae*, pp. 33-34.
[104] Mingana, *Sources syriaques* 1, p. 156.
[105] Abdishoʿ mentioned a commentary on the *Analytics*, lost now, in his catalogue of Syriac authors. Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition', pp. 6 and 9. See also Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, p. 209.
[106] On this hagiography, see section 3.1, note 1. As we have seen in section 3.6.2, Fiey moreover suggested that Henanishoʿ I is identical to the Abbot Henanishoʿ, a confidant of Ishoʿyahb III.
[107] Morony, *Iraq after The Muslim Conquest,* p. 367.

which is considered lost, but of which Reinink has found several fragments. Henanishoʿ I not only judged the Jews who denied that Jesus should be known as God, but also the 'new folly' (*leluta hdatta*) of those who claimed that he is only a prophet, like those who said: 'This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee' (Matt. 21:11). Hoyland and Reinink hold that this new folly clearly designates Islam, since the Qurʾan counts Jesus among the prophets before Muhammad, but denies his divinity.[108] This view, as we have seen, became more pronounced after 690.

Already the election of Henanishoʿ I as Catholicos was not uncontested.[109] During the vacancy after 683, Ishoʿyahb the bishop of Basra had managed to get hold of the catholicate in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. He was, however, imprisoned and Henanishoʿ I was ordained instead.[110] It is not clear whether Ishoʿyahb might have been supported by the Zubayrids, who had seized control over Basra between 683-91.[111] Catholicos Henanishoʿ I could not but be involved in the second civil war in Iraq. He resided in Seleucia Ctesiphon which administratively belonged to Kufa, where the party of ʿAli, the Umayyads and the Zubayrids each claimed the sole leadership over all the Muslims. All parties had ruled for a while, but the chronology is quite obscure and many particulars remain unclear.[112]

Although the new Catholicos Henanishoʿ seems to have been neutral in directing the church affairs and in his legal correspondence, he was accused of siding with both Mukhtar and Musʿab. His contacts with these leaders may have made him unreliable in the eyes of the Umayyads. When the Umayyads finally had defeated Musʿab in 690 and ʿAbd al-Malik's brother Bishr b. Marwan was appointed governor of Kufa (690-93/94), John of Dasen (ܕܣܢ), the Metropolitan of Nisibis, may have conspired with the Umayyads in order to get hold of the catholicate. He cast doubt on Henanishoʿs loyalty and may have persuaded Bishr to make him Catholicos instead by promising a large bribe and by delivering him Nisibis, which had come into the rebel hands of the *shurte*. In 692/93 Bishr actually dismissed Henanishoʿ and forced the bishops to elect John. John's good fortune did not last long. After the severe Hajjaj

[108] Gerrit Jan Reinink: 'Fragmente der Evangelien Exegese des Katholikos Ḥenanišoʿ I', in R. Lavenant (ed.), *V Symposium Syriacum 1988* (OCA 236; Rome, 1990), pp. 89-91; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as others saw it*, p. 202.
[109] Most information on Henanishoʿ and his rival John of Dasen is based on the Chronicle of Maris, Amri and Sliba. Eduard Sachau gives a summary of these data and compares them with other sources, which Michael Morony uses in his historical overview. Gismondi (trans.), *Maris*, pp. 55-57; idem, *Amri et Slibae*, pp. 34-35; Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, pp. vi-xvii; Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 352-53.
[109] Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, pp. vii-ix.
[110] Gismondi (trans.), *Amri et Slibae*, pp. 34-35.
[111] Cf. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam*, pp. 48-49; Pellat, 'al-Baṣra', pp. 1087-88.
[112] See also above, section 5.1.

had succeeded Bishr in November 694, John was unable to pay all the money demanded by this new governor. He tried to escape, but died in the vicinity of Kufa.[113]

John's supporters in Nisibis were led by Mardanshah, an aristocratic Christian Persian physician. They helped the governor of Jazira, another brother of ʿAbd al-Malik, to take Nisibis. Thereafter the party of Henanishoʿ would have been driven out of Nisibis, while Mardanshah was rewarded with the administration of the city, Bet ʿArabaye and Bet Nuhadra. This alliance would not have lasted long and only held until John's death. ʿAbd al-Malik is said to have punished Mardanshah severely in 696: Mardanshah was arrested, his goods were confiscated, his family was sold into slavery and his brother was crucified.[114] It may be that Mardanshah was the victim of a general assault on Christian leaders.[115]

Henanishoʿ was moreover attacked by Miaphysite circles in Nisibis. A certain Sargon, who probably was a secretary at the court of ʿAbd al-Malik, is said to have accused Henanishoʿ before this caliph.[116] Fiey seems to conclude that inter-Christian rivalries led the Muslim authorities to support John of Dasen against Henanishoʿ.[117] Morony even argues that the 'Nestorians themselves caused their Muslim rulers to apply Sasanian methods towards them'.[118] This view, however, seems to overemphasize the role of the rival Christian parties rather than competing Muslim groups in this turmoil of events. It is further not clear to what extent the already existing conflicts between the more western oriented Nisibis and the rest of the Church of the East continued to play a role in their loyalties to the rival Muslim parties.

After the death of John of Dasen, Henanishoʿ I seems to have exerted some kind of unofficial patriarchate from a monastery near Mosul until his own death around 700. The period from 694 to 700 is therefore generally considered his second period as Catholicos.[119] Overall, the reign of Henanishoʿ corresponded roughly with that of ʿAbd al-Malik, although this caliph only gained full power over Iraq since 690. After this time the relative religious tolerance of

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[113] Gismondi (trans.), *Maris*, pp. 55-57; idem, *Amri et Slibae*, pp. 34-35; Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, pp. xiii-xv; Morony, *Iraq after The Muslim Conquest*, pp. 131, 352-53; Lucas Van Rompay, 'Ḥenanishoʿ I (d.699/700)', *GEDSH*, pp. 194-95. Hajjaj took severe measures in order to raise (land) taxes. He sent the peasants back to the land they had left evading taxation. The peasants were thus subjected to taxation again, while they were practically forbidden to convert to Islam. Cahen, 'D̲j̲izya', pp. 559-62.

[114] Gismondi (trans.), *Maris*, pp. 55-57; idem, *Amri et Slibae*, pp. 34-35; Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, pp. xiii-xv; Morony, *Iraq after The Muslim Conquest*, pp. 353.

[115] According to the West Syrian *Chronicle of 1234*, ʿAbd-al-Malik appointed two generals as governor in 685 when he saw that Ibn al-Zubayr gained support in the East. In Persia, governor al-Hajjaj killed the leading men of the Arabs and looted their houses, while Muhammad b. Marwan did the same in Mesopotamia, Mosul and Armenia and moreover murdered Christian leaders, including Mardanshah. Payne, *Christianity and Iranian Society*, pp. 245-46, with references; Andrew Palmer, Sebastian Brock and Robert Hoyland, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993), pp. 200-202.

[116] Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, p. xiiii.

[117] Fiey, 'Naṣārā', pp. 970-73.

[118] Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 352-53.

[119] Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher* 2, pp. vii-ix; Morony, *Iraq after The Muslim Conquest*, p. 367.

the Arab rulers towards Christians changed and the position of the Christians worsened. After 705 only Arabic was allowed as the civil language.[120]

[120] According to *Chronicle of AD 1234*, Caliph al-Walid ordered this in 705. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, pp. 101-102; Palmer, Brock and Hoyland, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, p. 209.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

In this study we have discussed more or less chronologically many aspects of the Christology of the Church of the East and the challenges its catholicoi faced from the fourth up to the end of the seventh centuries, focusing on how these may have been experienced by Ishoʿyahb III. In the present chapter some lines of discussion will be brought together and summarized in nine main points.

6.1. The new Christological formula and Babai

At the turn of the sixth into the seventh century the Church of the East had developed its own Christological orthodoxy in reaction to alternatives deemed heretical, often associated with powerful opponents. However the Church of the East seemed never to have been a monolithic block, and positions within it could vary. In 612, the Church of the East officially added 'two *qnome*' to the traditional Antiochene Christological formula ('two natures in one person'), although this was not uncontested. The addition was especially influenced and promoted by Babai. The reasons for it can be traced through a range of often intertwining factors, such as linguistics, Church history, logic, epistemology and politics.

In general, the addition was a reaction to the teaching of one (composite) *qnoma* or even one nature in Christ. Babai opposed the Miaphysite emphasis on the one nature and one *hypostasis/qnoma* after the union, as strongly defended by Cyril of Alexandria and his followers. Babai also opposed the Neo-Chalcedonian doctrine (553), which recognized the two natures, but only one person and one composite *hypostasis/qnoma*. Moreover, within his own Church Babai had also to deal with adversaries of the two-*qnome* doctrine, which had found support in the influential Theological School of Nisibis and the powerful court of the Persian emperor.

The choice for one *qnoma* or two *qnome* in Christ depended essentially on the definition given to it. The Syriac term *qnoma* had several meanings that could vary over time and within different settings, causing many misunderstandings. It was often used as a translation of the Greek term *hypostasis*, some circles almost identifying '*qnoma*' with 'person' (*parsopa*), and others aligning the term with 'nature'. The former usage was true for the (neo-) Chalcedonians and for Miaphysite groupings in Babai's time. Before, the Miaphysites had connected it

mainly with 'nature', and they therefore considered the Chalcedonian doctrine of two natures in one *hypostasis/qnoma* illogical. But later their interpretation seems to have shifted to 'person'. To complicate matters, 'person' could also be interpreted differently among the various groupings, ranging from what one essentially is to one's outward appearance. The Church of the East tended toward the latter option, making a close connection between *qnoma* and nature, although different interpretations also occurred. The confusion was not confined to that period: when *qnoma* is given different translations in secondary literature, the difficulties are only compounded. This study chooses therefore not to translate *qnoma* but to use only the Syriac term.

Babai seems to have represented a 'Nestorian' stream of the famous theological School of Nisibis in associating *qnoma* with nature, while he associated *parsopa* with the outward appearance (or manifestation) of the nature. This was probably the main reason why he added two *qnome* to the original Antiochene formula and rejected the one-*qnoma* Christology. When Babai defended the extended formula, he was resting firmly within the tradition of the Church of the East.

In the fourth century Aphrahat and Ephrem used the clothing metaphor to explain the mystery of Christ being God and Man. In Ephrem's work we found sayings that might have fostered the later two-*qnome* doctrine, as he required that everything that really exists must have a *qnoma* since otherwise it would be a mere name. Although Ephrem was making the claim in a Trinitarian context, such argumentation was also used later in a Christological context. For instance Nestorius, Ishoʿyahb II and both Ishoʿyahb III and his opponent Sahdona used it in their defence of either one or two *qnome* in Christ.

