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The Arabic Letters of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III to the Caliph ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz:

An Edition, Translation and Commentary

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The Arabic Letters of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III to the Caliph ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz:

An Edition, Translation and Commentary

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This study explores the tradition of the epistolary exchange between the two famous figures, the Byzantine emperor Leo III and the ‘Umayyad caliph, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. Several Christian and Muslim authors have over the centuries provided accounts of the tradition that ‘Umar sent a letter to Leo to inquire about Christian doctrines and practices and that Leo replied to him. In addition to these accounts, copies of letter purporting to have been written by Leo and ‘Umar have come down to us in the manuscript tradition in Arabic, Armenian, Latin and Aljamiado. There have been studies concerning the authorship and provenance of these letters.

This study continues the scholarly discussion on this tradition based on the newly available manuscript, which contains two letters in Arabic attributed to Leo. The manuscript is among so-called ‘new finds’ in the library of St. Catherine Monastery at Mt. Sinai. This study presents the first edition of these Arabic texts, with English translation and commentary.

Based on the examination of the new source, this study sheds new light on the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar. The content and style of the Arabic letters of Leo show that they were written by an anonymous Christian author living in the second half of the eighth century. These texts seem to have been composed by a Melkite author, probably living either in the monastery of Mar Sabas or Mar Chariton in Judean desert. They show how the Christian

author wrote the defense of Christian doctrines and practices such as divinity of Christ, the Eucharist and the veneration of the cross. Arabic was a new language for Christian writers in this era; the author used many expressions found in the Qur'ān. The purpose of the composition of these texts is to provide Christian audiences with ready replies to objections to their faith coming from Muslim polemicists, in order to encourage them to keep their Christian faith.

Additionally, a close analysis of the first Arabic letter of Leo in comparison with the Latin version of the letter ascribed to Leo shows that both letters are from the same earlier text, written in Arabic. This anti-Muslim polemical text was not only read by Christians in the East, but also known to the Christian in the West through Latin translation.

This dissertation by Seonyoung Kim fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in the department of Semitic Languages and Literatures approved by Sidney Griffith, Ph.D., as Director, and by Shawqi Talia, Ph.D., and Aaron Butts, Ph.D. as Readers.

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*Abbreviation*

<i>AJT</i>	<i>American Journal of Theology</i>
<i>ASCH</i>	<i>American Society of Church History</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Catholic Apologetics Journal</i>
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Coptic Church Review</i>
<i>CE</i>	<i>Coptic Encyclopedia</i>
<i>CMR</i>	<i>Christian Muslim Relations</i>
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorium Christianorum Orientalium</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oak Papers</i>
<i>EAL</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Islam</i>
<i>EMC</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Medieval Chronicles</i>
<i>GCAL</i>	<i>Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Literatur</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>ICMR</i>	<i>Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations</i>
<i>IJCT</i>	<i>International Journal of the Classical Tradition</i>
<i>IQ</i>	<i>Islamic Quarterly</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JMBRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>MW</i>	<i>Muslim World</i>
<i>OLA</i>	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta</i>
<i>OS</i>	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>

<i>PBR</i>	<i>Patristic and Byzantine Review</i>
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
<i>PO</i>	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
<i>REI</i>	<i>Revue des Études Islamiques</i>
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>SM</i>	<i>Scripta Mediterranea</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>

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### *Introduction to the study*

The legend that two famous historical figures, Iconoclast Leo III (717-740) and ‘Umar Ibn Abd al-‘Aziz (717-720), have exchanged letters concerning their respective faiths has been known to Christians and Muslims in the East from the early Islamic period, through the accounts given by Christian and Muslim historians. The details of the reports vary from writer to writer, but the main outline of the story is as follows: During the reign of ‘Umar, the caliph sent a letter to Leo in order to discuss Christianity and Islam, and to persuade the emperor to accept Islam. In response to ‘Umar, Leo wrote a reply to him, answering ‘Umar’s theological questions concerning the doctrine of Christianity. In addition to the historical reports, we also have some texts purporting to be the letters exchanged between Leo and ‘Umar which are preserved in various languages of the East to the Latin West.

Unlike modern scholars who may show skepticism about the historicity of the correspondence between the Emperor Leo and the Caliph ‘Umar and the authenticity of the letters attributed to them, Christians and Muslims living in the medieval period might have had some good reasons to believe the event to be historical and the letters of Leo and ‘Umar authentic.

First, such religious correspondence may not have been unfamiliar to them. Muslims have a long tradition of epistolary invitation to Islam which dates back to the time of the prophet Muhammad. According to the Muslim sources, Muhammad sent letters to his contemporary non-Muslim rulers calling them to Islam.<sup>1</sup> Among his letters, the one he wrote to Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610-641) is probably the most famous. Muhammad wrote to Heraclius to persuade him to embrace Islam. In response, Heraclius wrote a letter to Muhammad, affirming that Muhammad is the prophet of God whose coming was foretold in the New Testament. The reason that Heraclius did not convert to Islam is said to be due to his personal and political situation. The authenticity of this correspondence is quite controversial.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it shows that Muslims were familiar with such a tradition. Christians have had a similar tradition. In the legend of the correspondence between Abgar and Jesus, Abgar, the king of Edessa, wrote a letter to Jesus, asking him to come and heal him. Jesus replied to Abgar, saying that he would send one of his disciples to him to heal him. This legend and the letters were widely known to and believed by Christians. The historicity of this correspondence and the authenticity of the letters between Abgar and Jesus are quite doubtful.<sup>3</sup> Yet, it shows that Christians also had some familiarity with such epistolary exchanges between famous figures, be it a prophet or Christ, and secular rulers. Christians who heard of the legend of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar may not have doubt that it had actually taken place.

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<sup>1</sup> Serjeant, “Arabic Prose,” 139-142. Muhammad is known to have been illiterate, but one of his scribes, Zayd Ibn Thābīt, wrote down his letters to “the kings.” See Lecker, “Zayd.”

<sup>2</sup> For the discussion on the correspondence between Muhammad and Heraclius, see Hamidullah, “Lettre,” 97-110; idem, *Lettre*; Serjeant, “Arabic Prose,” 141-42; El-Cheikh, “Muhammad,” 5-21, esp.10-15. It is noteworthy that the accounts on the correspondence between Muhammad and Heraclius are all and only given by Muslim authors.

<sup>3</sup> H. Drijvers, “The Abgar Legend”; Bauer, *Orthodoxy*, 2-13.

Second, the profile of Leo as an Iconoclastic emperor and ‘Umar as a pious promoter of Islam may have also provided credentials to the historicity of the legend. Leo’s iconoclastic policies and his confrontation with iconophile theologians (e.g., John of Damascus) were well known.<sup>4</sup> ‘Umar’s figure as a pious Muslim caliph who promoted Islam to non-Muslims is well attested in Byzantine and Syriac chroniclers, such as Theophanes and Dionysus of Tel-Mahrē,<sup>5</sup> and most of all, is well reflected in the Pact of ‘Umar. The origin of the Pact of ‘Umar is also controversial, and probably may not be dated back to ‘Umar’s own time in 717-720; yet the ascription of the Pact to this ‘Umar shows that he was known for his active promotion of Islam and suppression of non-Muslims, especially Christians.<sup>6</sup>

Third, the religious correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar is not unique. In the early Abbasid period, such “epistolary exchange” came to be established as one of the genres of Christian apologetics. In addition to the letters between Leo and ‘Umar, we have several other attestations of such letters during the first three centuries of early Islam, including the letter from the Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd to the Emperor Constantine VI,<sup>7</sup> the correspondence between a Christian named ‘Abd al-Masīḥ ibn Ishāq al-Kindī and a Muslim named ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ishmā‘il al-Hashimī<sup>8</sup>, and a letter to the emir of Damascus written by Arethas.<sup>9</sup> Though the historicity, origin, and authorship of these correspondences are still controversial, at least, these epistles

<sup>4</sup> On conflict and tension between Leo and John, see Sahas, *John*, 43-44.

<sup>5</sup> See discussion in chapter I.

<sup>6</sup> See chapter IV.

<sup>7</sup> For the letter from Harūn al-Rashīd to Constantine VI, see Eid, *Lettre*.

<sup>8</sup> See 202, n. 26 below

<sup>9</sup> See Sahas, “Arethas” where he presents content of this letter and introduces discussion concerning its authorship. For the text, see Karlin-Hayter, “Arethas.”

show that a number of religious correspondences were composed in the early Islamic period, and read and circulated among Christians and Muslims. The themes discussed in these texts are various, but they are, by and large, themes typically discussed in Christian-Muslim polemics in the early ‘Abbasid caliphate.

The source-critical and historical-critical studies on this legend are, therefore, the production of modern researchers of history. This legend has been known through the Armenian and Latin sources from an earlier period, but serious study began with Arthur Jeffery, who published his English translation of the Armenian letter of Leo and ‘Umar included in the chronicle of the eighth-century Armenian historian, Ghevond.<sup>10</sup> Since Jeffery opened the door of the study on this correspondence, the discovery of some new sources -both historical accounts and letters of Leo and ‘Umar - grasped the attention of scholars and increased the study on these materials.<sup>11</sup> The conclusions previous researchers draw are based on the historical accounts and the letters of Leo and ‘Umar known so far.

In addition to them, a new source has come to light. The Arabic letters of Leo, which were found in 1975 in the monastery of St. Catherine’s in Sinai along with other previously unknown manuscripts, is the main subject of this study. The existence of this manuscript has been known to scholars since the 1980’s through Meïmarēs’s catalogue,<sup>12</sup> but this current study is the first time that this manuscript is examined in detail. Together with other previously known

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<sup>10</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond.”

<sup>11</sup> See discussion in chapter I.

<sup>12</sup> Meïmarēs, *Catalogos*, 41, 43.

letters of Leo and ‘Umar, it is expected to shed new light on the research of the religious correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar. This study will be done in the following ways:

In chapter I, I will discuss all previously known historical accounts on the religious correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar and the letters which were composed in their names. In this chapter, I will attempt to introduce all relevant primary sources and observe how the legend has been integrated and developed in different socio-religious and political circumstances. While discussing these sources, I will distinguish the accounts from the texts, for there is a possibility that the legend emerged first and the texts were written later on the basis of that legend. In addition to the already known sources, some new materials are added for further discussions on the reliability of the historical accounts. Then, I will introduce several conclusions reached in previous studies about the origin and authorship of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar.

In chapter II, I will introduce the newly available Arabic letters attributed to Leo. The two Arabic letters of Leo are included in the Sinai Arabic New Finds collection manuscript n.14 (hereafter, NF 14). This chapter contains a short introduction to the manuscript, and the edition and translation of the two Arabic letters of Leo.

Chapter III is a commentary on these two letters of Leo. In this chapter, I will also use another letter of Leo preserved in Latin translation. The comparison of this Latin text with the first Arabic letter of Leo will reveal that the Latin version is not only a translation from the text written in Arabic, as assumed in earlier studies, but its Arabic *Vorlage* is another recension of the extant first Arabic letter of Leo. approximately two-thirds of each text overlap with each other.

When the Arabic and Latin versions discuss different themes, I will discuss them separately and attempt to explain how each text has developed into different directions.

In chapter IV, I will attempt to suggest a hypothesis on the provenance of the all extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar, and their relationships to one another. Then I will locate the Arabic and Latin letters of Leo in their proper historical and literary contexts.

In chapter V, which is conclusion of this study, I will summarize the discussions made in previous chapters and give some preliminary remarks for future study. It has been suggested by previous studies that, in the medieval period, the letters of Leo and ‘Umar were transmitted from the East to West and translated from Arabic into Latin and Aljamiado. The letter of Leo is also thought to have arrived in Armenia, been translated into Armenian, and read by Christians in the churches of Armenia. But when, how, and by whom this was done is yet to be studied. In fact, it is beyond the scope of present study. In this chapter, I will only contend myself with introducing some relevant studies and raising questions for further study. And, finishing the study, I will also locate the study of the religious correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar in its proper place of interreligious dialogue and how this study may contribute to modern scholars and general audiences who are interested in interreligious dialogue between Christianity and Islam.

Before I begin the discussion, there is one thing to be mentioned. The term, “Melkite” has been used to designate the Christian denomination which adhered to the teachings of the first six ecumenical councils, especially of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. This word, given by their

theological opponents, the “Miaphysites,” means the “royalists” or “king’s men.”<sup>13</sup> Today, this term is used to refer to the Greek Catholic Church united with the Church of Rome. But this study follows the usage of this term in its historical sense, and only refer to the Church in Jerusalem in the first three centuries of Islam, and those who are interrelated with it. There are no negative political implications intended in the use of this term in this study.

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<sup>13</sup> Griffith, “Creed,” 184. n.1; Dick, *Melkites*, 9-11.

## *Chapter I: Sources*

### *Introduction*

The legend of the religious correspondence between two well-known rulers, the Byzantine Emperor Leo III and the Muslim Caliph ‘Umar II has been known to Christians and Muslims in the East and West for a long time, as early as the eighth century.<sup>1</sup> That these two rulers exchanged letters was known through the works of several famous chroniclers and historians, such as Theophanes, Agapius and Ghevond. In addition to these reports, there are letters of Leo and ‘Umar which are preserved in Armenian and Latin. These reports and letters drew the attention of scholars, and as mentioned in the introduction, serious study concerning this particular event began with Arthur Jeffery’s publication of the English translation of the Armenian version of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar.<sup>2</sup> For several decades now, as new sources became available, such as the letter of ‘Umar in Arabic and Aljamiado, the discussion on the authenticity of the texts and the historicity of the event has developed.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to examine all extant sources concerning the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar, to figure out when and where the legend first originated, and how this legend was used and developed by later writers. The discussion will be presented as follows. First, I will categorize all the sources according to their origin.

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<sup>1</sup> The earliest extant sources for this legend seem to have been written in the late eighth century by a Syrian chronicler named Theophilus of Edessa. See discussion 2.4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jeffery, “Ghevond.”

<sup>3</sup> Detailed bibliographical information of each source will be given below, as I discuss them one by one in detail.

Second, I will state the historiographical problems concerning the assessment of these sources.

The earliest among these sources are from the eighth to the ninth century, and the reliability of the literary sources written in this period is controversial. Third, each source will be discussed in detail. I will first examine the historical reports and then move to the letters ascribed to Leo and ‘Umar.

The range of these sources is wide - their origin, language and date of discovery vary. They can be categorized as follows:<sup>4</sup>

[Chart 1: Historical reports and letters]

	Historical accounts	Letters
Christian sources	World chronicle of Byzantine Greek and Christian Arabic world chroniclers:  Theophanes, Kedrenos, Agapius	
	Works of Armenian historians:  Ghevond, Thomas Arcruni, Vardan Arewelc‘i, Kirakos of Gandzakets‘i	Leo’s reply in Armenian translation
		An early sixteenth century Latin translation of the letter of Leo
		A statement given by a thirteenth century Coptic-Arabic writer, al- Ṣaffī Ibn al-‘Assāl
Muslim sources	Accounts from Muslim writers:  A-Mubarrad, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī	The letter of ‘Umar in Armenian
		The letter of ‘Umar incompletely preserved in the early tenth century Arabic manuscript

<sup>4</sup> Similar categorization has been employed in the previous studies. For instance, Kaplony divided the sources into four groups: sources from the Byzantine chroniclers, Armenian writers, Champier’s Latin text and *Al-Kāmil* by Al-Mubarrad. See Kaplony, *Damascus*, 207. I adapted the same methodology, with changes and addition of some new sources, including the reports from Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and Al-Ṣafī.

		The letter of ‘Umar also preserved incompletely in the sixteenth century Aljamiado translation
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### *Historical reports*

#### *1. Background and Problems*

Can we prove the historicity of the legend of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar? Or can we reconstruct this event through the extant sources? It seems difficult because interpretation and assessment of the relevant sources involve several problems. Here I will present these problems briefly. Each source will be discussed in detail below.

The foremost problem is that all available extant historical sources on this legend date from later periods. The earliest Byzantine account we have is included in the *Chronography* of Theophanes, which was completed in 816. The earliest Armenian account is given by Ghevond in his *Armenian History*. It seems generally accepted that the *Armenian History* was composed in the late eighth century, but still, the date of Ghevond and the “extent” version of the *Armenian History* are also controversial. The same is true for the Muslim sources. Al-Mubarrad, a ninth century grammarian, was the first to report this event. Leo and ‘Umar became emperor and caliph in the same year of 717, and ‘Umar died in 720. Therefore, they may have exchanged their letters some time during 717-720, if the correspondence actually did take place. There is at least a several decades gap between reign of ‘Umar and the earliest sources. Of course, it is very

possible that Theophanes, Ghevond and al-Mubarrad used earlier materials to composite their own works; yet none of their sources for this event have survived.<sup>5</sup>

Second, Theophanes, Ghevond and al-Mubarrad, and all others who mentioned this event neither described it objectively,<sup>6</sup> nor did they faithfully reproduce the materials they used. Rather, these authors freely used their sources according to their own political and religious perspectives. Some of them had more materials than others. Some of them omitted some parts from the material they used. As a result, there exist a number of “discrepancies between the sources.” For instance, even though it is consented that Theophanes and Agapius used the lost chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa to account for this event, their own accounts are different. While Theophanes reports the event simply, Agapius gives fuller account. Agapius tells how Leo reacted wisely to the call of ‘Umar and briefly describes the content of Leo’s letter. Moreover, while Theophanes describes ‘Umar as a severe persecutor of Christians, Agapius portrays him as a pious and generous Muslim ruler. ‘Umar’s persecution toward Christians is omitted by Agapius.<sup>7</sup> The comparison of the accounts by Christian authors with Muslim writers reveals further discrepancies between them; while the Christians writers report the event from Leo’s

<sup>5</sup> From the extant chronicles, scholars attempted to identify the earlier common sources used by later chroniclers and tried to reconstruct them. Indebted to such efforts, lost works, including the lost chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa, Patrician Trajan, and Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē, came to the light. Among these lost works, the chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa is of great importance with regards to this study, for it is now thought to be the common source that Theophanes and Agapius used to report the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar. See 2.4 below.

<sup>6</sup> The discussions on the “objectivity” of historical writing and on the way of interpretation of historical events of historians and historiographers have been made since E.H. Carr published *What is History?* in 1961. In this study, when I mention objectivity of historical writing, I do not premise that a fully objective historical writing is possible. In fact, the discussion on this topic is out of the scope of this study. What will be discussed in this chapter concerning the “objectivity” of any historical account is about the way that historiographers used their sources through omission, addition, and reinterpretation of their own, and how historical facts can be revealed and understood through various *histories* that survived up till today.

<sup>7</sup> See discussion in 2.3 below.

side, al-Mubarrad describes from ‘Umar’s side. He accounts how ‘Umar sent his two envoys to Leo, and describes the discussion between one of them and Leo on religions. This debate held in Leo’s court, between Leo and one of ‘Umar’s envoy named ‘Abdallah is lacking in all the Christian source.

Third, with respect to the second problem, sometimes, the author modified and changed the legend intentionally, in order to exploit it to make their own argument or to explain the cause of other events. In other words, the focus of the account of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar and the purpose of reporting it are different depending on the author. For instance, Ghevond and Armenian writers are focusing on the positive result of the exchange of letters between Leo and ‘Umar, connecting it with local Armenian events: They reported that, as the result of this correspondence, ‘Umar showed more benevolence to Christians and he sent Armenian captives home freely. As for the Muslim writers, they report this event for a different purpose. Al-Mubarrad accounts for it, not to emphasize ‘Umar’s promotion of Islam, but to accuse a heretical Muslim named ‘Abdallah. At the beginning of the account, the narrator, one of the envoys of ‘Umar sent to Leo, was told secretly by ‘Umar to watch what ‘Abdallah would do in Constantinople. In the debate between Leo and ‘Abdallah, Leo says three times that ‘Abdallah is neither a Christian nor a Muslim. The account ends with the narrator’s report to ‘Umar about ‘Abdallah’s heretical acts at the court of Constantinople. After hearing it, ‘Umar blamed Abdullah. But ‘Umar, who called Leo to Islam, does not mention anything about Leo’s refusal to accept his call.

These three questions are only relevant to the legend of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence. Yet similar questions may be posed with regards to other events in the seventh and eighth

century Near East, where a transition from the Byzantine Empire to *Dar al-Islam* was made. In other words, the historiographical problems related to this one particular legend can also be applied to the study of other events in the seventh to the eighth century. In regard to the examination of the sources which recount the events in this period, the following questions may be raised: when different sources report the same even differently or even in opposite ways, how should we assess each source? Should one source be considered to be more reliable than others? When the reports are all from the later period, how should we interpret them and assess their authenticity? If one event is accounted for differently depending on the sources, then can we synthesize them? How did the tradition come down to later generations? Does the existence of multiple sources confirm the historicity of the event? And finally, can we accurately reconstruct the events of the past from the sources we now have at hand?

Attempts to answer such questions have been made by scholars of Byzantine, Armenian and Islamic historiography for several decades, on which this study heavily depends.<sup>8</sup> The general consensus from these studies may be summarized as follows: (1) As to the Byzantine historical writings of the seventh and the eighth centuries, there is no “contemporary” source which survives today. Scholar have attempted to explain the reason for this lack of historical writings.<sup>9</sup> They also attempted to reconstruct lost works through the chronicles of later writers who used these earlier works as their sources. Indebted to the efforts of modern scholars, some

<sup>8</sup> The literatures concerning these subjects are vast, all of which I cannot list here. It is not only due to the length of this study but also to the fact that primary purpose of this study is (1) to provide the edition and translation of the Arabic letters of Leo and (2) to attempt to answer the questions concerning the origin of the extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar. Some key works by Treadgold, Hoyland, Crone, Donner and Kaegi were used as basic foundation of discussion. See bibliography at the end.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Whitby, “Greek,” 66-80; Kaegi, “Initial,” 149.

important lost works are now reconstructed, including the lost Syriac chronicle of Theophilus Bar Toma of Edessa<sup>10</sup> and the chronicle of Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē.<sup>11</sup> The line of transmission of the lost sources to their later dependents was established by Conrad.<sup>12</sup> (2) The reliability of the Muslim sources in the formative period of Islam has been questioned by several Western scholars. For those with this “skeptical perspective,” Muslim sources are considered to be unreliable, not only because they were from a later period, and also because they were written from an Islamic view of history, rather than describing what had actually happened as objectively as possible. Moreover there exist a number of discrepancies and contradictions in reports of the same event, depending on the sources. Thus, it seems difficult to find so called “historical kernel” in Muslim sources.<sup>13</sup> As a result, scholars became inclined to use non-Muslim sources,<sup>14</sup> which are also not free of historiographical problems.<sup>15</sup> (3) Careful examination of the sources, attempts to sort out sources from different traditions, assess and choose some and reject others, or synthesize them, and trace their inter-dependencies are also necessary. However, treating these sources is not a simple task;<sup>16</sup> there lie complicated problems, and as Kaegi once pointed out, the establishment of “new methodologies” to treat the sources of different sources together is called for.<sup>17</sup> For this study, I am greatly depending on Conrad’s study on the Muslim

<sup>10</sup> Hoyland, *Theophilus*.

<sup>11</sup> Palmer, *Chronicles*.

<sup>12</sup> Conrad, “Arwād,” 322-348.

<sup>13</sup> For the general introduction of the scholars with “skeptical perspective” and their studies, see Donner’s “introduction,” in *Narratives*.

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam* and his recent the *Path of God*; Shoemaker, *Death*, etc.