The Antiochene school of thought, which had also developed in the fourth century, was to dominate the Christology of the Church of the East. In reaction to Arianism, Apollinarism and Paulianism, which were considered to have diminished the integrity of the divine and/or human nature of Christ, the Antiochene School emphasized a precise differentiation between these natures. Christ as God did not suffer and anyone suggesting so was accused of Theopaschism. At the same time Christ's complete humanity is highly important for the school's soteriology. Further, Christ in his humanity is the prototype of all believers and has all human properties, including free will.

Theodore of Mopsuestia was the most famous Antiochene theologian and his work was considered the norm for exegesis. His exegesis was literal and historical and was embedded in a pedagogical and soteriological perspective. It was marked strongly by the concept of divine *paideia*, God's guidance of mankind, in Syriac language often referred to as *mdabbranuta*.

Theodore further taught that the two natures (each having a *prosopon/parsopa*) become one *prosopon/parsopa* in an exact conjunction. It is questionable whether he taught two *hypostaseis/qnome* in Christ. In Theodore's time, the term was not yet well defined and most of his texts that have been preserved do not use *hypostasis/qnoma* in a Christological context, except for an ambiguous fragment from an Edessene Syriac version of his *On the Incarnation*. This fragment allows both the interpretation that he taught one *qnoma* and that he taught two *qnome* in Christ. When arguing against defenders of the one *qnoma*, Babai also seems to have referred to these Syriac fragments. Theodore's influential exegesis of the Nicene Creed was based on a somewhat different version which contained some specific Antiochene elements. Especially his insertion of 'First-Born of everything created' after 'Only-Begotten' (Son of God), emphasizing the two natures, persisted in the usage of the Church of the East.

Nestorius stood in the same tradition as Theodore. He tried to explain how the two *prosopa/parsope* could become one. Provoked by Cyril he spoke of each nature having in addition a *hypostasis/qnoma*. The works which elaborated the formula of 'two natures, two *qnome* and one *parsopa*' were probably unknown among the contemporary Theodorians in Edessa. Nestorius' letters were condemned in 431 by the Synod of Ephesus in which Cyril of Alexandria played a key role. In 451 the Synod of Chalcedon produced the Christological formula that was to become the standard of orthodoxy of the Byzantine Church. It stated that Christ exists in two natures concurring in one *prosopon* and one *hypostasis*, while each nature keeps its property. The union was characterized by four qualities: 'without confusion', 'without change', 'without division' and 'without separation'. The latter two were included to counter a doctrine ascribed to Nestorius, namely the teaching of two sons. The Church of the East, however, strongly denied repeatedly that they and Nestorius taught such a doctrine. The position of the Church of the East towards this synod seems to have been ambivalent, as it used several of its expressions in defending and explaining its own orthodoxy.

Cyril's anathemas became very influential and had several terminological consequences, because they condemned the teaching of two *prosopa* and two *hypostaseis* while demanding the acceptance of only one of each. The use of the plural form of these expressions consequently could become suspect. It was perhaps for this reason that the Theodorians of the School of Edessa and Nisibis developed a specific language. They not only restricted the use of *qnoma* and *parsopa*, but also differentiated the divine nature from the activities of the divine Word (love, will and power) involved in the salvific coming of Christ. The humanity and divinity become one only in one undivided adoration. However, the Church further continued to use expressions for the Incarnation that were disqualified by Cyril, such as an 'inhabitation'

or ‘indwelling’ (in a temple); the clothing metaphor; ‘assuming the form of a servant’; *sunapheia* (conjunction), and ‘he who was assumed by him who assumed him’.

On their part, the Chalcedonians tried to put an end to the confusions in Greek terminology and decreed in 553 that *hypostasis* was not the same as nature, but that it was the same as *prosopon.* Nature (*physis*), then, was the same as *ousia.* One important reason for these definitions was to prevent Miaphysite interpretations such as those made by Cyril and more particularly his followers. It thus became impossible to interpret the last part of the Chalcedonian formula ‘two natures concurring in one *prosopon* and *hypostasis*’, as an indication that Christ has one nature after the union. The Chalcedonian formula now was reformulated and explained by the Neo-Chalcedonian expression ‘one composite *hypostasis*’.

Although the Byzantines emphasized the two natures in their definitions, their simultaneous identification of *hypostasis* with *prosopon* still demanded continuing condemnation of the main theologians of the Church of the East and any Christological doctrine suspected of teaching two *hypostaseis* (*qnome*) and therefore of two *prosopa.* In reaction, a discussion on the use of *qnoma* seems to have started within the Church of the East. This discussion became even more complicated after 540, when the Church of the East had another base for its theology at its disposal. This was the Syriac translation of the *Liber Heraclidis* of Nestorius, which contained the formula of two natures, two *qnome* and one *parsopa.* It had hitherto been unknown but had recently been rediscovered and translated. Although the *Liber Heraclidis* possibly contained additions, it was considered completely authentic. As a result of the Church’s efforts to interpret *qnoma* in the light of both the traditional Antiochene and the new formula, in reaction to the Neo-Chalcedonian formula, two opposing groupings developed.

In 562-63, a delegation of the Church of the East tried to convince the Byzantine Emperor Justinian that each nature must have a *qnoma*, and that Christ therefore has two *qnome.* But probably they did not speak for the whole Church. Henana, the director of the influential School of Nisibis, played a role in the conflicts, although one can only speculate about the particulars. Several factors, which do not exclude each other, might have been involved.

Henana may have belonged to the stream within the School of Nisibis that more or less identified *qnoma* with *parsopa* and he may therefore have accepted the formula ‘one *parsopa* = one *qnoma*’. This may have been in accordance with Justinian’s decree, but whether Henana actually taught the one (composite) *qnoma* is contested. Henana’s party may have interpreted the two *qnome* as leading to two *parsope*, which they rejected. The other stream, including Babai, associated nature with *qnoma* and acknowledged therefore two *qnome* in Christ and rejected the formula ‘one *parsopa* = one *qnoma*’ as this would lead to the Miaphy-

site position of one nature of Christ. Those who did not accept the one *qnoma* solution left the School. Many of them were connected to the Izla (or Great) Monastery of which Babai was the third abbot. Each party claimed to represent orthodoxy and to stand in the tradition of the Fathers and might have found confirmation in the Syriac fragments of Theodore's *On the Incarnation*.

The School of Nisibis and the Great Monastery probably also had rival claims on supremacy depending on who would offer the best way to the highest spiritual knowledge. To the monastery belonged a school of some renown which was strengthened by teachers who had left Henana's school. Henana might have opposed the official church, propagating an epistemology considered heretical and corroborating with dissenting monks who followed their own way. The Church had combatted such monks already since at least 486 and often associated them with Miaphysites and Messalians.

During Babai's time, the defence against Miaphysite propaganda seems to have become of vital importance to the Church of the East. Around 603, Khosrau started to favour the Miaphysites strongly at the expense of the Church of the East, which hitherto he had favoured. In the year 608, he even started to paralyse the leadership of the Church of the East by denying it a new catholicos, exiling several bishops and allowing Miaphysites to confiscate its churches and monasteries. Meanwhile, the number and influence of Miaphysites within the Church and monasteries grew. Local authorities, mostly lay aristocrats, who could have invested their family capital in churches and monasteries, were affected and might have allied with one or the other denomination, probably depending on theological and opportunistic considerations. The suggested specific alliance between aristocrats and the circles around Henana seems therefore to belong to a wider, general pattern.

Moreover, the geo-political situation of Nisibis at the contested border of the Byzantine and Persian Empires gave rise to many tensions. These were intensified by the proximity of not only many monasteries of both Miaphysite and strict Dyophysite denominations, but also by monastic circles that were not approved by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Some parties within the Church of the East may have preferred Byzantium over Persia, and even have sought a doctrinal reconciliation, which was promoted by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610-41), who also sought for reconciliation with the Miaphysites. Khosrau, in turn, seems to have favoured the denomination he expected to serve his political ambitions most.

Whatever the possible explanations for the conflicts within the Church of the East, they seem to have been exploited by Miaphysite groupings within the Church who thus may have even provoked the official formulation and defence of the doctrine of two natures, two *qnome*

and one *parsopa*. This defence in 612 of the new formula by bishops of the Church of the East may be seen in the light of attempts to regain influence on the basis of their Christology.

Such were the challenges Babai met and the theological tradition he wanted to defend at the beginning of the seventh century. Some other typical traits of the Church of the East can be mentioned: in line with Nestorius, the Church held that Christ's humanity implies that Mary is not solely *theotokos*; in following God's will and in imitation of Christ, believers can already participate to some extent in Christ's glory and become part of the *parsopa* of Christ; free will is necessary to follow God's will; baptism plays an important role; argumentation centres mainly on Bible texts (especially Phil. 2:6-7 and John 1:14), the exegesis of Theodore of Mopsuestia, and some Greek philosophy. Finally, it is standard that Arius, Paul of Samosata, Cyril, Justinian, Severus, Philoxenus and later also Henana are all condemned and often seen as one of a kind, especially because they are thought to propagate the dogma of one nature and/or one *qnoma* of Christ.

In his argumentation, Babai reinterpreted sayings of the Fathers, but did not quote Theodore of Mopsuestia to any extent and did not mention Ephrem at all. Bible texts remained important, including the famous Antiochene key verses. Babai's argumentation further contained many elements of Aristotelian logic and concepts that were also current in the School of Nisibis. Babai focussed on how the two *qnome*, each with their own *parsopa*, are joined in one *parsopa*. He explained this extensively, defining the several Christological terms with new details.

The Christology of Babai can be characterized as follows: he was a strong defender of the fundamental Antiochene safeguarding of God's transcendence and the humanity of Christ, with the two natures united in the one *parsopa* that shared the honour, power and adoration of the Lord. The *parsopa of filiation* (an expression of Nestorius), which Babai also called the *parsopa of mdabbranuta*, is the natural, unique and unchangeable property of the 'Word' and can be communicated with creatures. Babai defined *qnoma* as the individual instance of a nature and therefore argued that only one *qnoma* of each of the two natures could be involved (namely Jesus and the *Word*) and not all human beings and the whole Trinity. Babai also held that the one-*qnoma* doctrine implied Origenism and Theopaschism, and he did not distinguish it from the teaching of one *composite qnoma*. His rejection of the composite *qnoma* was perhaps also a reaction to Proclus' assumption that a composite *qnoma* would end in dissolution and loss of existence of its parts.

In Babai's Christology it was essential that the union of the two natures into one *parsopa* was infinite, not passible and not out of necessity but voluntary. Free will also played an im-

portant role in the desired purification of the soul. Babai still used the five traditional Antiochene descriptions for the Christological Union: assumption, indwelling, temple, clothing and conjunction, which he saw as attempts to describe different aspects of the miraculous union of the finite with the infinite. Babai further elaborated the concept of assumption in explaining differences between *qnoma* and *parsopa* with the aid of Aristotelian terminology. In his rejection of the enemies of the Church, Babai did not deviate from former times, seeing Henana as their heir.