<sup>15</sup> See Donner, *Narratives*, 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> The complex problems concerning the use of various sources from different traditions was well addressed by Kaegi, in the first chapter of Kaegi, *Byzantium*.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 21.

and non-Muslim sources on the conquest of al-Awrād, not only on his establishment of the line of transmission of Byzantine traditions which begins from Theophilus of Edessa and continues to his dependents, but also on his method of treating Muslim and non-Muslim sources in assessing them altogether.<sup>18</sup> (4) Current scholarship seems mostly focused on the events of the seventh century, especially on the battle narratives, the history of the rise of Islam, and the life of Muhammad; yet similar problems are found in eighth century events.

Having all these aspects in mind, now I will examine each source in detail. I will analyze Christian sources and then will move to the Muslim sources. Then through comparison between the sources, I will attempt to show how the legend of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence developed and was elaborated upon in different socio-religious and cultural contexts.

## *2. The Byzantine Chroniclers and Theophilus of Edessa*

### *2.1. Chronography of Theophanes and George Syncellus*

The extant *Chronography* is ascribed to Theophanes the Confessor; but the problem of the authorship of the *Chronography* has been a subject of many discussions. In the composition of the *Chronography*, two figures were involved. One is Theophanes, who finished the extant form of the *Chronography*, and to whom it was ascribed. Theophanes died during his exile in 818, due to his iconophile stance against Leo V, two years after he finished the *Chronography*.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Conrad, “Arwād.”

<sup>19</sup> For information about the life and career of Theophanes, see Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, xliv-lii; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 7-8.

However, Theophanes was not the one who first began the composition of the *Chronography*. It was a monk named George, who first had undertaken to write it.<sup>20</sup> George seems to have planned to write a world chronicle from the creation to 810,<sup>21</sup> but he did not finish his work, due to his illness. Theophanes mentioned how he was asked by George to “finish” the *Chronography*; when George Synkellos realized that he would not be able to finish the composition of the *Chronography* due to his illness, he entrusted it with all his materials to his friend Theophanes and asked him to finish the work.<sup>22</sup> At that time, George had already finished the earlier part, from the creation to the reign of Diocletian. George also left a large amount of his drafts or dossiers to finish the work.<sup>23</sup> Theophanes accepted George’s request to complete the task, and completed the *Chronography* in two years after George’s death. As a result, the *Chronography* was written under the name of Theophanes, but with George’s name in the preface.<sup>24</sup>

Theophanes’s account of the events in the East during ‘Umar’s reign is brief. When reporting the events during 717-718 A.D., he opens the account with the occurrence of the great

<sup>20</sup> For life of George and his career, see Adler and Tuffin, *George*, xxix-xxx; Treadgold, *Middle*, 39-40, 50ff

<sup>21</sup> Adler and Tuffin, *George*, xxix.

<sup>22</sup> At the beginning of the *Chronography*, Theophanes briefly mentions why he was asked to complete the *Chronography* George had begun to write. See Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> The recent edition and translation of George’s work with introduction was prepared by Adler and Tuffin in *George* in 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Theophanes wrote: “The most blessed Father George, who had also been *synkellos* of Tarasios, the most holy patriarch of Constantinople, a man of distinction and great learning, after he had perused and thoroughly investigated many chronographers and historians, composed with all accuracy a succinct chronicle from Adam down to Diocletian, the Roman emperor who persecuted the Christians.” (The translation is adapted from Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, 1-2). George is now thought to have written most parts of the *Chronography*. For discussion on the authorship of the *Chronography*, see Tredgold, *Middle*, 38-77; Mango, “Who”; Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, lii-lxiii, 1-2. Additionally, papers presented at the conference, “The Chronicle of Theophanes: Sources, Composition, Transmission,” held in Paris in 2012, reflect recent studies on the authorship and sources of the *Chronography*, which I have not included in this study. These papers were published in 2015 in one volume (see Jankowiak and Montinaro, *Theophanes*).

earthquake in Syria. Then he describes how ‘Umar persecuted Christians and promoted Islam; ‘Umar banned the consumption of wine for Muslims, and forced Christians to convert to Islam through exempting those who converted to Islam from taxation and killing those who refused to do so. He also prohibited public testimonies against Muslims. Then he briefly added that ‘Umar sent a letter to Leo to make him accept Islam.<sup>25</sup> Theophanes’s account ends here and the result of the correspondence is not attested. From the fact that other sources such as the chronicle of Agapius and the accounts from Armenian and Islamic tradition mentioned that Leo replied to ‘Umar, it seems that it was probably either Theophanes or George, both of whom were iconophiles, who omitted the result.<sup>26</sup>

## *2.2. George Kedrenos and Historium Compendium*

Following Theophanes, George Kedrenos also accounted for this event. Like George Synkellos, only a little of Kedrenos’s life and career is known. He was probably a monk, born in 1050, and from his name, he was probably from Kedrenos, in Asia Minor.<sup>27</sup> His *Historium Compendium* is a world chronicle which covers the period from the creation to the events in 1057.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, 550.

<sup>26</sup> Gero suggests that the result of this correspondence might have been omitted by Theophanes or George, implying Leo’s acceptance of Islam (Gero, *Iconoclasim*, 44). Elsewhere in the *Chronography*, Theophanes described Leo as “pius.” Theophanes’s source for the events during 717 and 720 will be discussed in 2.4 and 2.5 below.

<sup>27</sup> For detailed research of life of Kedrenos and his career as a historian, see Treadgold, *Middle.*, 339–341; Stavrakos, “Kedrenos.”

<sup>28</sup> Stavrakos, “Kedrenos,” 961. For the edition of *Historium Compendium*, see Bekker, *Georgius Cedrenus, Compendium Historiarum*.

Kedrenos's account is as follows:

In the first year (i.e., the first year of Leo's reign) was great earthquake in Syria. Then 'Umar forced Christians to convert to Islam; those who accept it would be exempted from taxation, but those who do not, would be killed. Then there were many martyrs. It was declared that Christians should not testify to Muslims. Then he wrote to the emperor Leo in order to make him to accept Islam.<sup>29</sup>

As to Kedrenos's account, it seems that Theophanes's *Chronography* was his source for his report on the correspondence between Leo and 'Umar.<sup>30</sup> Both begin with the earthquake in Syria in the first year of Leo's reign. Like Theophanes, Kedrenos describes 'Umar's severe policies against Christians, and the occurrence of many martyrs thereafter. Both chroniclers are silent on the result of 'Umar's letter.

Yet, the *Chronography* might not be Kedrenos's direct source. Rather, Kedrenos used the *Chronography* through intermediaries of the historians earlier than him. As pointed out by scholars of Byzantine historiography, Kedrenos is regarded as a copyist or a compiler of earlier materials rather than an author of his original work.<sup>31</sup> The sources of Kedrenos vary: As to the events before 811, Kedrenos depended upon Psuedo-Symeon and added his work to the *Synopsis* of John Scylitze.<sup>32</sup> Kedrenos might have used the other sources, too; however, to trace the manuscript tradition of Kedrenos is difficult, for many manuscripts of Kedrenos's works are still unpublished.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, some of Kedrenos's sources are now lost or remained unedited. For instance, the work of Pseudo-Symeon deals with the events from the creation to 962, but only the last part of it (the section on the events in 813-962) has been edited and published.<sup>34</sup> Thus, what

<sup>29</sup> Translation is based on Bekker's edition, 791-792.

<sup>30</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 44. Gero saw that Kedrenos simply abbreviated the account of Theophanes.

<sup>31</sup> Treadgold, *Middle*, 339-340.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 341.

<sup>33</sup> Stravrkos, "Kredrenos," 962. For information of early bibliography on this subject, see Markopoulos, "Kedrenos," 208. n.9.

<sup>34</sup> Markopoulos, "Kedrenos," 208.

we can say now is that, from the comparison of the account between Theophanes and Kedrenos, the former might have depended on the latter, probably indirectly through Pseudo-Symeon, who also used Theophanes' chronicle as his source.<sup>35</sup> Since Kedrenos's source apparently goes back to Theophanes, Kedrenos will be out of further discussion on the origin of the legend of the religious correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar.

### 2.3. Agapius and *Kitāb al-‘Unwān*

The last chronicler in consideration is a tenth century Christian Arabic writer and Melkite bishop of Northern Syria, Maḥbūb al-Manbij, who is more commonly called Agapius. Like other chroniclers discussed above, and despite of the importance of his work, little is known about his personal life.<sup>36</sup> Agapius composed a world chronicle, titled *Kitāb al-‘Unwān*, meaning “Book of the Title,” which begins from the creation and continued to the 780s.<sup>37</sup> The account of Agapius on the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar is as follows:

‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz displayed asceticism and piety. He banished corrupt men from his realm. He forbade Muslims to consume intoxicating drinks made from grapes and dates. He led in public a virtuous life. He wrote a letter to King Leo calling on him to convert to Islam and disputing him on matters of religion. Leo replied countering ‘Umar’s arguments, made clear to him the falsity of his doctrine and demonstrated to him the truth of Christianity with proofs from the revealed books, rational analogies and extracts from the Qur’ān.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Markopoulos, “Kedrenos,” 208.

<sup>36</sup> For introduction of his life, see Conrad, “Agapius,” 63; Lamoreaux, “Agapius,” 137-138, 312 (notes).

<sup>37</sup> There is another manuscript which has different version of the title, which says, “*Kitāb al-Tārīkh*,” meaning, “Book of History.” See Lamoreaux, “Agapius,” 138, 313, n.6. The Arabic text with French translation was published by Vasiliev (*PO* vol.5, 557-692; vol.7, 457-591; vol.8, 397-550). The text ends abruptly during the event of 780. Conrad pointed out that Agapius himself mentioned elsewhere that “he is writing in 940s,” but as Conrad also mentioned, there is so far no evidence that Agapius did write or even planned to write about the events of his own time. (Conrad, “Agapius,” 63). For the date of composition of this work, see also Lamoreaux, “Agapius,” 138, 312 (notes) Lamoreaux gives a brief description on the manuscripts of the Agapius’ chronicle and provides a short English translation of the part of the work, which discusses the Christian accusation against the Jews of altering the Torah (Lamoreaux, “Agapius,” 136-159, 312-316). Recently, Hoyland provided English translation based on Vasiliev’s Arabic text in his *Theophilus*.

<sup>38</sup> The English translation is adapted from Hoyland, *Theophilus*, 216.

Agapius' account shows similarities to and differences from that of Theophanes. Like Theophanes, Agapius begins his account with the great earthquake of Syria and 'Umar's edict to ban Muslims from drinking "wine out of grape or date."<sup>39</sup> Agapius also reports that 'Umar sent a letter to Leo. Agapius' description of 'Umar is different from that of Theophanes. While Theophanes depicts 'Umar as a severe persecutor of Christians, Agapius describes him as a man of piety. 'Umar's severe persecution of the Christians and his policies to promote Islam are not attested in the account of Agapius. Furthermore, while Theophanes ends his account without reporting the result of the correspondence, Agapius mentions how Leo wisely defended Christianity against 'Umar's arguments. According to Agapius, Leo successfully demonstrates the validity of Christianity by citing verses from the Bible and the Qur'ān, and using analogies.

These differences and similarities might call attention to the problem of the sources that were available to Agapius. From the fact that both Theophanes and Agapius begin their account with the earthquake of Syria and 'Umar's banning of wine, and from all other similarities between their accounts of the events in 717-720, it seems clear that Agapius is also depending on the same source that Theophanes used.<sup>40</sup> It is now accepted that this shared source of Theophanes and Agapius is the lost chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa.<sup>41</sup> The dependency of Agapius and Theophanes on the chronicle of Theophilus is further shown from the fact that other two chronicles, the *Syriac Chronicle of 1234* written by an anonymous author and the chronicle

<sup>39</sup> 'Umar's banning of wine is not mentioned by Kedrenos.

<sup>40</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 490.