6.2. Epistemology and Christology. The monastic life

Alongside the reasons already suggested for the addition of two *qnome*, this study also draws attention to a further possible element neglected thus far, namely Babai's epistemology for the more advanced monks. This may have formed an additional intrinsic motivation, and also seems to have played a decisive role in Babai's conflicts with the School of Nisibis.

Babai accused Henana of Origenism and of having asserted that the human intellect enabled human beings to know the unknowable God and even to become God. It has been suggested that Henana extended the scholastic curriculum with the epistemology of Evagrius (who was influenced by Origenism) and possibly that he claimed that this combination offered the best way to the highest knowledge. This claim may have challenged the position of the Great Monastery and the reform monasteries. Consequently, epistemology would have been another reason for Babai to accuse Henana of teaching Origenism, Miaphysitism and one composite *qnoma*, which according to Babai belonged together and would imply the teaching that human beings can know God and will be gods. It is not clear to what extent these were actually Henana's views.

According to Babai, Origenism not only taught human participation in the divine nature, but also the pre-existence of the soul and the denial of the Resurrection, and thus would impair the fundament of faith. The real Evagrius held that intelligent souls were originally in intellectual unity with the divine, but had fallen away from this unity into a bodily state from which through asceticism and reflection they had to find their way back to the former unity. In contrast, Babai emphasized that the mode of God's essence cannot be known, and that this insight even formed the culmination of spiritual knowledge, for which baptism, the ascetic life and grace were a prerequisite. He therefore eliminated Origenist elements from a Syriac version of Evagrius' work that was important in monastic life. He transformed it to a system that

bound the monks to obedience to the hierarchy while guarding the Antiochene distinction between God's transcendence and human passibility against the notion of God and man becoming one. Babai elevated this 'domesticated' Evagrius to a position similar to that of Theodore of Mopsuestia and recommended him to monks in their effort to gain access to spiritual knowledge. In his mysticism, he may further have been influenced by John of Apamea and Marc the monk.

One of the prerequisites for spiritual knowledge was the purification of the individual soul, which Babai closely associated with the concept of *qnoma*. This purification required the ascetic life of monks who had Christ as their prototype. Christ's human obedience and the purity of his soul, which—like a clear mirror—made him a perfect reflection of God in one *parsopa*, served as an example to enjoy a momentary vision of the Trinity. In line with the Antiochene tradition Babai taught that the invisible divine nature is visible in Christ's one *parsopa*. Babai explained that the invisible is seen like the sun in a mirror or a pearl. After baptism, the soul could become a mirror that should be directed at the light of truth by freely discerning between good and bad, and this 'mirror' finally might reflect the Trinity for a moment during prayer. This is both strongly reminiscent of Ephrem's mirror metaphor, and of Theodore's teaching of participation in the *parsopa* of Christ and of the moral role of knowledge.

Besides such a reflection, Babai also explained how the *parsopa* of God could become visible in an individual nature (*qnoma*). He therefore used the example of the imprint of the face of a king on a golden coin in wax or clay. The wax thus assumed the *parsopa* of the king and his honour, while remaining of a different nature.

As each monk had to purify his individual human soul (*qnoma*), Christ might have been thought to have not only a divine *qnoma*, but also as human *qnoma*. In his human *qnoma* he may even have reflected God in a more permanent way than other human beings. The way Babai linked the highest knowledge with the individual soul and *qnoma* may have been a means to integrate the new doctrine in monastic life. However, it also may have been the expression of an already existent undercurrent within reform monasticism connected to the Izla monastery that intensified the discussion on one or two *qnome*.

In the works of Babai's successors Ishoʿyahb II and III there are also traces of such a reflection of the truth in one's *qnoma*. Ishoʿyahb II may similarly have equated *qnoma* and soul, especially with regard to its purification. The next successor, Ishoʿyahb III, held that participation in Christ could be effected at the level of *qnoma*. He may have been in line here with the mysticism of Babai, according to which the ultimate truth could be seen in the purified *qnoma* of the soul. Ishoʿyahb III barely elaborated the mystical connotations in the way Babai

had done, but referred to monks as ‘vessels’ who had purified their *qnoma*, and were like mirrors that reflected the light of truth. He referred only in a very early letter to the metaphor of imprints in gold. It is not known whether he may have ceased making further references because his enemy Sahdona criticized Babai’s use of the examples of pictures and prints in gold or wax, arguing that such representations were not real.

Ishoʿyahb III, who had been a monk in the reform monastery Bet Abe, had to deal with a diverse monasticism which was hard to regulate. He attempted to influence the election of abbots while many monasteries were internally divided themselves and inclined to Miaphysite tendencies. Once he was Metropolitan, Ishoʿyahb III tried to regulate monasticism in Adiabene and wrote a general letter which emphasized that monks should stay in the same monastery, be obedient to their abbot and work for a modest income, instead of travelling around and demanding money from believers. Their behaviour should be exemplary and enlighten the Church. In other letters he also described their role in offering refuge for the oppressed and in being hidden helpers of the bishops in the ‘struggle of prayer’.

Ishoʿyahb III not only urged the nobility and the clergy in Nisibis to fight the heretics there, but he also mobilized the monks of Qatar to fight for their faith which stood under great pressure from rebelling bishops.

In a separate hagiography written somewhere between c.621 and c.659, Ishoʿyahb III described all the sufferings the popular martyr monk Ishoʿsabran had sought and endured. There are no indications that inform us to what extent such mortifications were still seen as desirable within the monasteries. Where Ishoʿsabran had provoked the Zoroastrians in order to be punished for his teaching, it is less probable that Ishoʿyahb III used this as an example vis-a-vis the Arabs whose authority he considered God-given.

6.3. Hira of the Arabs

A few years before the 612 debate, Muhammad is said to have started to receive revelations which were to play an important role in nascent Islam. Meanwhile, probably somewhere between 604 and 611, several Arab tribes had been able to resist Sasanian troops for the first time at the battle of Dhu Qar, which became famous.

Arabs were not a foreign element to the Church of the East. Arab tribes had lived close by for centuries. They either led a nomadic life or settled down and adapted various elements from the languages and religions they encountered. At the advent of Islam most Arabs in

South Iraq belonged to the Church of the East. Others adhered to a form of Miaphysitism. Two Arab kingdoms that had developed as vassal states in the desert area between the Persian and Roman Empires, namely that of the Lakhmids in the east (centred in Hira) and of the Ghassanids in the west, were strongly influenced by the adjacent form of Christianity. The *Lakhmids*, who allied with the Persians, were enemies of the Miaphysite *Ghassanids*, who in turn allied with the Byzantines.

The Kingdom of Hira consisted of several Arab tribes and already had a bishop in 410. There may have been an awareness of being a specific people or nation (*ʻamma*) particularly among some Christian tribes, the so-called ʿIbad, based both on their loyalty to the Christian God and on their Arab origins. Hira enabled the Sasanians to dominate the Gulf region and adjacent regions, and to extend their influence even into the Hijaz. For centuries Hira thus could transmit its Arab Christian culture and religion—including the Syrian, Christian and Persian influences—to the Arabs of the Peninsula, and may have formed a model for a Christian Arab identity. Several biblical and Christian notions may have reached Mecca, and the transtribal unity of the ʿIbad may have stood as a model for the notion of a transtribal Muslim *umma*.

The relations with the Church of the East were strong. The Church identified Hira simply with the Arabs (Syr. *Tayyaye*). At least two of the participants in the 612 debate had connections with Hira. After 520, however, several tribes here converted to a form of Miaphysitism.

Many tribes sought Hira's surrounding fertile grounds, holding varying degrees of dominance over these grounds and possibly also over the trade routes leading to Hira. Regularly, conflicts could arise on the use of land and wells. These intensified after the Sasanians had taken over Lakhmid rule in 602 and appointed governors in their place. Without the Lakhmid control of the frontiers, it must have become easier for other tribes to invade. One of the conflicts arose at the oasis Dhu Qar close to Hira and led to the famous battle.

Among the several rival tribes were the powerful Tamim who may have triggered the events which ensued, as after 605 they started to invade the territory of the Bakr close to Hira. The Sasanians had given the Tamim privileges for defending the Sasanian and Hiran trade routes, and had made one of their tribesmen, al-Mundir b. Sawa, governor of the Arabs in Bahrain, supervised by a Persian governor. Meanwhile, the Quraysh in Mecca seem to have competed with Hira over the control of the trade routes and the tribes involved. In this rivalry, it seems likely that Mecca's position became stronger when that of Hira weakened. The Quraysh in Mecca had also built strong ties with the Tamim, which may have further strengthened the position of Mecca.

The Persian and Arab governors of Bahrain are said to have received Muhammad's message in 630 or 632. The Tamim governor was probably striving for independence from the Sasanians and the implied submission to Hira and the Persian governor. He may therefore have used this alliance with Mecca/Medina mainly for economic and political reasons. But after Medina rapidly increased taxations between 630 and 631, around the times of the deaths of both Muhammad and Al-Mundir b. Sawa, there was strong opposition in Bahrain in which the Tamim played a leading role. Opposition also arose among other tribes in the Peninsula fed by both political and religious elements. On the Gulf it was suggested that the kingship should be returned to a Lakhmid descendant. This proposal may have corresponded with a current view that Arab rule was in hands of the kings of Hira.

The internal rivalries between the several Arab tribes of Hira and other powerful tribes concerning control of the trade routes probably continued during this resistance against Meccan supremacy (the so-called *ridda* wars), and during the subsequent Arab conquest of Hira. The extent to which they affected the *ridda* wars and the conquest is not clear, but they seem to have been more significant than generally held. The supremacy of the Quraysh over the other tribes who had made earlier conquests in Hira seems a later (contested) development. The fact that the Shiʿi bulwark Kufa was close to Hira may reflect these earlier dynamics. It is further not clear to what extent the Church of the East may have been affected by these rivalries, but there are some indications which will be discussed below.

6.4. Ishoʿyahb III and the Arabs

The letters of Ishoʿyahb III give some insight into the actions and worries of a senior clergyman within the Church of the East during the wars between Persians, Byzantines and Arabs, which resulted in the early period of Muslim rule over an extensive area. The interpretation of these letters can sometimes be hampered because Ishoʿyahb III carefully did not name some people, and probably relying on other knowledge available to his addressees which we lack remained deliberately vague or made allusions by means of word play. He was often ironically saying rather the opposite of what he meant. He used such rhetorical techniques amply, while sometimes streamlining his message into highly stylized descriptions or comparisons.

Dates are moreover not given and although the generally chronological order of his *Liber Epistularum* can be of some help, the allocation of several letters is clearly wrong, or disputable. An additional difficulty is that the reports on the Arab conquest are not always consistent or accurate. These factors together can seriously affect the interpretation of several events,

such as those taking place during the conquest or conquests of Nineveh by Arab troops, and the question of how Ishoʿyahb III experienced this. The reconstruction of many events remains therefore tentative, which is also the case for some of the new suggestions in this study.

It is not sure when Ishoʿyahb III started to recognize the Arabs as 'secular leaders'. Estimations of the date are dependent among other factors on the fall of Nineveh, of which Ishoʿyahb III officially had been bishop since 628. Nineveh is said to have been taken in either 637 or 641, depending on the report. There are indications that it was taken twice by various Arab tribes. For a better understanding of the complex situation around Nineveh it should be noted that from 628 until 636 the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius had kept parts of his army in Persia around the Miaphysite bulwark Tagrit where Miaphysite Arab tribes lived. Heraclius probably had made this city the administrative centre for a wide region including Nineveh. As his army in Persia consisted mainly of Miaphysite Arab allies, it contributed seriously to Miaphysite dominance here. Conversely, the position of the Church of the East in Nineveh became very weak and even the Metropolitan of the Church of the East in Adiabene sided with Miaphysite groupings.

After Seleucia-Ctesiphon was conquered in 637, the Arabs established Kufa, a new garrison in the vicinity of Hira. From here they made further conquests. When the Arabs took Tagrit in the same year, the Miaphysite allies of the Byzantines might have lost their leading position. This in turn could have once more advanced the position of the Church of the East in this area, as possibly reflected in two of Ishoʿyahb III's letters which mentioned an almost miraculous improvement. The 'impious' (probably Miaphysites) had to run away and hide, while the 'barbarians who opposed us (because of) our sins' became more acceptable instead. Whom Ishoʿyahb III actually meant is not clear. He probably referred to new victorious Arab groupings here. The invading Arabs also built Mosul, a strategic encampment close to Nineveh on the other bank of the Tigris. Their rule followed the Kufan pattern. Nevertheless, although the Miaphysite dominance seems to have been reduced, it did not disappear and Ishoʿyahb III remained in conflict with them.

Later came Arabs from the West. Starting in Damascus, dominated by the Umayyad dynasty, they conquered Nisibis and fought around Balad. They finally took Tagrit as well and gradually their governmental system replaced the Kufan one. Traces of this transitional stage seem to be discernible in Ishoʿyahb III's letters.

Difficulties in interpreting or combining some events in the life of Ishoʿyahb III arise not only from the differing dates for the conquest of Nineveh, but also from some implications in his letters concerning the elections of metropolitans. Ishoʿyahb III wrote these letters towards

the end of his episcopacy in Nineveh and when he had just become Metropolitan in Adiabene. One difficulty in the first of these letters concerns the identification of the dismissed unscrupulous Metropolitan of Adiabene whom Bishop Ishoʿyahb III had refused to succeed initially: Paul or Paul's successor Makkika. Fiey assumed it was Paul and he consequently had to assign Makkika's reign to a later period.

The other letters were connected with the appointment of Maremmeh as Metropolitan of Bet Huzaye, to which position Ishoʿyahb III had himself aspired. Because Fiey also followed the claim of a report that Maremmeh was bishop when the Arabs took Nineveh, and set this event in 637, he assumed that the last episcopal letters were misplaced and actually belonged to Ishoʿyahb III's metropolitan period. This report, however, is contested by the fact that a more reliable source did not mention Maremmeh's episcopate. Moreover, Ishoʿyahb III never called Maremmeh a bishop, although he had written some letters to him during this time. I have suggested therefore that Ishoʿyahb III was Bishop of Nineveh when Arabs took it in 637 and possibly in 641 as well. The latter suggestion is complicated by the fact that Ishoʿyahb III wrote as Metropolitan about fighting around Balad. This might either refer to known battles around 640 or to surmised battles continuing despite Umayyad victories, which does not seem impossible since this area remained contested for decades.

I have presented an alternative interpretation for the events as mentioned in Ishoʿyahb III's letters, which would justify the existing order not only of the five letters (E-50-52 and M-1-2) concerning the elections, but also of E-48 which dealt with Arab rule and of which the heading indicated that it was written when Ishoʿyahb III 'served the holy church of the Ninevites'. According to this alternative interpretation, Ishoʿyahb III was initially invited to replace Metropolitan Makkika who was sent away. Ishoʿyahb III refused, possibly because he preferred Bet Huzaye where his prospects to succeed the ageing Catholicos might have been secured. In his place, he may have proposed Maremmeh, whom he sent to negotiate for him in the Izla monastery. Maremmeh, however, became metropolitan of Bet Huzaye and Ishoʿyahb III of Adiabene. All these events may have taken place between 641 and 642, with Ishoʿyahb III being bishop of Nineveh until that time, while Maremmeh may have to some extent represented him.

As the Izla monastery was close to Nisibis, which had already been taken by Umayyad troops around 640, one might wonder to what extent the Umayyads on the one hand were involved in these decisions and on the other the Kufan troops that still occupied Mosul. Possibly the Tigris, which runs between Mosul and Nineveh, provided a natural border, forming for an unknown period the boundary between the conquered regions negotiated between several

groupings. If a short comment by Metropolitan Ishoʿyahb III meant that the '*politeia* of the orthodox' ended at the East side of the Tigris, as Fiey holds, this would support this suggestion.

There are no direct indications in the letters that Ishoʿyahb III had assisted the Arabs during the conquests. But the fact that in E-48 he asserted confidently that the Arabs would listen and help if one explained some of their Christology to them suggests that he was at least on speaking terms with them. Moreover, the (unverifiable) claim that Maremmeh was given the position of Metropolitan because he had helped the Arabs could similarly have applied to Ishoʿyahb III.

When Ishoʿyahb III became metropolitan of Adiabene around 642, Arab rule was more or less considered a fact, although it took some time to be settled. In the levying of taxes, for instance, Arab rulers depended heavily on the existing infrastructure. The Arabs might have been influential in the appointment of the leaders of the Christians, but the Persian nobility including its Shah had not yet been completely vanquished.

Most of the aristocratic families adjusted to the new situation. They could still put family capital in church properties, perhaps also for fiscal reasons. Just as they had done during the late Sasanian times, they continued to play a role in levying taxes during the early Arab period. This might even have been done through those churches and monasteries. The powerful Persian nobility had been influential in the East Syrian Church, which tried to keep their support and to prevent them from turning to the Miaphysites, as this would have affected the whole area they were responsible for. Some, however, who did not belong to the Church but adhered to Zoroastrianism, might have tried to undermine the position of the Church during the transition period when Sasanian rule was being replaced by Arab rule.

Meanwhile, there is a slight hint that Bishop Ishoʿyahb III may have been involved in a conspiracy with the nobility in Nisibis against Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II. This suggestion is inferred from Ishoʿyahb III's criticism of the priest Moshe in Nisibis, who apparently had not followed his instructions. He wrote this in the context of rumours about the appointment of a new catholicos, in which Moshe seems to have been involved, mentioning Ishoʿyahb III's name to others. This alarmed Ishoʿyahb III. Unfortunately, Ishoʿyahb III's actual role in such a conspiracy cannot be reconstructed.

E-48 is the only letter in which Ishoʿyahb III explicitly referred to the religion of the Arab rulers and called them *mhaggre Tayyaye*. They would reject Theopaschism. Although the exact etymology of the term *mhaggre* is contested, Ishoʿyahb III most probably used it to describe Arabs connected with nascent Islam. He may have distinguished them from the (Miaphysite) Arabs who were already living around Nineveh. In other letters he called Arabs

merely *Tayyaye.* His metropolitan letters rarely refer directly to them. He mentioned once the already familiar 'Hira of the *Tayyaye*'. In later letters he used the term *Tayyaye* several times, but it is not always certain whether he referred to Christian Arab tribes or to Muslim Arab tribes. The usage could in fact change overnight.

During his catholicate Ishoʿyahb III faced apostasy and rebellion in the southern provinces around the Persian Gulf when Muslim rule had been established for some time. He used the terms 'apostasy' and 'rebellion' sometimes rather interchangeably and they allow therefore no further insight in the character of the conflict. The rebelling elements that had not turned to Islam probably strove for independence from the Church, and might also have sought for a more favourable tax regime. As the letters devoted to this rebellion were probably written in the context of the first civil war with supporters of ʿAli (*Shiʿites*) opposing those of the Umayyads, a difference in alliances may have played a role as well. In that case, Ishoʿyahb III might have defended the position of ʿAli who reigned relatively nearby in Kufa.

Probably not long before the rebellion, many churches had been destroyed in Fars and in the 'whole southern world', which presumably included the Gulf region. According to Ishoʿyahb III, the *Tayyaye* would not have been responsible for this, since they had actually protected the churches. He ascribed the destruction to 'a demon', who met no resistance at all. Ishoʿyahb III analysed the situation as follows: the bishops there had not been ordained with his consent. Therefore, the canonical passing down of the power of the Holy Spirit had not taken place and the people lacked consequently the right spirit to defend themselves or to be protected. If the bishops would comply with the rules of the Church, they could be empowered again and miracles could be effected. He further explained that servitude to the Church was the same as servitude to God, and consequently that revolt against the Church was revolt against God. He also held that the people should obey the secular leaders, the Arabs, and pay them taxes, which could amount to half of their possessions, because these Arabs were sent by God at the imminent end times, which were a time of trial. In order to reach eternal salvation, people should therefore remain obedient to the Church and its teaching even at the cost of their possessions or life.

Ishoʿyahb III's argumentation that servitude to God implied servitude to the secular leaders whom God had installed was a generally accepted Christian doctrine. It was also in line with the prescriptions of ʿAli, but opposite to that of the Kharajites, who left ʿAli's party after 657 (and murdered him) because they opposed any human government considered tyrannical or ungodly. However, Ishoʿyahb III also used some expressions that became a mark of the militant Kharajites, such as to 'sell the present life for the world to come'. He thus might have

appealed to sentiments current among several groupings by that time when he indicated that one should ‘sell’ one’s worldly possessions and one’s life in order to ‘buy’ eternal life.

It is not clear to what extent, if any, the rivalry between the Umayyads and the Kufan alliances may have played a role in the conflict between Ishoʿyahb III and his rival Sahdona, and this also applies to the appointments of several subsequent catholicoi during the civil wars.

6.5. Ishoʿyahb III and his rivals

Ishoʿyahb III’s position was contested from several sides. His main rival was Sahdona who propagated a one-*qnoma* Christology and had some important allies. There are several indications in Ishoʿyahb III’s letters that this rivalry was much stronger than generally thought, as Sahdona may have been involved in a condemnation of Ishoʿyahb III and may have aspired to the catholicate as well. Among Sahdona’s supporters was most probably Cyriacus, the Metropolitan of Nisibis until c.645. It was in Nisibis where an independent synod even condemned Ishoʿyahb III when he was Metropolitan of Adiabene. The reasons for this condemnation are not specified other than that this synod rejected the two-*qnome* doctrine, taught ‘the error of one *qnoma*’ in the name of Chalcedon, and used Ishoʿyahb III’s Christological letter to Sahdona against him. The Synod in Nisibis presumably took place between 641 and 645, almost simultaneously with another synod which the Nisibenes did not attend and where the participants could not agree on how to react to the devastating times.