<sup>41</sup> Conrad, "Awrād," 322-348. This lost chronicle of Theophilus is the source of Michael and the author of the *Syriac Chronicle of 1234*, who used Theophilus' work through the work of Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē, which is also lost (see discussion in 2.4).

of Michael the Syrian give similar accounts on the events in this period, including the banning of wine and earthquake in Syria, and ‘Umar’s persecution of the Christians.<sup>42</sup> However, Theophilus is not the only source of Agapius. In addition to Theophilus’ chronicle, Agapius seems to have been also influenced by his contemporary Muslim historians, who described ‘Umar as a pious caliph.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps, Agapius himself omitted the ‘Umar’s persecution of Christians, for Theophanes, Michael the Syrian, and the *Syriac Chronicle of 1234* all account for it.

What is more interesting is that Agapius not only mentioned the result of ‘Umar’s contact with Leo, but also gave the content of Leo’s reply. Agapius’s description of the content of Leo’s letter is the same as the content of the extant Arabic, Armenian and Latin letters attributed to Leo. Since the extant letters of Leo preserved in Arabic, Latin and Armenian are now thought to have been composed in the eighth or ninth century, it seems not impossible that Agapius could have read some of these texts in circulation or at least had heard of. However, it should be noted that the themes discussed by Leo and his strategies mentioned by Agapius are commonly used in Christian apologetic writings against Islam in the early Islamic period. Nevertheless, the accounts from Theophanes and Agapius show that they depend on the same source, but used it loosely, by omitting and adding additional materials.

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<sup>42</sup> Hoyland, *Theophilus*, 215-217.

<sup>43</sup> The portrayals of ‘Umar in difference sources was thoroughly explored by Bartol’d. I used the English translation by Weryho, “‘Umar II.”

#### 2.4. *Theophilus of Edessa and the beginning of the legend*

Now we move to the shared source of Theophanes and Agapius. That Theophanes, Agapius, and Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē shared a “common source” to account for the events in the East is evident. Attempts to identify this source have been made, and is now generally accepted that this Eastern Syriac source is the lost chronicle of Theophilus Bar Toma of Edessa.<sup>44</sup> The life, career and work of Theophilus of Edessa are known through the statements given by Dionysius and Bar Habraeus. Theophilus is known to be Chalcedonian, an astrologer who served the Caliph al-Mahdī, and also the Syriac translator of the Iliad and Odyssey. He wrote a Syriac chronicle and died twenty days before al-Mahdī died.<sup>45</sup> Theophilus’s chronicle ends with the events in 754-55, which indicates that the chronicle might have been composed in this time.<sup>46</sup>

The source of Theophilus for this event is unknown.<sup>47</sup> For he was a contemporary of ‘Umar and Leo, Theophilus may have heard of this event. Considering his career as an astrologer of the Caliph al-Mahdī, he may have heard it from someone who was involved in the event. Theophilus is now thought to be the first to mention this correspondence and the source of Theophanes and Agapius. His astrological works were cited by Muslims and even known to Constantinople before the completion of the *Chronography*.<sup>48</sup> Still, it is interesting that the

<sup>44</sup> The starting point of the discussion is E. Brooks’ article on this “common source.” But Brooks regarded the author of this source as John bar Samuel, rather than Theophilus (Cf. E. Brooks, “Source,” 587). Yet, later studies identified this author with Theophilus. (Cf. Conrad, “Awraq,” 322-348), producing numerous books and articles concerning Theophilus (For the development of the study on this “common source,” see e.g., Debié, “Oriental Source” and Hoyland, *Theophilus*, 1-26). Yet, the discussion on source and authorship of this “common source,” is still ongoing. I will not discuss them in detail, but simply accepted the general consensus that Theophilus is the author of the source shared by Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius, and that Theophilus is the source of Thoephanes and Agapius for the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. E. Brooks, “Sources,” 583-584; Palmer, *Chronicles*, 92.

<sup>46</sup> Hoyland, *Theophilus*, 20-21.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 23-26.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 6-7; Debié, “Oriental Source,” 371.

account of this correspondence is attested in only a limited number of writers. Therefore, before more studies are made with regards to Theophilus' source, I can only say that Theophilus is by far the oldest source of this legend, and the study of his own source is yet to be made.

## 2.5. *The silence of other Chroniclers*

Before we move to the second group of sources, the historians from the Armenian Church, one might also raise the following questions: There are only three Byzantine chroniclers that have reported the event: Why not others? Was the legend known and circulated only through a limited number of chroniclers? Did other chroniclers simply not know about this event or ignore it when they composed their works? Such questions may lead to the question of the origin of the legend and its circulation. It is out of the scope of this study to discuss this problem in detail; it is the work of historians of Byzantine historiography, which may require extensive research on all extant and probably unknown sources. Instead, I will briefly address the conclusions from earlier studies:

(1) Comparisons between Byzantine chroniclers on the account of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence might indicate that this tradition might have been in circulation in the East but was unknown in Constantinople. For instance, that the *Chronography* reports this event but the *Breviarum*<sup>49</sup> does not shows that it was not known in Constantinople before Theophanes' composition of the *Chronography*. Both Theophanes and Nikephorus depended upon Patrician

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<sup>49</sup> For edition *Breviarum* with introduction and English translation, see Mango, *Nicephoros*. Treadgold also discusses the source and content of the *Breviarum* in Treadgold, *Middle*, 26-37. The date of the Breviaum is now considered to be in 780's (Mango, *Nicephoros*, 12).

Trajan to report on events up until 720.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, if the account of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar has been known and circulated in Constantinople, either Trajan or Nikephoros would have known about it and included it in their works.<sup>51</sup> The absence of the report on this event may be explained by possibility that either Nikephoros omitted what Trajan has reported, or Theophanes used another source that was not available to Nikephorus. The latter seems to be more reasonable because we also have the report from Agapius, who shares common sources with Theophanes, but through different a route. Both Theophanes and Agapius depend on this common source, the lost work of Theophilus of Edessa. Thus, in all probabilities, the tradition is of Eastern origin, firstly mentioned by Theophilus.

(2) Likewise, this tradition seems to have been circulated locally in the Eastern part of the Byzantine Empire, probably in Syria-Palestine, and probably was not known to Syriac chroniclers in the West. The silence of Michael the Syrian, the anonymous author of the *Syriac Chronicle of 1234*, and Bar Hebraeus shows that the account of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence

<sup>50</sup> Patrician Trajan’s lost work is one of the shared sources of Theophanes and Nikephorus. Treadgold, “Trajan,” 589. For recent study on Trajan’s life and the discussion of his lost work, see Treadgold, “Trajan,” 618ff; idem, *Middle*, 8-17. There were discussions on the source of Theophanes and Nicephorus for their account around 720, for Leo gives two opposite descriptions of Leo. When reporting Leo’s victory against Muslim fleets in A.M. 6209, he calls Leo “the pious emperor (Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, 545),” while he shows opposite view toward the same person in his report for the events in A.M. 6211, describing him “impious (Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, 551, 552, n.1).” Similar change of attitude is also found in the Breviarum. The negative description to Leo in the Breviarum begins in year 726 (Treagold, “Trajan,” 594). Mango and Scott explain Theophanes’ and Nicephorus’ change of attitude toward Leo by assuming that one common source of Theophanes and Nicephorus ends around 720, and the other begins after 726 (Cf. Treadgold, “Trajan,” 594; Mango and Scott, *Chronicle*, lxxxvii; Mango, Nicephorus, 15-16. Recently, Afigenov and Forrest suggested different view on the problem of the shared sources between Theophanes and Nicephorus. See their studies in Jankowiak, *Theophanes*). Yet, I will not discuss Theophanes’ and Nicephorus’ common sources during the reign of Leo here, for even though Nicephorus shared the sources with Theophanes for the events during Leo’s reign, but did not mention the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar. The chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa is Theophanes’ source for this event.

<sup>51</sup> If Trajan, who was iconophile and favorable to Leo had known about the legend of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar, he would have accounted it in a positive way and wrote about Leo’s refusal to accept Islam and his “wise reply” to ‘Umar as did Agapius and the Armenian writers (cf. Treadgold, *Middle*, 12; idem “Trajan,” 618).

was not included in the chronicle of Dionysus. But it seems that the absence of the report of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar is not because Dionysus was not interested in the events during the reign of ‘Umar and Leo. Rather, the reports of the events during the reign of ‘Umar and Leo given by Michael the Syrian, the anonymous author of the *Syriac Chronicle of 1234*, and Bar Hebraeus are more detailed than that of Theophanes.<sup>52</sup> The absence of this account in the work of Dionysus can be explained by Dionysus’ own words in the preface that Theophilus is one of his sources but he took the parts which he thought to be “reliable and do not deviate from the truth.”<sup>53</sup> As a result, that Michael the Syrian, the author of the *Syriac Chronicle of 1234*, and Bar Haebraeus were all silent on this event shows that none of them knew about this event.

### *3. Armenian sources*

The second group of writers to consider is the historians from the Armenian Church. So far, four Armenian writers are known to have written about this tradition: Vardapet Ghevond, Thomas Artsruni, Kirakos of Gandzakets‘i, and Vardan Arewelc‘i, who is also called Vardan Vardapet.

As in the case of Byzantine chroniclers, the sources of the Armenian writers and the interdependency between them have been subjects of discussion. One of the difficulties lies in the way that the Armenian writers used their sources; they used earlier sources when they report events, but did not identify them. Instead, they simply listed in the preface the names of earlier

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<sup>52</sup> For comparison between the accounts in these works, especially on the events in 717-720, see Hoyland, *Theophilus*, 215-218.

<sup>53</sup> Palmer, *Chronicles*, 92.

historians whose works they used.<sup>54</sup> Another difficulty is that many of the extant works of the Armenian historians are from later copies, some of which survived in a single manuscript. For instance, Ghevond's *Armenian History* is now thought to have been composed in the late eighth century, but the oldest extant manuscript of the *Armenian History*, which is commonly called the Erevan manuscript, is from the thirteenth century.<sup>55</sup> The same case is Thomas Arcruni's *History of the House of the Artsrunik*'. Thomas composed this chronicle in the early tenth century, but the extant surviving text is in a unique manuscript copied in 1303.<sup>56</sup> These extant works might be redactions from their earlier versions.

### *3.1. Ghevond and the Armenian History*

The most well-known and probably the earliest account of the correspondence between Leo and 'Umar was given by an eighth century Armenian historian Ghevond, in the *Armenian History*.<sup>57</sup> Despite his influence on later Armenian writers, little is known about his life. He was born in the eighth century and from his epithet, he is known to have been a Vardapet, a doctor of the church in Armenian tradition.<sup>58</sup>

Ghevond's account on the correspondence between Leo and 'Umar is as follows: 'Umar was a noble man. He wrote a letter to Emperor Leo to learn about the Christian faith.<sup>59</sup> Leo

<sup>54</sup> Thomson, *History*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> Arzoumanian, *Lewond*, 30-33.

<sup>56</sup> Thomson, *History*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> For bibliographical information of the editions and manuscripts of the *Armenian History* and early 19th century editions, see Arzoumanian, *Lewond*, 28-33. Arzoumanian's translation in 1984 is the recent, and the first English translation of the entire *Armenian History*.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Bedrosian' preface of *Ghewond*. Even though it is generally accepted now that the Ghevond was an eighth century historian, some placed him in later date. See Jeffery, "Ghevond." 275-276.

<sup>59</sup> Arzoumanian, *Lewond*, 70.

replied to him with a long answer, defending Christianity and attacking the errors of Muslim doctrine and practices. Leo's letter brought a positive result: after reading Leo's reply, 'Umar became ashamed and showed "more tolerance and indulgence toward the Christian people." 'Umar sent Armenian captives home freely.<sup>60</sup>

It is noteworthy that such positive comments that 'Umar released Armenian captives brought by the result of correspondence is not attested in any of the Byzantine sources. However, Hoyland shows evidence from another source that it had actually taken place.<sup>61</sup> Some Muslim sources mention that 'Umar had a negotiation with Leo about the exchange of captives caught in battle with the Byzantines. This may refer to or at least is related to Ghevond's report of Umar's sending Armenian captives home. But the reliability of these Muslim sources and the connection between sources from Muslim and Armenian sides should be considered carefully.<sup>62</sup> At any rate, Ghevond seems to have connected the tradition of the Leo-'Umar correspondence with the Armenian local event.

Ghevond not only accounted for this event, but incorporated the letters attributed to Leo and 'Umar into his work as well.<sup>63</sup> The authenticity of these Armenian texts and their relationship with other letters ascribed to Leo and 'Umar will be discussed later in this chapter and in chapter IV.

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<sup>60</sup> Arzoumanian, "Lewond," 105-106.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 491, n.131.

<sup>62</sup> These sources do not mention 'Umar's inviting Leo to Islam. For these sources, see section 3 below.

<sup>63</sup> Arzoumanian, *Lewond*, 70-105. I use Jeffery's translation for the letters of Leo and 'Umar in this study, but Arzoumanian's was also consulted when Jeffery and Arzoumanian show notable distinctions. For the parts other than the letter of Leo and 'Umar, Arzoumanian's translation was used. Another English translation by Bedrosian is available online: [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ghewond\\_00\\_intro.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ghewond_00_intro.htm)

## .2. Thomas Artsruni and the History of the House of Artsrunik‘

Thomas Artsruni, a tenth century author, also gives a brief account on the epistolary exchange between Leo and ‘Umar in the *History of the House of Artsrunik*.<sup>64</sup> As in the case of Ghevond, little is known about Thomas and his career. The sole surviving manuscript of this work was copied later.<sup>65</sup> Thomson provides several literary evidences for the date of Thomas’ composition through analysis of Thomas’s *History of the House of Artsrunik*‘ and of later Armenian writers. When reporting some events of the second half of the ninth century, Thomas mentions that he has eyewitnessed them or learned about them from living persons.<sup>66</sup> A later historian, Kirakos, places him after Ghevond and before Shapuh Bagratuni at the end of ninth century and John Catholicos of the early tenth century.<sup>67</sup>

Thomas’s account is almost identical to Ghevond’s, and runs as follows:

‘Umar was a pious man. He wrote a letter to Leo on the matters of religion. When he received a reply from Leo and read it, he became ashamed of his faith. The correspondence between these two rulers resulted positively. ‘Umar “expunged many fabulous things from the Qur’ān” and showed generosity to the Christians, forgave their crimes and freed prisoners.<sup>68</sup>

It is interesting that the account of ‘Umar’s “expungement” of many elements from the Qur’ān is not attested in Ghevond’s *Armenian History*. The interdependency between Ghevond and Thomas for this event is hard to determine. Jeffery suggested that Thomas was depending on Ghevond when he reported the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar,<sup>69</sup> while Gero claims the

<sup>64</sup> For English translation of this work, see Thomson, *Artsrunik*.

<sup>65</sup> See n. 56 above.

<sup>66</sup> Thomson, *Artsrunik*, 18-19.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 16. However, later Thomson shows Thomas used the lost work of Shapuh Bagratuni as one of his sources. See ibid., 37.

<sup>68</sup> For translation, see ibid., 171. Alternative translation was suggested by Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 133-134.

<sup>69</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 270. He saw Thomas, Kirakos, and Vardan are all depending on Ghevond.

opposite.<sup>70</sup> Thomson accepts that Ghevond is one of Thomas' sources, but also points out that Thomas also added another information which is not mentioned by Ghevond.<sup>71</sup> Or they might not have depended on each other, but used sources of their own.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, Thomas's source for this event is not known. Yet, as did Ghevond, Thomas's account also attributes 'Umar's releases of Armenian captives to his correspondence with Leo.

### *3.3. Kirakos of Gandzakets'i and the History of Armenians*

Two other 13th century Armenian writers also reported on the exchange of religious correspondence between Leo and 'Umar. First, Kirakos Gandzakets'i mentioned it in his *History of Armenians*. Like other Armenian historians, little is known about Kirakos. The date of Kirakos' can be inferred only through his work. Bedrosian cited chapter 33 of the *History of the Armenians*, which indicates Kirakos was around 40 years old in the year 1241.<sup>73</sup>

Kirakos accounts for the Leo-'Umar correspondence briefly. Kirakos' account is almost same as that of Thomas.<sup>74</sup> According to Kirakos, the purpose of 'Umar's letter is to attain "information about Christian doctrine." Leo's wise reply turned out to have brought positive result for Christians. The rest of the account runs as follows:

<sup>70</sup> Gero claims that the "extant" *Armenian History* is the secondary version of Ghevond's eighth century chronicle which was revised with the works of two tenth century historian, Thomas Arcruni and Stephen of Tauron. As for the account of the correspondence between Leo and 'Umar, Gero claim that the author of the extant Armenian History took it from Thomas as a "framework" to "fit" the letters of Leo and 'Umar in Armenian into it. For Gero, the eighth century version only deals with local Armenian event. See Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 132-140.

<sup>71</sup> Thomson, *Artsrunik'*, 37.

<sup>72</sup> Palombo, "Correspondence," 235.

<sup>73</sup> Bedrosian assumes that Kirakos was born sometime between 1200 and 1210. See Bedrosian, *History*, editor's preface. Bedrosian's online edition of the *History of Armenians* is available online at archive.org

<sup>74</sup> Unlike Jeffery (see n. 69 above), Gero claims that Kirakos is depending on Thomas for this event (Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 46). It seems more reasonable to think Thomas was the source of Kirakos for this event: 'Umar's elimination of some "loathsome" elements in Islam is clearly not from Ghevond, but taken from Thomas.

As soon as ‘Umar read this, he was greatly embarrassed, and began to remove some of the loathsome things in their religion. Although he did not make bold to annul all the iniquities, nonetheless he righted many things in their disorder, and thereafter was well-disposed toward all Christians and especially toward the Armenian people. [‘Umar] ordered that those who had been taken into captivity be repatriated to Armenia. At that time, lord Vahan of Goght’n was returned from captivity...<sup>75</sup>

### *3.4. Vardan Arewelc’i and the Historical Compilation*

Kirakos’s contemporary and colleague, Vardan Arewelc’i also gives an account on the same event in his *Historical Compilation*.<sup>76</sup> Vardan Arewelc’i mentions a small portion of the letters of ‘Umar and Leo; he mentions ‘Umar’s refutation against the Christians on their division into 72 sects. He also presents Leo’s lists of the Muslim heretical groups, and briefly describes the debates on the validity of the Qur’ān and falsification of the Christian scriptures.<sup>77</sup> His citation can find the reference in the letters of Leo and ‘Umar in the *Armenian History*, and clearly Vardan used the letters included in Ghevond’s *Armenian History* as his source when he mentions these letters.<sup>78</sup> Unlike other Armenian writers, Vardan did not mention the positive result of this epistolary exchange.

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<sup>75</sup> The account of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar is in [59] of Bedrosian’s online edition of *History*.

<sup>76</sup> For more information of Vadan Arewelc’i’s life, early education, career and works, see Thomson’s “Historical Compilation,” 125-140.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 180. In order to answer Muslims’ refutation against Christians that they altered the scripture, Leo claims that if the scripture was altered, it would be impossible to find the words of the scripture preserved in twelve languages of Christians the same. The names of the twelve languages of the Christian churches Vardan mentions are slightly different from those of Ghevond. Cf. Ibid., 180, n. 5 and Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 297.

<sup>78</sup> Thomson, “Historical Compilation,” 135: “Vardan is the first to quote from the correspondence found in the History of Lewond,” and also see 180, n.3.

#### 4. Muslim sources

Together with these Christian writers, Muslim authors also reported that Leo and ‘Umar have corresponded to debate on religions. We have two sources from the Muslim side: *Al-Kāmil*, written by a ninth century grammarian al-Mubarrad, and *Lisān al-Mīzān*, by a thirteenth century writer, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. I will first examine al-Mubarrad’s account in the *al-Kāmil*, which served as the source of al-‘Asqalānī on this account.

##### 4.1. Al-Mubarrad and Al-Kāmil

*Al-Kāmil* was composed by a ninth century Muslim grammarian and philosopher, Abū al-’Abbās Muḥammad Ibn Yazīd (826-898), who is more commonly called Al-Mubarrad. He studied grammar in Baṣrā, and then served at the court of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil in 860. After the death of the caliph in 861, he came to Baghdad and later died there. He left an important work, *al-Kāmil*, meaning “The Perfect One,” which discusses Arabic literature and linguistics, poetry and history.<sup>79</sup> Wright’s edition was published in 1874 in Leipzig,<sup>80</sup> on which the English translation of this study is based. In the *al-Kāmil*, al-Mubarrad presents a long, detailed account of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence.

The basic outline of al-Mubarrad’s account is the same, compared to those of the Christian writers: ‘Umar sent a letter to Leo to call him to Islam. ‘Umar’s two envoys arrived at

<sup>79</sup> For life, career and the content of *al-Kāmil* and edition of his other works, see Van Gelder, “al-Mubarrad,” Sellheim, “al-Mubarrad.”

<sup>80</sup> Wright, *Al-Kāmil*. Wright edition was published in two volumes: vol.1 contains the text edited and was published in 1874. Vol 2 has a long index, published in 1892. De Goeje’s preface in vol. 2 gives brief introduction of various manuscripts of *al-Kāmil*.

Constantinople with the letter of ‘Umar and delivered ‘Umar’s message to Leo. But Leo did not accept it and wrote a reply to ‘Umar as requested. Leo’s Arabic name appears as “Ilyūn,” without being specified, but from the context, there is no doubt that Leo is the Emperor Leo III. The content of the letters of Leo or ‘Umar’s is not mentioned by al-Mubarrad. The story goes as follows:<sup>81</sup>

Section 1<sup>82</sup>: And he related to me that ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, may God have mercy upon him, sent his emissaries, ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Abdal’alā and with him, a man from ‘Ans to Leo. Then, the man from ‘Ans said, “‘Umar met me alone without him (i.e., ‘Abdallah) and said to me, ‘Remember everything he says and does.’”

Section 2: When we arrived to meet him, we met a man (i.e., Leo) who spoke Arabic, being raised in Mar’ash. Then ‘Abdallah began to speak, but I said, “Gently, please.” Then I praised God and prayed for His Prophet –Peace and Blessing be upon him! After that, I said, “I was sent by the one who sent this man. The commander of the faithful is calling you to Islam. If you accept it (i.e., Islam), you will get the right guidance, but for me, it is thought that the book has already prescribed for you misery,<sup>83</sup> unless God wills otherwise. If you accept, and if not write a reply to our letter.”

Then ‘Abdallah spoke, praising God and praying for His Prophet –Peace and Blessing upon be him! And he continued speaking, for he was eloquent.

Then Leo said to him, “Oh, Abdallāh, what do you say about Christ?”

Then ‘Abdallah said, “The spirit of God and His word.”

Then Leo said, “Can there be a son without a man?”

Then ‘Abdallah said, “This <question> requires reflection.”

Then Leo said, “What reflection for this? Either yes or no?”

Then ‘Abdallah said, “God created Adam out of dust.”

Then Leo said, “He (i.e., Christ) was <born> out of the womb.

Then ‘Abdallah said, “This needs reflection.”

Then Leo said to him in Greek, “I know that you neither belong to my religion nor the religion of the one who sent you.”

Then the man from Ans said, “And I know the Greek language.”

Leo said, “Do you celebrate a day other than Friday?”<sup>84</sup>

‘Abdallah said, “Yes.”

Leo said, “What day is it? Is it one from your feast days?”

‘Abdallah said, “No.”

<sup>81</sup> Holyland gives partial English translation based on the same text in his *Seeing Islam*, 496-497. Kaplony provides translation of several sentences and phrases in German when he is analyzing the account. See, Kaplony, *Damascus*. The account in *al-Kāmil* is made of the recurrent use of the third person masculine singular verb form لَقَدْ, “he said...,” without specifying its subject. To avoid confusion, I specified the subject in translation when necessary.