The position of Cyriacus himself was also contested by other parties who accused him of Chalcedonian sympathies and who might have supported Ishoʿyahb III. Nisibis seems to have been in a rather isolated and different position by this time when compared to the rest of the Church of the East. It is not clear to what extent this was due to the wars. It probably had to do with the fact that it was closer to Byzantium and was in more contact with Miaphysite groupings there. In addition, it might also have to do with other Arab forces in the area that were more under the influence of Damascus.

In Arbela, the metropolitan city of Adiabene, Metropolitan Ishoʿyahb III encountered many problems with members of the Persian nobility who were involved in the election of metropolitans and therefore considered the religious views of the candidates. They openly questioned Ishoʿyahb III’s position as well as that of the new Catholicos Maremmeh. Sahdona may have allied with the leaders in Arbela.

Ishoʿyahb III accused Sahdona of Miaphysitism and considered him the enemy of both himself and the Church. After his fruitless attempts to convince Sahdona of his two-*qnome* Christology he agitated against him. Sahdona was exiled several times, but was also forgiven by the Synods. He must have appealed to a substantial part of the Church who still wanted him as bishop or maybe even Catholicos, which in turn threatened Ishoʿyahb III's position and the Christology he defended. Meanwhile, the phraseology in Sahdona's works remained strongly within the traditional framework of the Church of the East. He seems to have belonged to the stream within the School of Nisibis that rather treated *qnoma* and *parsopa* as equivalents and to have argued similarly that this was in line with Theodore of Mopsuestia.

The letters Ishoʿyahb III wrote in relation to Sahdona form the main extant sources for his own Christology. Similarly to what had happened before in the School of Nisibis, his accusations rest mainly on conclusions deriving from his own definition of Christological key terms and they do not seem to represent Sahdona's thinking accurately. Ishoʿyahb III warned Sahdona not to equate *qnoma* with *parsopa* and discussed their differences, remaining in the framework as developed by Babai, who had focussed on their ability to assume or be assumed. Both Ishoʿyahb III and Babai considered this only possible for a *parsopa* and hence they thought it explicable that the human and the divine *parsopa* could become one *parsopa.* As they denied such ability for a *qnoma,* the human and divine *qnoma* had to remain separate, although they could both exist in the one *parsopa.*

Sahdona did not share Babai's and Ishoʿyahb III's distinction between *qnoma* and *parsopa*. He held that a *qnoma* could assume or be assumed and was indicative of the reality of the *parsopa.* Sahdona seems to have insisted that the *parsopa* of Christ was really divine and not only a kind of manifestation, and this may have been the reason why he rejected Babai's metaphors to explain the idea of one *parsopa* in two *qnome.* Although Ishoʿyahb III professed the two natures and two *qnome*, he may sometimes have been inclined to obscure Christ's divinity as he hardly spoke of the Sonship or 'God the Word'. He further seems to have used the concept of the two *qnome* in Christ in an ambiguous way in order to permit various interpretations.

Sahdona was freer in his terminology for the Incarnation and used terminology dear to the Church of the East. It seems that the gap between his and Ishoʿyahb III's points of view was deepened because of two factors. Firstly Sahdona may have sought to harmonize the Christology of the Church of the East with that of other Christians in the former Byzantine areas close to Nisibis. Initially, when Heraclius still governed Syria and tried to harmonize the diverse Christologies, he may have involved both East Syrian and Miaphysite groupings. During the

period Miaphysite Arabs seem to have played a leading role here, Miaphysite groupings may have become Sahdona's main discussion partners. He may have considered himself the defender of the classical Antiochene formula, while he interpreted the key terms in the (Neo-) Chalcedonian way, which might still have allowed him to find some common Christological basis with Miaphysite groupings. Secondly, on his side, Ishoʿyahb III seems to have tended to preserve his Christology against the Arab governors he had to deal with by sometimes obscuring Christ's divinity. This might have strengthened Sahdona's opposition against Ishoʿyahb III, in which he was joined by others.

It is moreover not impossible that after 646, the new Catholicos Maremmeh and the Metropolitan of Arbela, Ishoʿyahb III, envisaged another kind of co-operation with Muslims than was acceptable to several leaders within the Church of the East. However, the relation between Maremmeh and Ishoʿyahb III was also challenged. Although both were attacked by the people from Arbela, who may have sided with Sahdona, Maremmeh later considered rehabilitating Sahdona against the advice of Ishoʿyahb III. It was possibly only the sudden death of Maremmeh which prevented this.

During Ishoʿyahb III's catholicate the influence of Miaphysites in Nisibis seems to have increased, and he tried to mobilize both the nobility and the clergy against this. It is not clear whether groupings around Sahdona were also implied in this rivalry. There must have remained an influential group that was hostile to Ishoʿyahb III, because he had not been treated well in Nisibis when he was exiled there by an unfavourable Arab governor.

Ishoʿyahb III spoke repeatedly of the threat of schisms. These may have been mainly Christological, but geographical factors and fluctuating alliances may also have played a role. The loyalties in the Church seem to have been complex, and the rivalry between the candidates thus may have reflected the political instability of the time, including the rivalry between troops from Kufa and the Umayyads in the North-West.

6.6. Adaptations in Ishoʿyahb III's Christology?

With respect to Byzantines, Ishoʿyahb III claimed once in M-30 (probably written somewhat before 649) that they had now abandoned Cyril's wrong teaching of 'one *qnoma,* property and energy in Christ'. They would now recognize the 'duality of the *qnome,* energies and properties of Christ in one agreement'. It is thereby not clear whether Ishoʿyahb III may have understood 'one agreement' as 'one will'. Ishoʿyahb III may have reacted to some strong opponents

in Byzantium to the doctrine of Monenergism (and Monothelitism). He may have considered his statement opportune for a short time only as he did not subsequently discuss further.

Beside the vagueness about Christ's divinity and his use of the rejection of Theopaschism, the nomenclature in Ishoʿyahb III's letters seems not to permit firm conclusions concerning a possible adaptation to Muslim Arabs. There are, however, some exceptions. The following points may illustrate this:

- All the expressions concerning the omnipotence of God appear from E-26 onwards. This might have had to do with increasing Islamic presence, but could also be explained by the fact that Ishoʿyahb III scarcely wrote on Christology before that time.
- Ishoʿyahb III never mentioned the Trinity, except for one negative example. As he seems to have avoided connecting Christ explicitly to either the Sonship or the Word, one might suggest that Ishoʿyahb III not only tended to avoid the concept of the Trinity, which was rejected by the Qurʾan, but consequently also avoided writing in more specific terms about the relation between God and Christ.
- In rather ambiguous language Ishoʿyahb III stated in C-3 that the human nature of Christ is created and he did not mention the Sonship of the divine nature. This possibly may have been an adaptation to the Islamic rejection of Christ being born of God. Ishoʿyahb III's formulation is rather opaque and might be an attempt to profess his Christological view without causing too much suspicion on the side of the Islamic governors.
- However, in C-22, his last letter, probably written at the end of his life after having been exiled for a time by an Arab governor, Ishoʿyahb III indicated twice that Christ has the same nature as the Father, and he also clearly rejected the view that Christ is not God. One can only speculate whether the reference was deliberate or merely incidental, and whether his later experiences with Arab rule at the onset of the first civil war influenced his strategy.
- It is remarkable that Ishoʿyahb III did not call Christ a 'servant', although Islamic theology did so and previous East Syrian Christology had made ample use of the phrase 'the form of God assuming the form of a servant'. He did not even refer to this verse, as this formulation might have been unacceptable to Islam.
- The same might apply to other expressions for the Incarnation, such as the clothing metaphor, which Ishoʿyahb III did not use.

- Where Ishoʿyahb III could have been in line with the Qurʾan if he called Christ 'the son of Mary'—although this would imply a reduction of the traditional Christian view—he did not mention her at all, possibly to avoid difficult discussions on Christ's precise descent.
- The death on the cross, which according to the Qurʾan was an illusion, is hardly addressed. Ishoʿyahb III did not mention Christ's taking away man's sins. The soteriological role of Christ's death is briefly touched upon twice. He expressed the soteriological role of Christ's death more explicitly when he stated that only through the human *qnoma* of Christ, Christians could be saved and participate 'in the hope of resurrection because of the participation in the prime resurrection'.

These examples give the impression that in his letters Ishoʿyahb III hardly ever used any of the several expressions that may have been unacceptable to Muslims. As most references to Christology are found in the extant letters written after the first Arab invasions, the discernment of a possible development is limited. One can speculate that the absence of several terms that were familiar in the Church of the East was merely incidental in his first letters but more deliberate later. The basic tenets of his Christian belief do not seem to have been affected: Ishoʿyahb III insisted on Christ's soteriological role, which required full acknowledgment of both his human and divine nature and *qnoma*. The very concept of *qnoma* itself may sometimes have enabled him to make ambiguous statements concerning the divine nature of Christ, which might have secured greater acceptance among Muslim governors.

6.7. The Christology of other Catholicoi in the seventh century

Since Babai, the new Christological formula had become standard in the Church of the East and was defended by its Catholicoi. However, on details of the Christology discussion could diverge. The Christology of Babai's immediate successor Ishoʿyahb II can be surmised from only one authentic letter and on less reliable reports on his embassy to Heraclius. The general impression from the letter is that Ishoʿyahb II strongly defended the two-natures-two-*qnome*-one-*parsopa* doctrine. It shows many similarities with Babai's arguments, although these are not expressed at the same length or with the same harshness. Ishoʿyahb II underpinned his Christology with philosophical-theological and semantic argumentation. Several comments seem to be vague or to allow for more lenient interpretations. In his letter he did not mention Cyril nor did he explicitly reject Chalcedon, holding the Chalcedonian formula merely illogical because it confessed two natures on the one hand, but on the other hand translated *hypos-*

tasis as *qnoma* and therefore implied the teaching of one nature. This raises the question of whether Ishoʿyahb II was writing in this way for diplomatic reasons, accommodating to a position that was acceptable to the Byzantine Emperor.

The number of wills, powers or energies was another theme that could be interpreted variously. It became a fervently debated item under Emperor Heraclius, who defended Monenergism from 622 onwards and modified it into Monothelitism in 638. Already Nestorius understood the *prosopon* in terms of image and will and therefore the two *prosopa* becoming one not only implied two wills becoming one, but also one energy according to God's will. However, Nestorius' thought allowed him to recognize both one and two wills, energies and *parsope*. Narsai recognized that the one Sonship has one *parsopa* and one will. The bishops of the 612 debate recognized the two natures and two *qnome* in one *parsopa of filiation*, one authority, one will, one *mdabbranuta* and one power. Ishoʿyahb II's position is not clear. In his Christological letter he spoke of two forms that 'act everything in one *parsopa*'. It remains speculative whether this formulation is meant to accommodate to Monenergism or not. Ishoʿyahb II may have reacted here to discussions on Monenergism because he had to respond to a question whether the unique *parsopa* of Christ belonged to the 'form of God' or to 'the form of man' or to both. According to some, who may have interpreted the verb 'assumed' as 'elevated', Christ would manifest himself, act and speak by this divine *parsopa* that had assumed him, and thus the *parsopa* of Christ would belong only to the form of God. Ishoʿyahb II rejected this view and stated that it was the same as acknowledging one *qnoma* in Christ. It is not sure whether Ishoʿyahb II was here already fighting Sahdona, who propagated the one *qnoma* in Christ and also argued that 'everything is elevated to his assumer'. The letter further seems hardly to have reacted to Heraclius' defence of Monothelitism, possibly because it was written before 628. There is no reliable evidence for the claim in the *Chronicle of Seert* that Ishoʿyahb II actually adhered to the doctrine of one will and one energy.