<sup>82</sup> I divided al-Mubarrad’s account into three scenes according to the setting, such as time and place. It is not shown in the Arabic text. The words in < > are inserted for smooth reading of the English translation. When the subject or the object is indicated in third masculine singular form of verb or pronoun, I identified that person in ( ) to prevent confusion.

<sup>83</sup> This expression reflects Islamic fatalism.

<sup>84</sup> Meaning “Sabbath.”

Leo said, “Then why do you celebrate it?”

‘Abdallah said, “It is a feast for the people who were righteous before it became a day of celebration (i.e., Sabbath) to you.”

The man from the tribe of ‘Ans said: “Then Leo said to him (i.e., ‘Abdallah) in Greek, ‘I realized that you neither belong to my religion nor the religion of the one who sent you.’”

Then ‘Abdallah said to him (i.e., Leo), “Do you know what foolish people say?”

Leo said, “What do they say?”

‘Abdallah said, “They say that Iblīs said, ‘I was commanded not to venerate anything but God. Then I was told that I should venerate Adam.’”

The man from the tribe of ‘Ans said, “Then Leo said to him (i.e., ‘Abdallah) in Greek, ‘the matter about you has become clearer from this.’”<sup>85</sup>

The man from the tribe of ‘Ans said, “Then Leo wrote a reply to our letter. Then we returned to the caliph with it.”

Section 3: The man from the tribe of ‘Ans said, “Then we reported to ‘Umar about what we have brought. Then we got up <and left>. Then ‘Umar brought me back at the gate of the court, and met me alone and I reported to him <about what transpired at the meeting with the Emperor Leo>.”<sup>86</sup> Then answered ‘Umar, “May God curse him. I myself scorn him but I did not think he would be so bold.”

The man from the tribe of ‘Ans said, “When I left ‘Umar, ‘Abdallah said to me, “What did ‘Umar tell you?” He (i.e., the man from the tribe of ‘Ans) said, “I answered, ‘Umar asked if you go against him (i.e., Leo), then I answered ‘No.’”

Al-Mubarrad’s account is quite different from those of the Christian writers in several aspects; it contains features which are not attested in any other Christian sources.

(1) Unlike the Christian sources, al-Mubarrad gives information of the envoys of ‘Umar: a man from ‘Ans and a Muslim named ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Alā. The man from ‘Ans is not only the narrator of the story, but also the source of *al-Kāmil*, from whom al-Mubarrad claims he had directly heard of this event. The account begins with “حدثني he related to me...” The man from ‘Ans is one of the caliph’s entourages, in whom ‘Umar put more trust than he does on the other. Before dispatching his envoys to Constantinople, ‘Umar secretly commanded this man to watch over ‘Abdallah during their stay in the court of Leo. That this man from ‘Ans is a faithful Muslim is shown in the passage where he halted ‘Abdallah when ‘Abdallah was about to talk to

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<sup>85</sup> Or, “the matter about you is more clear than this.”

<sup>86</sup> The text simply reads: I reported to him.

Leo and praised God with a typical Islamic eulogy. The other is the man named ‘Abdallah Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Alā. From his name, he also appears to be a Muslim. But from his conversation with Leo, the fact that he does not follow the orthodox Islamic teachings is revealing. Every time ‘Abdallah finishes his argument, Leo says that he is “neither a Muslim nor a Christian.”<sup>87</sup>

(2) While the Christian writers simply mention that ‘Umar sent a letter and Leo replied to it, al-Mubarrad reports how it has taken place. The story is told in three scenes in sequences:

a. ‘Umar’s secret command to the man from ‘Ans: before ‘Umar’s envoys headed to Constantinople with the letter of ‘Umar, ‘Umar commanded the man from ‘Ans secretly to keep watch over Abdallāh, over what he would do and say during their mission.

b. The debates between Leo and Abdallāh: Leo and Abdallāh made theological arguments. Leo did not embrace Islam, but wrote a letter ‘Umar. Leo’s reply was delivered to ‘Umar through Abdallāh and the man from ‘Ans. In the *Armenian History*, however, Ghevond reports that Leo entrusted one of his trustworthy men to bring his reply to ‘Umar.<sup>88</sup> Theophanes is silent on the reaction of Leo.

c. The report of the man from ‘Ans about Abdallāh’s deeds at Constantinople: When the caliph’s envoys returned, the man from ‘Ans reported ‘Umar what Abdallāh did at the court of Constantinople. Then ‘Umar came to know what Abdallāh had done and was surprised at his “boldness” to reveal his religious attitude.

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. Kaplony, *Damascus*, 224-225. Based on the claims Abdallāh made, Kaplony concluded that he might be “a crypto-Zoroastrian.

<sup>88</sup> Arzoumanian, *Lewond.*, 105.

(3) Al-Mubarrad's account describes in what language 'Umar's emissaries communicated with Leo. It seems that no Christian writer was interested in the question of how Leo could read 'Umar's letter, which is in Arabic, and how he communicated with the envoys from the caliph. By al-Mubarrad, Leo was described as a bilingual in Arabic and Greek, for he was raised in "Mar'ash."<sup>89</sup> Since Leo was "eloquent" in Arabic, it is not difficult to guess that the conversation might have taken place in Arabic. During his conversation with 'Abdallah, Leo sometimes speaks in Greek. However, Leo's statement in Greek is not a part of mutual discussion; it is rather Leo's own commentary on 'Abdallah's answers. 'Abdallah does not show any reaction to Leo's statement. Since the debates between Leo and 'Abdallah was in Arabic, it is not known whether 'Abdallah knew Greek. The man from 'Ans knew Greek and therefore, could understand what Leo said.

(4) The conversation between 'Abdallah and Leo deserves attention. They discussed three themes, concerning the divinity of Christ, celebration of a feast day, and Iblīs' refusal to bow down to Adam, which is an allusion to Q 2:34. All these questions are typically discussed themes by Christian and Muslim polemicists; yet 'Abdallah's answers to Leo are somewhat strange. (a) His answer to the identity of Christ that he is "the Spirit of God and His Word" is a citation from Q 4:171. However, as for his birth without a father, 'Abdallah simply answers that "it needs reflection." (b) On the celebration of the feast day, which is other than Friady, 'Abdallah also mentioned that it was a tradition from the "righteous" people before Christians and Muslims first

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<sup>89</sup> It was reported by Syriac and Muslim writers that Leo is from Mar'ash, which is Germanica. This would explain Leo's knowledge of Arabic in the account of al-Mubarrad. See Bartol'd, "'Umar II," 82; Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 10-12. Jeffery, "Ghevond," 272-273.

appeared. (c) ‘Abdallah even says to Leo that the tradition of Iblīs’ disobedience to God to venerate Adam, which is described in Q 2:34 is “what foolish people” say. Every time ‘Abdallah answers, Leo says in Greek, “Now I realize that you do not belong to my religion or the religion of the one who sent you.” The theological discussion between Leo and ‘Abdallah is also not attested in other sources.

(5) Importantly, al-Mubarrad’s focus of the story seems quite different from the Christian writers. What stands out is the heretical aspect of ‘Abdallah. The event seems to have used to show that ‘Abdallah is not a true Muslim; it is well shown in the strange argument between ‘Abdallah and Leo, and the emperor’s statement about ‘Abdallah that he neither belongs to Christianity nor to Islam. ‘Umar’s secret order to the man from the ‘Ans to keep watching over ‘Abdallah, and this man’s report to ‘Umar after their return to Damascus also demonstrates this point. Moreover, while Armenian writers accounted the good result Leo’s reply brought to Christians, al-Mubarrad is silent on the result of this correspondence. ‘Umar’s reaction is only to ‘Abdallah’s heretical speech, not Leo’s letter or his refusal to accept Islam. The exchange of letters between them seems not the primary focus in al-Mubarrad’s account.

#### *4.2. Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī and Lisān al-Mīzān*

The same account is given in later work *Lisān al-Mīzān* by a famous Hadith scholar in Mamluk Egypt, named. Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī (1372-1449).<sup>90</sup> There are vast literatures ascribed to him; his interests were not only limited to the studies in the Hadith literature. He wrote a

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<sup>90</sup> In this study, I used the edition published in Hyderabad in 1329-31.

number of works in various fields, including historiography, biography, and language and literature.<sup>91</sup>

Al-‘Asqalānī is depending on *al-Kāmil* for the report of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Uamr, as shown in the Isnād. Al-‘Asqalānī’s account is a defective reproduction of al-Mubarrad’s account. The discussion between Leo and ‘Abdallah appears, but it is presented in abbreviation. The two envoys from the caliph are identified, but with changes: they are ‘Abdallah and the man from “Abs” rather than “Ans.”<sup>92</sup>

With his attempt to identify this man from ‘Abs, Aṭwan gave more credit to al-‘Asqalānī than al-Mubarrad. Atwan claims that this man is from the family of “Abs,” which had a close relationship with the Umayyad caliphate.<sup>93</sup> However, according to al-Mubarrad he is a man from ‘Ans, not ‘Abs. Moreover, the account of al-‘Asqalānī is somewhat corrupted, even though the Isnād identifies al-Mubarrad as his source. The identity of this man remains unknown.

As to ‘Abdallah, there is a report which connects the accusation against ‘Abdallah of being heretic with the death of Ayyūb, the son of Sulaymān, the predecessor of ‘Umar. It was Ayyūb who was Sulaymān’s son and his successor. But Ayyūb died before his father died. Then Sulaymān appointed ‘Umar as his successor. As for the death of Ayyūb, according to al-Margbānī, ‘Abdallah caused Ayyūb to become a heretic (نَدِقَ), thus his father, Sulaymān poisoned his son and killed him. However, as Aṭwan also pointed out, this is not accounted by al-Balādhurī and others. Yet, regardless of the reliability of al-Margbānī’s account, this explains

<sup>91</sup> The extensive study on the life, education, career of al-‘Asqalānī and his works in various fields was done by Rahmani in his *Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī*.

<sup>92</sup> Al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, 3, 305.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Aṭwan, *Sīrah*, 78, n.40.

the suspicion of ‘Umar toward ‘Abdallah and his secret command to the man from ‘Ans to watch over him, and the strange discussion between Leo and ‘Abdallah.

*4.3. The diplomatic contact between Leo and ‘Umar and the authenticity of the account of al-Mubarrad*

Al-Mubarrad is the earliest source from Muslim side on the “religious” correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar. He is the source of al-‘Asqalānī. None of his contemporaries such as al-Balādhurī or al-Ṭabari mention this event. Yet, the lack of report of this particular event does not mean that Muslim writers were not interested in the Byzantine-Arab affairs. Rather they reported ‘Umar’s diplomatic contacts with other Muslim and non-Muslim rulers, and even the one between Leo and ‘Umar themselves. For instance, the besiege of Constantinople is well described in al-Ṭabarī’s *History*. According to al-Ṭabarī, at the end of the reign of Sulaymān Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik, he sent his brother Maslamāh and other commanders to conquer Constantinople. Then, Maslamah besieged the city. There are several accounts from Muslim sources how Leo, who became emperor at that period, had negotiations with Maslamāh and tricked him.<sup>94</sup> The siege ended with the death of Sulaymān, and when ‘Umar became a caliph, he commanded Maslamah to return.<sup>95</sup> Al-Ṭabari also provides information on the letters written by ‘Umar to his contemporaries to handle political issues.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Powers, *Tabarī*, 39-42.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 76-82, 101.