George I took a slightly different position than Ishoʿyahb III, who once claimed that the 'great Rome' and other areas supported the doctrine of two *qnome*, two energies and properties of Christ. Although George stated similarly that Rome and the whole of Italy, Constantinople, Jerusalem and other cities adhered to the true confession, he claimed that they acknowledged the two natures with their properties (plural) and energy (singular). He moreover openly stated that they acknowledged the soteriological role of the Son of God, an expression which Ishoʿyahb III seems to have avoided for a long time.

6.8. Reactions to increasing pressure on Christians and their basic tenets

As suggested above, the rivalry between Sahdona and Ishoʿyahb III might have had to do with rivalry between the Umayyads and Kufa. This was possibly also combined with differing reactions to views of the new leaders, Ishoʿyahb III apparently tending to conceal unfavourable differences more.

George I claimed that the true confession was preserved best in 'this *politeia* of the East, namely in the land of Fars and the surrounding areas'. As his Synod of 676 was attended only by bishops from this former metropolitan see, it is not clear whether it is simply coincidental that reports from this area have been preserved, or whether George's authority was actually restricted to the Gulf area. It is moreover not known whether this might have been connected with the three main contending Arab parties during the first civil wars. Indications for such an interpretation might be that George I has been associated with Kufa (a Shiʿa bulwark), while one of his rivals was associated with Basra (connected with Al-Zubayr), and the other with Nisibis, which may have been associated more closely with the Umayyads. Moreover, after the brief reign of George I's successor and the subsequent vacancy, the bishop of Basra had got hold of the catholicate but was imprisoned. Instead, Henanishoʿ I was ordained in 685 only to be dismissed in 692/93 at the order of the Umayyads when they regained control. They replaced Henanishoʿ I by the bishop of Nisibis who had conspired with them. These latter developments took place during the second civil war.

Henanishoʿ I had his seat in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, which administratively belonged to Kufa where governors of the three contending parties replaced each other rapidly. His own position was moreover seriously challenged by an internal rival from Nisibis and by Miaphysites from that city who supported the Umayyads. Morony's hypothesis that the 'Nestorians themselves caused their Muslim rulers to apply Sasanian methods towards them' is based on such rivalries. However, it seems to overemphasize the role of the rival Christian parties rather than competing Muslims in this turmoil of events. It is not clear who employed whom, nor to what extent the already existing conflicts between the more western orientated Nisibis and the rest of the Church of the East continued to play a role in loyalties to the rival Muslim parties. The fact that caliphs played an important role in the appointment of new catholicoi was also a result of rival Arab groupings who may have sought the cooperation of influential Christian leaders and rewarded them with the catholicate. The rivalries between the candidates for the catholicate and the eventual choice may therefore have reflected the (temporal) dominance of the respective Arab patrons during nascent Islam.

Whatever the Arab grouping catholicoi succeeding Ishoʿyahb III aligned with, they also had to respond to the developing ideas of the new religious movement and its changing attitudes towards Christians. George's Synod in Dairin (676) emphasized the apostolic mission to teach and baptize all the nations, and it decided therefore on several measures which may have been taken in reaction to Islam, but could also have been a continuation of practice under the Sasanians. The synod forbade women from marrying outside their religion, but it allowed only monogamous relations. Bishops were further to be exempted from the poll tax and another tribute, probably a kind of land tax. It is not clear whether the emphasis on God's incomprehensibility and transcendence at the beginning of the account was a specific response to Islam. It was similar to what was expressed in former synods, as was the subsequent explanation of the Trinity. George introduced the Trinity by explaining how Christians acknowledge this one nature of the divinity in a trinity of names and *qnome,* also called '*qnomatic* names'. This connection with the names (of God) may have found some acceptance among Muslims. George seems to have felt more freedom in referring to the Trinity than had Ishoʿyahb III, possibly because he had found a more acceptable explanation for the relation between Christ and God. George may have further responded to the accusation in the Qurʾan that Christians would say 'God is Christ'. Remaining within the Christological framework of the Church of the East, he nuanced this expression by stating that it is only God the Word who was united in one *parsopa* with Christ.

Unfortunately, not much is preserved of the Christological work of George's learned successor Henanishoʿ I. He once not only criticized Jews who deny that Jesus should be known as God, but also a 'new folly' of those who say that Jesus is only a prophet. The latter probably was a reaction to Islam. Overall, the reign of Henanishoʿ I corresponded roughly with that of ʿAbd al-Malik, although this caliph gained full power over Iraq only after 690. After this time the relative religious tolerance of the Arab rulers towards Christians changed and anti-Christian propaganda intensified.

6.9. Divine Paideia (mdabbranuta) and the end times

The exegesis of the Church of the East was literal and historical, embedded in a pedagogical and soteriological perspective. The stories in the Old Testament were taken as historical facts, which would offer actual examples of the steps man needed to learn, and which might contain prophecies. According to this view, God created the world as a pedagogical tool and he teaches the successive generations throughout history in order to lead man to salvation. God's

mdabbranuta of the generations implies that they have to learn that he is the Creator. Therefore, God also established schools, for instance the School of Nisibis. The visible world enables human beings to develop their reason in order to gain some access to spiritual knowledge and to train the virtues. This practical and moral aspect is also guided by reason and knowledge. Part of God's *mdabbranuta* was that he sent his Son to make his invisible power visible. Final salvation takes place at the end times when Christ returns.

The feeling of living at the end times was already common among Jews and Christians. This was a part of their faith, but in the seventh century it was combined with a strong feeling of urgency as it was thought to be really at hand and this feeling was also shared in nascent Islam. Donner even holds that the Arab conquests would have been started by a rather ecumenical and 'apocalyptically oriented pietistic movement' which would have brought together men from different religions into one *umma* fighting the enemies of God. This movement would have been aimed at attaining salvation on the Last Day by forming a 'community of the righteous' and spreading this as far as possible. The first Caliphs would have extended this policy into an expanding *jihad* state. Because of the religiously pluralist character, the leaders would have had only neutral titles that did not point to a specific religion. This situation would have changed under ʿAbd al-Malik who elevated Islam to the position of the official state religion.

The Last Day was considered to be imminent, which would be followed by a new Era of Righteousness with believers of this new movement inheriting what had belonged to the sinners. Believers thus would be rewarded both in heaven and in the present world. Although social, political and religious confusions were mounting at the time and may have elicited a breakaway from several disappointing elements, in my opinion it is nevertheless difficult to understand why Jews or Christians would support Donner's suggested early movement, as it would have rejected several of their basic tenets. Possibly, they did not fully understand the implications of some accusations or these implications developed only later.

The idea of living at the end times also permeated Ishoʿyahb III's thinking. In line with Antiochene exegesis and the teachings of the School of Nisibis, he related the sufferings of his times to God's *mdabbranuta,* which implied that each period had a pedagogical aim and was meant for learning and purification. His letters offer only a few examples of God's guidance in history, but centre abundantly on present situations, interpreted in a highly apocalyptic manner: Satan had come already to the world and this was the precursor of the end times, accompanied with great distress and the loss of discernment and virtue. It was a punishment for

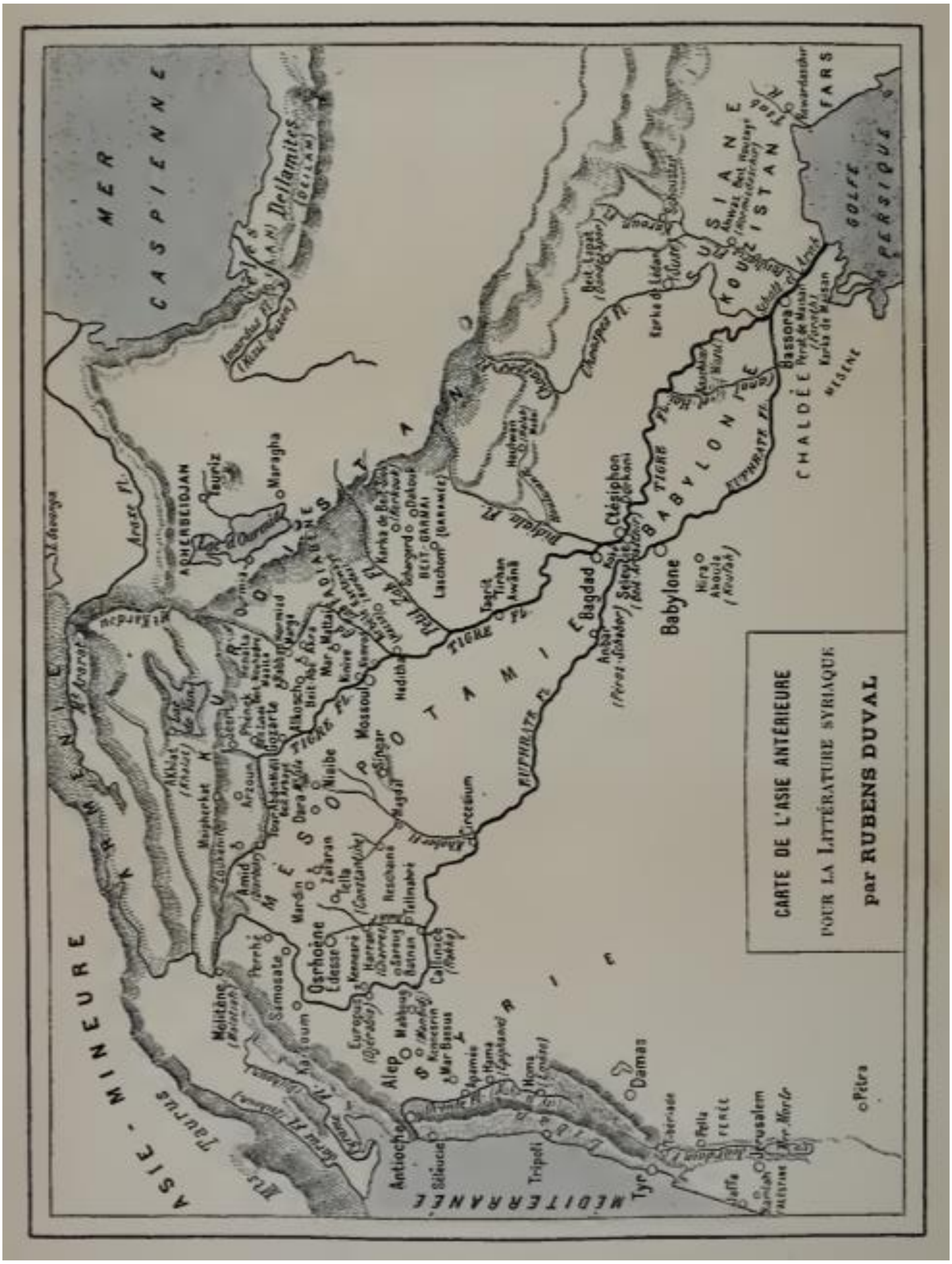
sin but could also be a chance to be perfected and find salvation. Notwithstanding this rather grim outlook, Ishoʿyahb III still fostered education at the end of his life.