The following examples are more interesting with regards to this study. Even though al-Mubarrad's account is the only Muslim source which mentions the correspondence between Leo and 'Umar, there are some other reports which account for the diplomatic contact between Leo and 'Umar. Jeffery cites two examples from the *Kitāb al-'Aghānī* and the war history of al-Balādhurī about 'Umar's political and diplomatic acts.<sup>97</sup> *Kitab al-Aghānī* mentions the letter from 'Umar to Muslim captives at Constantinople, in which he promised care for their families. In *Kitāb Futūh al-Buldān*, al-Balādhurī gives a report of the negotiation between 'Umar and a Byzantine emperor on the issue of freeing captives.<sup>98</sup> This contact between Leo and 'Umar for exchange of captives is also accounted in the *History of Damascus* with further information of 'Umar's envoy. 'Umar sent 'Abd al-'A'lā Ibn Abī 'Amrah to Leo in Conatantinople to negotiate the exchange of the captives.<sup>99</sup> Ibn Asākir also gives the account of the conversation between 'Abd al-'A'lā with 'Umar, concerning the term to exchange Muslim captives with Byzantines:

When ['Umar] Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz sent me for redemption of the prionsers of Constantinople, I said, "If they (i.e., Byzantines) refuse to exchange a man for one man, then what should I do?" He (i.e., 'Umar) said, "Reply to them." I said, "If they refuse to release a man for two?" He said, "Give them three." I said, "If they insist on four?" He said, "Then give them whatever they want with all Muslims. God said, 'One Muslim man is more beloved to Me than all those who disbelieve.'<sup>100</sup> If you ransom the Muslim by whatever, then you are winner and you are rather ransoming Islam."

He (i.e., 'Abd al-'Alā) said: "I said to him (i.e., 'Umar), "If I find men who became Christian but wish to return to Islam, should I ransom them?" He said, "Yes, just as others are ransomed." He (i.e., 'Abd al-'Alā) said: I said to him, "Should I ransom slaves if they are Muslims?" He said, "Yes, just as others are ransomed." He (i.e., 'Abd al-'Alā) said: "I said to him, "If I find among them who became Christian but wish to come back to Islam?" He said, "Do with them just as you do with others."

He (i.e., 'Abd al-'Alā) said: "Then I agreed to terms with the highest of Byzantium (i.e., Leo?): one Muslim for two Byzantines."<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> The examples of *Kitab al-Aghānī* and al-Balādhurī's *Kitāb Futūh al-Buldān* were given by Jeffery, without detailed bibliographical information. See Jeffery, "Ghevond," 271.

<sup>98</sup> Hitti, *Origin*, 204. On this event, see also Kaplony, *Damascus*, 239-240; Rochow, "Diplomatischen," 310-311.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Atwan, *Sīrah*, 76; Ibn Asākir, *Damascus*, vol. 33, 417-419 in al-Fikr edition.

<sup>100</sup> Literally, those who associate God with someone or something.

<sup>101</sup> Ibn Asākir, *Damascus*, vol. 33, 419.

Ibn Asākir gives the Isnād of this account, which goes back to ‘Abd al-‘A’lā Ibn Abī ‘Amrah. Interestingly, ‘Umar’s emissary, ‘Abd al-‘A’lā Ibn Abī ‘Amrāh, has a family connection with one of ‘Umar’s envoys to Leo that appeared in the account of al-Mubarrad. ‘Abd al-‘A’lā Ibn Abī ‘Amrah and ‘Abdallah were known as being of the same family through various reports of Muslim biographers. These biographers report not only about ‘Abdallah but about his father and grandfather as well, for they were all related to ‘Umayyad caliphate. When al-Ṭabari reports the result of the battle of ‘Ayn al-Tamr between Khalīd Ibn al-Walīd and the Persians along with their Christian allies, he mentions how Khalīd captured sons of the garrison troops and sent them to Abū Bakr. These boys were gathering in the church when they were found by Muslim soldiers. One of these boys was “Abū ‘Amrāh, the *mawlā* of the Shayban, who was the father of ‘Abd al-A’la b. Abi Amrāh.”<sup>102</sup> Al-Ṭabari gives a similar account elsewhere, reporting the same event: Khalīd found the boys in the church at the battle of ‘Ayn al-Tamr and distributed them to the Muslims who made a contribution in the battle. He gives names of those boys, and one of them was “Abū ‘Amrah, the grandfather of ‘Abdallah b. ‘Abd al-A’lā the poet.”<sup>103</sup> Al-Balādhurī also gives an account in *Kitāb al-Futūh al-Buldān*: when Khalīd was engaged in the battle of ‘Ayn al-Tamr, he found people in the church and took them captives. One of these captives was, “Abū ‘Amrah, a grandfather of ‘Abdallah ibn ‘Abd-al-A’lā, the poet.”<sup>104</sup> Ibn Asākir also accounts for the capture of Abū ‘Amrah at the battle of ‘Ayn al-Tamr, and says he is the father of ‘Abd-al-A’la.<sup>105</sup> Thus, the family relationship is as follows: Abū ‘Amrah the grandfather; ‘Abd

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<sup>102</sup> Blankinship, *Ṭabarī*, 123

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 55

<sup>104</sup> Hitti, *Origins*, 395-397.

<sup>105</sup> Ibn Asākir, *Damascus*, 418

al-A’la the father; and ‘Abdallah, the son. Among them, it was ‘Abd al-‘A’lā, the father, who ‘Umar sent to Leo for affairs of exchange captives made by battle between Muslims and Byzantines.

The account of the al-Kāmil is the earliest source from the Muslim side which reports the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar concerning religions and ‘Umar’s call to Islam. Al-‘Asaqlānī depends on al-Mubarrad for this event. Yet, all other sources mentioned above show that there was a tradition among Muslims from the early Islamic period that Leo and ‘Umar had diplomatic contact. The similarities and discrepancies among the sources show that the tradition has been elaborated and conflated with another tradition during the course of transmission. How and why the father, ‘Abd al-‘Alā, in one source was replaced by the son, ‘Abdullah, in the other, and the negotiation concerning exchanging captives was replaced by ‘Umar’s invitation to Islam are unknown. The direct source al-Mubarrad used to account for this event is also unknown. He only mentions the anonymous man from ‘Ans as his source. Whether this diplomatic contact refers to the “mundane affairs” that Leo and ‘Umar had dealt with each other before they began their discussion on religions is also not clear.<sup>106</sup>

##### *5. Al-Ṣafī Ibn al-‘Assāl*

In addition to these three groups of sources, we have one more report on the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar. It is from a Copto-Arabic canonist and apologist,

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 282. Leo said he and ‘Umar had corresponded but they are all about “mundane affairs.” In n.27 on the same page, Jeffery claims that this statement may be “indirect confirmation” that ‘Umar wrote to Leo.

named al-Şafī Abū al-Fadā'il Ibn al-‘Assāl. He was from the famous al-‘Assāl family; al-Şafī, along with the other three men from his family, was called “Awlād al-‘Assāl.”<sup>107</sup> As a Christian writer who was living under the Muslim rule, al-Şafī wrote several apologetic works in defense of the “Christian faith” and “Coptic Orthodox beliefs.”<sup>108</sup> With regards to this study, his short apologetic treatise, “Against the refutation against Christians” written by ‘Alī al-Tabarī, will be discussed.<sup>109</sup>

This work was written in order to answer to al-Tabarī’s theological attacks against Christians. One of the interesting features of this text is al-Şafī’s extensive use of the Qur’ān. The way al-Şafī used the Qur’ān is simple. He draws up the passages from the Qur’ān which favor Christianity and Christians. For instance, he insists that Islam is the religion professed only for the Arabs propagated in the Arabic language, citing Q 12:2 and 20:113.<sup>110</sup> He also claims that the Qur’ān also confirms the divinity and humanity of Christ. He said, “The Christian kings said, ‘In addition to this, we also find it (i.e., the Qur’ān) makes Christ and his mother great, and it says: He is the Spirit of God and His Word, and he did the divine works. And in addition to this, it describes that he is a man according to the human attribute. And he is the one we strongly believe that humanity and divinity are together in him.’<sup>111</sup> What al-Şafī discusses are of typical themes found in the early Christian-Muslim polemics and he deals with it thoroughly point by

<sup>107</sup> For information of Aş-Şafī and his family, see Graf, *GCAL* II, 387-403; Rizkalla, “Awlād al-‘Assāl”; Awad, “al-Şafī.”

<sup>108</sup> Rizkalla, “Awlād al-‘Assāl,” 100-101.

<sup>109</sup> For a critical edition of this work, see Samir, “Al-Şafī,” 281-325. The summary of al-Şafī’s answer to al-Tabarī is given by Samir’s “Safi ibn al-‘Assal, al” in the Coptic Encyclopedia (available at <http://ccdl.libraries.claremont.edu/cdm/ref/collection/cce/id/1688>).

<sup>110</sup> Samir, “Al-Şafī,” 313-314.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 317.

point.<sup>112</sup> Another interesting feature is the way al-Şafī presents his arguments. He wrote as if he was citing the words of the Christian kings. He begins his argument, saying, “... قال ملوك النصارى ...”: the Christian kings said...” or “... قالوا ... they said...” Then al-Şafī finishes his writing with following statement: “The Byzantine Emperor, Leo, the son of Basil, wrote a letter to one of the Muslim caliphs, as answering to the previous letters, being excellent in writing and content.”<sup>113</sup>

Al-Şafī’s final statement may lead us to think that he might have read the letter attributed to the Emperor Leo the Wise and cited from it. However, it seems not to be the case. Even though al-Şafī never mentioned Paul of Antioch as his source, it is clear that al-Şafī has drawn on the work this contemporary writer, who is also known as Paul of Sidon, a Melkite theologian and bishop of Sidon in the early thirteenth century.<sup>114</sup> As a Christian apologist and bishop, Paul wrote five works which deal with theological topics.<sup>115</sup> Among them, his “Letter to a Muslim Friend,” which al-Safi used as his source, is a letter from Paul to his Muslim recipient in Sidon.<sup>116</sup> In this letter, Paul tells his friend what he heard from the Christian notables he met during his journey to Byzantine territory. When Paul arrived at Byzantine territory, he conversed with the Christian notables who were living there, who explained to Paul why Christians should not accept Islam as their religion. It is interesting that the primary basis of the arguments of these Byzantine notables

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Awad, “Al-Şafī,” 543.

<sup>113</sup> وقد كتب لاون بن بسييل ملك الروم كتاباً إلى أحد الخلفاء المسلمين كافياً في الغرض المقدم ذكره جيداً الالفاظ والمعاني According to Samir, another manuscript identifies his father as “Basil I.” Samir explains this passage as being in connection with the tradition of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence. See Samir, “Al-Şafī,” 325.

<sup>114</sup> For brief information of Paul’s career as a writer and a bishop and the works ascribed to him, see Griffith, “Paul,” 216-219, 327-328 (notes); Dick, *Melkites*, 99-100 (Dick placed Paul in the twelfth century); Thomas, “Paul.”

<sup>115</sup> There are more works ascribed to him, but so far, only five among them are accepted to be authentic works of Paul. Cf. Thomas, “Paul,” 78.

<sup>116</sup> See Griffith, “Paul,” and Dick, “Paul,” 99-102 and Thomas, “Paul.” The letter to a Muslim friend was expanded later by an anonymous Christian writer in Cyprus with the title, “A letter from the people of Cyprus.” See Thomas, “Cyprus.” The edition and translation of this expanded work is provided by Thomas and Ebeid, *Crusades*.

is the Qur’ān. They cite verses from the Qur’ān to claim why Islam is the religion only for Arabs and how it proves the validity of Christian doctrines. Paul ends his letters with the statement that he wrote what he learned from those Byzantines and asks his Muslim friend to rebut to the arguments of these Byzantines if they are not acceptable to him. Even though Paul mentions he traveled to Byzantine territory, scholars have been skeptical about Paul’s trip to the land of Byzantines and his conversation with them. The journey may be fictitious, and Paul created it as a literary setting to provide pretext of his anti-Muslim polemics.<sup>117</sup> Paul’s purpose of writing was probably to equip members of his church with knowledge of Christian teachings so that they keep their Christians identity and faith.