George I also emphasized the way God's *mdabbranuta* serves the instruction of rational minds, enables them to use their independence and free will, and reminds every generation in every place of the fear of God. George's Synod of 676 offered the familiar account of God's warnings to Adam, Noah, and Abraham up to Moses; the laws God gave to Moses; the coming of God's Son, the saviour in whom divinity lived and who would renew the world; the Gospel and the Church; the apostles and the teachers after them who taught every new generation to walk the path of justice. At this point, at the end of the world, the bishops tried to adjust the divine laws to a difficult time. It is thereby remarkable that, in the light of this *mdabbranuta*, George claimed Abraham as Father of 'all nations that are raised in Christianity'. Here, George seems to have claimed Christianity as Abraham's only rightful heir, and thus to have deliberately denied such a status for Islam (and Judaism).

Presumably around 686, the East Syrian monk John bar Penkaye finished a long account of God's *mdabbranuta*, incorporating recent events which were the antecedents for the imminent end. His account is a continuation of thoughts expressed by Ishoʿyahb III and George I. He stated that the Arabs had been sent as punishment for the laxity of the Christians, but had also to be punished themselves by their internal divisions, several of which he specified by name, such as that between the Umayyads and Mukhtar's movement. The situation had worsened terribly and one had only to await the Antichrist and the end times. By now, the Lord had definitively withdrawn his care.

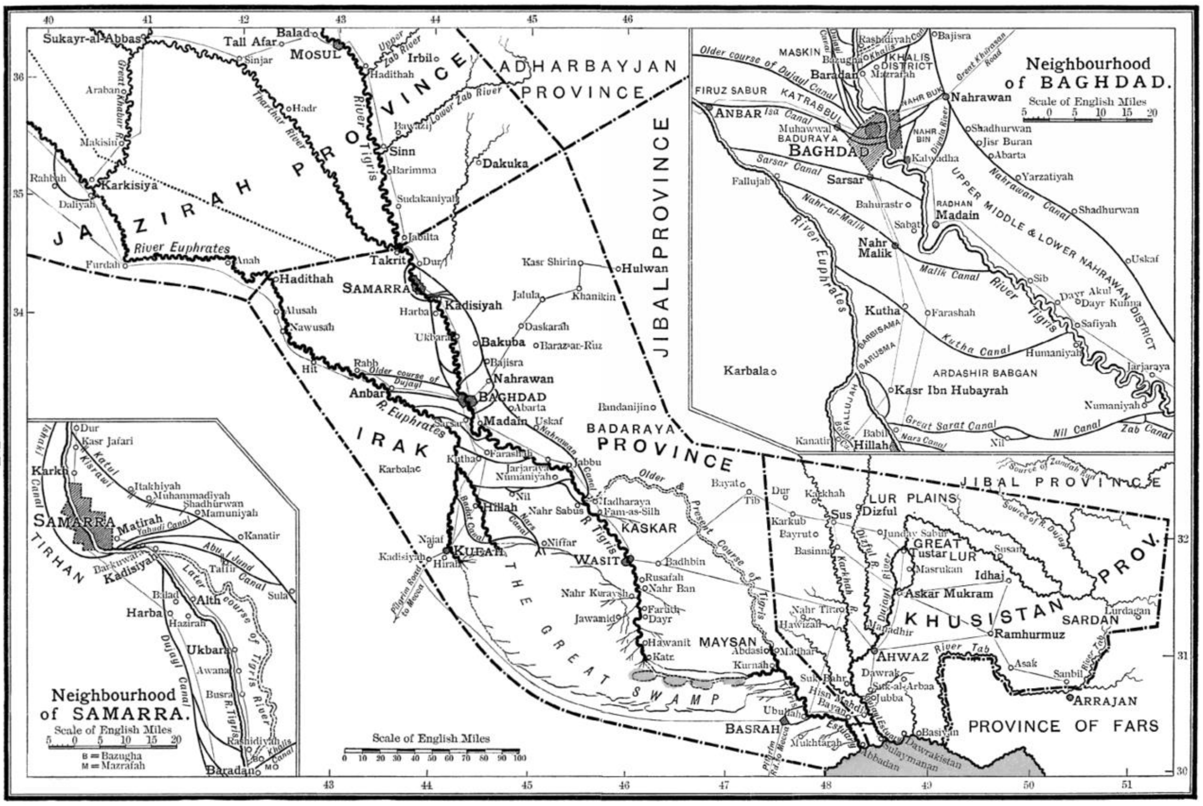
As further history has shown, the world did not end in the seventh century, and new catholicoi, especially Timothy I (780-823), realized that Arab rule was to stay, and they promoted higher education for new generations.

Annex 1. Map of the Middle East pertaining to Syriac literature (Duval)



Rubens Duval, *Anciennes littératures chrétiennes* 2. *La littérature syriaque* (Paris, 1907).

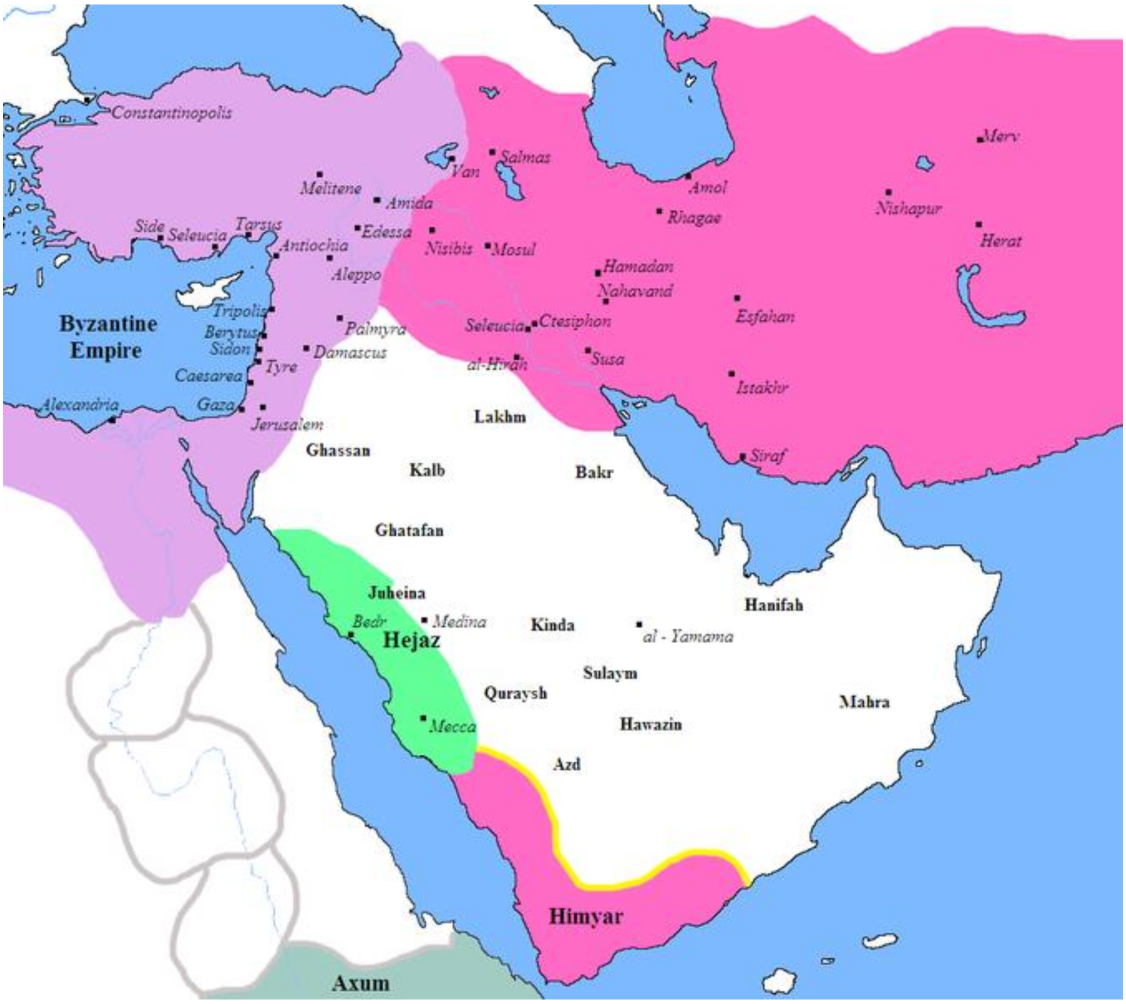
Annex 2. Map of Iraq under the Abbasid Caliphate, with inserts on the vicinities of Bagdad and Samarra



PROVINCES OF IRAK, KHUZISTAN, AND PART OF JAZIRAH

Guy Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate: Mesopotamia, Persia, and Central Asia, from the Moslem Conquest to the Time of Timur* (London, 1905), to face p. 25.

Annex 3. Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia.



http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pre_Islamic_Arabia.PNG

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Abbreviations:

ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*
BBKL	*Biographisch-Bibliografisches Kirchenlexikon*
CHRC	*Church History and Religious Culture*
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
EI²	*Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edn*.
EI³	*Encyclopaedia of Islam 3rd edn*.
GEDSH	*Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*
HCMR	The History of Christian-Muslim Relations
JdChr	*Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LThK³	*Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (3rd edn, Freiburg, 2006)
NRSV	*New Revised Standard Version (Bible)*
OC	*Oriens Christianus*
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica*
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
PO	Patrologia Orientalis
RGG⁴	*Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Religionswissenschaft* (4rd edn, Tübingen, 2004)
ROC	*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
VCSS	Variorum Collected Studies Series

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ABSTRACT

The response of the seventh-century catholicoi of the Syriac Church of the East to nascent Islam is the central theme of this dissertation, focussing on Christological questions with regard to Christ's divinity and humanity, especially the question of to what extent Christ has to be defined as divine or human. In the struggle of various rival Christian groupings to establish the right answer, the Church of the East emphasized the integrity of each of the two natures (the 'Dyophysites') and opposed those who rather emphasized one nature after the union (the 'Miaphysites'). As there were many aspects and nuances in the Christological discussion, further (sub)groupings can be identified, whose positions and alliances might change over time. Even within their own ranks dissenting views flourished. In the statements of the Qurʾan, which were compiled after c. 610 and found an already highly standardised form around the middle of the seventh century, the humanity and special role of Christ were acknowledged. However, the Qurʾan strongly denied his divinity, but without the further abstract argumentation and complex terminology which marked the debates among Christian theologians.

Most attention is given to Ishoʿyahb III, who was the highest church leader (catholicos) of the Church of the East from c.649 to 659 and whose 106 letters cover a period from before 628 until his last years. Not only his Christology but also the many challenges he faced are described as they shed more light on his attempts to defend both his Christology and his position against various opponents in a rapidly changing world. Unfortunately, an exact reconstruction of the period is difficult, due to conflicting and possibly biased reports that often were produced in later times.

My new translation of Ishoʿyahb III's letters which underlies this dissertation, in combination with a tentative reconstruction of contemporaneous events, leads to several new suggestions. The description of the situation of the catholicoi after Ishoʿyahb III until the end of the seventh century sheds further light on the question of how far Ishoʿyahb III's situation may have been exceptional or in agreement with a broader development during nascent Islam (ending c.692). For a better understanding of Ishoʿyahb III's letters, a description of the historical and theological background until the year 612 has been provided.

The main new suggestions put forward in this dissertation are as follows:

1. The dissertation offers a further reason for the official addition in 612 of 'two *qnome*' to the older Christological formula ('two natures in one *person*') of the Church of the East. Among Syriac speaking Christians, the term *qnoma* (plural *qnome*) had played an important

and sometimes confusing role in the Christological debates as it could be interpreted in various and even conflicting ways. In theology, it rendered the Greek term *hypostasis,* which traditionally denoted the three divine persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) of the one God. However, when the term also started to be applied to Christ, confusion and misunderstanding grew. An influential Byzantine definition (451) according to which the two natures 'came together in the one *person* and *hypostasis* of Christ' was an especial cause of opposing conclusions. Roughly speaking, most Byzantines interpreted the term *hypostasis* as an equivalent of the one *person,* while Miaphysites interpreted it as Christ's two natures becoming one nature. An important stream within the Church of the East held rather that each nature had its own (individual) *qnoma*. In reaction now to defenders of the one *qnoma* solutions the Church eventually declared in 612 that Christ has two *qnome.* This dissertation argues that the need for this new formula may moreover have been deepened by mystic-ascetical traditions which Babai the Great had modified. Babai (d. 628) was the abbot of a famous reform monastery who had strongly influenced the argumentation for the two *qnome* solution. He also wrote on monastic asceticism and its special contribution can be seen in Babai's description of the way to attain a mystical revelation of God. Each ascetic monk had to clean his soul like a mirror in order to reflect the light of God, whereby the individual soul was closely associated with the concept of *qnoma*. Because Christ the man was moreover the supreme model, the notion of a full human *qnoma* in Christ next to his divine *qnoma* would have been required.

2. This dissertation analyses how Ishoʿyahb III applied the term *qnoma,* and shows that he often used it in a Christological sense, not in a Trinitarian context, and in a few instances in a mystic way similar to Babai. Soteriology (the doctrines concerning the salvation of believers) seems to have played a major role in Ishoʿyahb III's defence of the two *qnome*, especially of the human *qnoma*. The concept of *qnoma* may even have enabled him to make ambiguous statements concerning the divine nature of Christ. Ishoʿyahb III's letters concerning the Christology of his rival Sahdona, who defended one *qnoma* in Christ, centred on the right translation of *qnoma*. Making use of an old tradition (perhaps going back to Ephrem), Babai, Ishoʿyahb II, Ishoʿyahb III and George I held that both the divine and human natures required their own true *qnoma* in order to denote the full reality of each nature. Sahdona and others argued in turn that the reality of the one Christ implied one *qnoma*.

3. Concerning the definitions of Christ, Babai acknowledged the traditional equation 'Christ is God' but rejected 'God is Christ', because this would deny the difference between God the Word and Christ the man. Ishoʿyahb III recognized the two natures, but he often remained vague about Christ's divinity and hardly brought up Christ's relation with the Trinity.

He spoke only incidentally of Christ as God, but did not use the expression 'Son of God'. He strongly rejected Theopaschism (a doctrine ascribing suffering to God), which was an old accusation of the Church of the East against Miaphysites and which was also rejected by Islam. Ishoʿyahb III even used this argument to disqualify the Miaphysites in the eyes of the Islamic Arabs. This gives the impression that he avoided writing in more specific terms about those aspects of the relation between God and Christ that were rejected by Islamic Arabs, unless he shared their views. However, he defended Christ's divinity more clearly in his last letter, probably after he was exiled by a new governor. Ishoʿyahb III's successor George I (661-80) may further have responded to the accusation in the Qurʾan that Christians would say 'God is Christ'. He explained that it is only one part of the Trinity, God the Word, who was united in one *parsopa* with Christ. George I further placed more emphasis on the one nature of the divinity while connecting the three divine *qnome* with the names of the divinity. This explanation may have found some acceptance among Muslims and George I may therefore have felt more freedom in referring to the Trinity than had Ishoʿyahb III.

4. Both Ishoʿyahb III and George I seem to have sought expressions that might be acceptable both to their fellow Christians and to Muslims, although George claimed that Abraham was the father only of the nations that are raised in Christianity. As with most of his predecessors, Catholicos Henanishoʿ I (ordained 685) condemned the Jews who denied that Jesus should be known as God, but he probably also covertly criticized the increasingly proclaimed Islamic doctrine when he spoke of the 'new folly' of those who claimed that he is only a prophet.

5. The Church of the East reacted to the attempts of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-41) at doctrinal reconciliation across different Christian groupings with discussion on the number of wills and energies in Christ. Ishoʿyahb II's (628-45) formulations remained ambiguous. This was also the case with Ishoʿyahb III, who recognized two energies in Christ and possibly in a covert manner hinted at only one will. Referring to the two natures, George seems to have acknowledged only one energy.

6. This dissertation also highlights the role of the predominantly Christian Arab vassal kingdom of Hira (in present southern Iraq) preceding and during the conquests, and suggests that the Church of the East tended to continue its centuries-old relation with Hira. Tribes associated with Hira (whose role may have been taken up later by the Shiʿites centred on the nearby new military encampment of Kufa) were rivals with other groupings, such as those headed by the Umayyads (descendants of a powerful grouping of the Meccan Quraysh) who operated from western Damascus.

7. During the first decades after the first conquests, there seem to have been some short-lived divisions of lands among fluctuating Arab tribes. The Tigris may have formed a natural border between the territories of different dominant Arab groupings, possibly until 641/42. The letters further provide slight indications that the Church of the East might have been involved, at least passively, in negotiations between such groupings.

8. In contrast to what is generally thought, Ishoʿyahb III probably was still bishop of Nineveh when a decisive conquest took place around 641/42. Here, he must have encountered various Arab groupings in leading positions, many of whom supported the Miaphysites. Some groupings already lived in the vicinity for a long time, but others may have belonged to the (Miaphysite) Arab troops of Heraclius who conquered Persian territory up to Nineveh in 627/28 and stayed there until 636. The new Arab conquests brought in other Arab troops. These various groupings could adhere to different forms of Christianity or to branches of the new religious movement. Initially, the situation may have been fluid and Bishop Ishoʿyahb III loosely distinguished Arabs (*Tayyaye*) in general (who could have been Christian), from Arabs associated with nascent Islam. He knew that the latter were already powerful and rejected Theopaschism, and he felt therefore confident that they could be persuaded to support his Church against Miaphysites.

9. The rivalry between Umayyad and Kufan groupings may also have accompanied the ecclesiastic rivalry which already existed between western Nisibis, which tended more towards Miaphysitism, and the eastern region where the Eastern Church was most present. If this was the case, Ishoʿyahb III may have allied more with the Shiʿites. His rivalry with Sahdona, who was involved in Nisibis' condemnation of Ishoʿyahb III, could also be seen from this perspective. The rivalry between Ishoʿyahb III and Sahdona was probably not limited to Christology only: both may have aspired to the position of Catholicos, and Sahdona sometimes seems to be the hidden instigator behind attacks on Ishoʿyahb III.

10. A pattern can be distinguished in which each rival Arab grouping may have sought the cooperation of a different rival Christian leader while rewarding him with the catholicate when it felt able to do so. The cooperation of Church leaders might have been important for the diverse Arab groups as it might have facilitated control over the large Christian communities, including the collection of tax revenues. In turn, it may have been challenging for both the higher clergy and those Persian aristocrats who played pivotal roles within the Church to estimate with which Arab party they might best associate, if they had the option. The letters of Ishoʿyahb III offer indications that divergent choices for or against the competing Arab groupings may have led to further uncertainties and conflicts within the Church. The suggested pat-

tern is further supported by the fact that the election of Ishoʿyahb III's successor, George I, which took place towards the end of the first civil war (656-61), was challenged by two Persian aristocrats. One came from Nisibis and the other from Basra, which was home to a third party involved in this war. The local character of the 676 Synod under George I may further be explained by its belonging currently to territory of one of the competing Arab parties. Another indication is the fate of Catholicos Henanishoʿ I, who was dismissed after the Umayyads regained control in 692/93, and replaced by the Bishop of Nisibis who had collaborated with them.

11. As Catholicos, Ishoʿyahb III tried to prevent the pursuit of independence among dioceses around the Gulf while at the same time defending Arab rule. He argued that Arabs respected and protected the Church, and he even considered it appropriate to such respect that Christians had to pay ruling Arabs the half of their possessions in order to keep their faith. He moreover argued that submission to God implied submission to the Arabs as God-given secular leaders, but that God's spiritual power could be transmitted only through his Church. The rebellion in the dioceses around the Persian Gulf was possibly also connected to the conflict between parties associated with Kufa, Basra, or the Umayyads.

12. An important element of the exegesis of the Church of the East was its pedagogical view that God provided each generation with opportunities to learn that he is the Creator of the world. The central part of God's educational plan, his *mdabbranuta,* was that he sent his Son to make his invisible power visible. Final salvation takes place at the end times when Christ returns. In the seventh century, the feeling of living at the end times was profoundly felt in Jewish, Christian and Islamic groupings and may even have formed a catalysing factor in the Arab conquests. Ishoʿyahb III strongly related the sufferings of his times to God's *mdabbranuta* and awaited the immanent end times, in which the Arabs played their God-given role. Ishoʿyahb III's and George I's emphasis on soteriology may have reflected an acutely felt desire to secure life thereafter. The Synod of George I, which was held in 676, further tried to adjust the divine laws to the difficult end times. The long account of God's *mdabbranuta* by the East Syrian monk John bar Penkaye, who described and interpreted events until c.686, is a continuation of the apocalyptic thoughts expressed by Ishoʿyahb III and George I.