Why al-Ṣafī connects Paul’s letter with the tradition of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence or how he knew about this tradition is unknown. Yet, al-Ṣafī’s connection of Paul’s work with this tradition may indicate that it was still in circulation in the medieval period. In this letter and elsewhere, Paul himself never mentioned the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar at all. In Paul’s letter and al-Ṣafī’s writing, these Byzantine kings or notables were always referred to as plural ملوك, rather than a singular form ملك. Thus, al-Ṣafī’s last statement might have been attached to Paul’s work later, probably by al-Ṣafī himself.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, it seems that the legend of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence did not arrive at Egypt and was not known to Coptic Christians in al-Ṣafī’s days. Apart from al-Ṣafī, to the best of my knowledge, no other Copto-Arabic writers mention it. On the other hand, Paul’s work was widely read. “Letter to a Muslim

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<sup>117</sup> Griffith, “Paul,” 218; Thomas, “Paul,” 80-81.

<sup>118</sup> Considering the fact that no Christian and Muslim writers who read Paul’s works connected his “Letter to a Muslim Friend” with the legend of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar, it is likely that it was al-Ṣafī himself who combined two tradition into one composition.

Friend” received the attention of Paul’s contemporaries and later Christian and Muslim theologians. Most of all, it was known to al-Qarafi, a thirteenth century Muslim theologian in Cairo not long after its composition.<sup>119</sup> Thus, it would not be surprising that al-Ṣafī read Paul’s works. It is likely that al-Ṣafī might have read Paul’s work circulated anonymously, and he himself combined it with the legend of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar. That the “Awlād al-‘Assāl” had a strong connection with Syria-Palestine, and that they also knew Syriac and Greek well<sup>120</sup> also support this claim. During his journey to Syria-Palestine,<sup>121</sup> al-Ṣafī probably would have heard of the religious correspondence between these famous Byzantine emperor and Muslim caliph. Al-Ṣafī’s work might show the evidence that the legend of the Leo-‘Umar correspondence was still in circulation among Christians in Syria-Palestine at the time of al-Ṣafī.

## *6. Conclusion*

The discussion on various historical accounts might be summarized as follows:

(1) As seen from the Byzantine-Greek and Christian Arabic chronicles, the authors of these works are depending on the same source, the lost chronicle of Theophilus of Edessa, written around 750. Probably, Theophilus himself might have heard of it and included it in his chronicle, yet his source is unknown. From the fact that it was not mentioned by other

<sup>119</sup> Griffith, “Paul,” 216-217; Thomas, “Paul,” 81.

<sup>120</sup> Rizkalla, “Awlād al-Assāl,” 98.

<sup>121</sup> Awad, “Al-Ṣafī,” 538.

contemporary Byzantine and Western Syriac chroniclers, it seems that the legend of the Leo-'Umar correspondence was circulated in the Eastern part of the Byzantine Empire.

(2) Then it may have come to be known to Armenians through unknown routes. When and how this legend came to be known to these Armenian writers still remains unanswered. Both Ghevond and Thomas Arcruni do not identify their sources.

(3) The accounts from Armenian and Muslim sources show how the legend is elaborated and conflated during the course of transmission. The Armenian writers connect this legend to explain the Armenian local event, 'Umar's release of Armenian captives. 'Umar's generous deeds toward the Armenians was a result of Leo's reply in which Leo successfully answered 'Umar's questions concerning Christianity and Islam. As for the account from al-Mubarrad, his account is a combination of various traditions. The legend of the Leo-'Umar correspondence has been combined with the Islamic tradition by a famous Muslim poet, 'Abdullāh, and historical reports of the diplomatic contact between Leo and 'Umar. In al-Mubarrad's account, the emphasis of the story is upon the heretical aspect of 'Abdullāh. 'Umar only pays attention to what 'Abdullāh said at the court of Constantinople, not to Leo's reaction to his call to Islam, even though he himself wrote a letter to Leo to invite him to Islam.

(3) Even though al-Ṣafī's treatise is from the medieval period in Egypt, it might show that in the Syria-Palestine at the twelfth century, the legend of Leo-'Umar correspondence was still in circulation. Yet, the source of al-Ṣafī for this legend is still unknown.

*Texts*

Now we move to the letters ascribed to Leo and ‘Umar. There are five texts attributed to them.<sup>122</sup> They are preserved in manuscripts copied in later period, and most of them are translations from original works which are now lost. All these letters are written under the name of Leo or ‘Umar, but the authorship of these texts is still controversial for the following reasons. First of all, there is no letter of Leo written in Greek that has come down to us, which one might expect to find if Emperor Leo himself was the real author of the letters attributed to him or they were written in the imperial court of Constantinople under his order. Instead, the extant letters of Leo are now preserved only in Armenian, Latin, and Arabic. As for the letters of ‘Umar, they are preserved in the manuscripts written in Aljamiado and Arabic. Moreover, it was common for writers in the ancient and medieval period to ascribe their works to famous historical figures in order to provide authority to the texts or hide the true authorship to guarantee the safety of the true authors.

Different opinions concerning the questions of the origin of these texts, their textual relationship, and the history of their transmission and translation have been suggested. Some of these questions are still in disputes and some of them will probably remain unanswered. Others may be answered only through comparison of the texts. Some will be answered by the study of the Arabic letters of Leo, which will be introduced and discussed in the following chapters. As mentioned above, even though all these texts are ascribed to Leo and ‘Umar, it seems unlikely

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<sup>122</sup> See the table I at the beginning of this chapter.

that these two historical figures are true authors of these texts. Likewise, letters ascribed to the same author may not have been from the same work. In other words, the letters of Leo preserved in Armenian and Latin texts should not be simply accepted to be from the same material, just because they are all attributed to the same author, Leo III. Rather, each text has to be considered separately on the assumption that each text may have been an independent work, which was written under the name of the same figure. In fact, sometimes even when the letters of Leo share similar themes, their approaches are different. Sometimes one text deals with themes which are not found in the other.

In this chapter, I will briefly introduce each text, and then discuss the conclusions from earlier studies. Then, in chapter II and III, the new Arabic letters of Leo would be introduced, edited, translated, and studied in detail. Then, the relationship of all the letters of Leo and ‘Umar will be discussed in chapter IV.

### *1. The letter of ‘Umar in Armenian*

The letter of ‘Umar is a short text which precedes the long reply of Leo, both of which are contained in the *Armenian History* of Ghevond.<sup>123</sup> ‘Umar’s letter is simply a “chain” of various questions. Here are some examples: ‘Umar asks questions concerning Christian doctrine and practices, including the divinity of Christ, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the practice of Baptism. He also claims that the Old Testament was altered and the Gospel was written according to its authors’ “talent.” ‘Umar claims that the coming of Muhammad as the prophet of

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<sup>123</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 277-278 (translation), 278-281 (commentary).

God is already foretold by Jesus in the Gospel. Then he requests Leo to reply with answers to them.<sup>124</sup>

The authenticity of ‘Umar’s letter cannot be established; there is no colophon or any statement that proves the authenticity of the text. Many scholars now consider it to have been composed later, written according to Leo’s citation of the letter of ‘Umar in his reply, as a pretext to Leo’s reply.<sup>125</sup> Ghevond himself mentions that it is a “summary” of the letter of ‘Umar, while the following letter of Leo is a “transcription” of the complete text.<sup>126</sup> Since the letter of ‘Umar in the *Armenian History* is not fully preserved, it will not be discussed in this study.

## *2. The letter of Leo in Armenian:*

Leo’s reply immediately follows the letter of ‘Umar. The title reads, “Flavian Leo, Emperor, the Servant of Jesus Christ, and sovereign of those who know Him, to ‘Umar, Chief of the Saracens,”<sup>127</sup> yet no evidence is found in the text to prove Leo’s authorship. He does not give any reference to diplomatic or political affairs he had with ‘Umar. One exception is his statement at the beginning of the letter, where Leo mentions that he had exchanged letters with ‘Umar about “mundane affairs.”<sup>128</sup> But what these mundane matters were is not known.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 277-278.

<sup>125</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 162-3, Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 113; Greenwood, “Ghevond,” 206. The opposite view was suggested by Cardalliac, who considered the letter of ‘Umar in Armenian genuine and the Aljamiado version as the secondary composition. See Cardaillac, *Moriscos*, 148-150.

<sup>126</sup> Arzoumanian, *Lewond*, 70, 105. See also Palombo, “Correspondence,” 241.

<sup>127</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 281.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 282, n.27.

The themes Leo discusses in the letter are all typical ones found in other early Christian-Muslim polemical writings. For instance, he defends the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ and the veneration of the Cross and relics. Leo also criticizes Muslim practices such as polygamy and concubinage, and denies Islamic prophetology that the coming of Muhammad was already foretold in the Bible. His strategies are also common; he uses examples taken from nature such as the Sun and its rays to explain Trinity. He cites verses from the Old and the New Testament, and also from the Qur'ān to prove the validity of his arguments.<sup>130</sup>

### *3. The letter of Leo in Latin translation*

As for the letter of Leo in Latin, we have two different versions of one text: one is included in the *Patrologia Graeca* (hereafter *PG*) 107 and other patristic collections, and the other in *De Triplici Disciplina: Cujus Partes Sunt, Philosophia Naturalis, Medicina* (hereafter *Triplici*), written by a famous French doctor and humanist, Symphorien Champier.<sup>131</sup> Both versions are same except for a few sentences, which do not alter the meaning of the texts. Champier's version is original, from which all other versions were taken. Before Gero found the *editio princeps* of Champier's *Triplici*, the *PG* version was used in earliest studies. The *PG* version contains some misinformation or even mistakes, such as the wrong authorship, the omission of the editorial note, misinformation of the date of publication, and misinterpretation of

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<sup>130</sup> I will not present all of Leo's argument here. For summary of Leo's letter, see Gaudeul, "Correspondence," 111-113.

<sup>131</sup> On Champier's life, education and career, see Copenhavor, *Champier*, 45ff.

an abbreviated word and some incorrect reference to the Bible. However, most of these problems were solved when Gero published the article about Champier's original work in 1975.<sup>132</sup>

The Latin text is written in the form of a letter but, in fact, it is closer to an apology or a theological pamphlet, written by a Christian writer.<sup>133</sup> As in the case of the Armenian letter of Leo, nothing in the text indicates Emperor Leo's authorship. The text consists of three parts: the eulogy, 'Umar's questions given to Leo, and Leo's reply. Then, Leo's reply may be divided into two headings: a defense of Christian doctrine and practices, and a refutation against Islam and Muslim laws. The language in the eulogy reflects Qur'anic expressions. Then Leo presents 'Umar's questions briefly. As in the case of the letter of 'Umar in Armenian, Leo's quotation is simply a "chain" of questions presented with a short argumentation for each. Leo may have summarized 'Umar' questions. But it seems more plausible to think that the themes were chosen by Leo himself to take advantage in the discussion by occupying agendas, rather than taken from the letter came to Leo. All questions raised by 'Umar are commonly found in other Christian-Muslim polemics in the early Islamic period. Then, Leo answers these questions. Leo discusses the doctrine of Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the veneration of the Cross, and the institution of the Eucharist by Christ himself. He then refutes Muslim laws on marriage, greeting, and burial, and criticizes Islamic fatalism.<sup>134</sup> Then the text ends abruptly.

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<sup>132</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 154-155. I will not need to mention all misinformation and mistakes found in the *PG* version here. The English translation of the entire text is presented in appendix I with corrections and notes. When both version shows variants in word or sentence, they are indicated in notes.

<sup>133</sup> Gaudeul, "Ghevond," 116.

<sup>134</sup> For the table of content of the Latin version, see chart 2 in chapter III.

The questions of when, how, why and by whom the letter of Leo in Latin was written, translated into Latin, and incorporated into *Triplici* have yet to be answered with satisfaction. Considering Champier's hostile attitude toward Islam and Arab medicine,<sup>135</sup> it is not strange that Champier included this anti-Muslim tract in *Triplici*. Apart from the letter of Leo, Champier also wrote an anti-Muslim tract, in his *Libelli Duo*, referring to Islam as “the sect of Muhammad (secte Mahometice).”<sup>136</sup> As to the original language of the text, a short editorial note preceding the text states the “genealogy” of this text. The translator, be it Champier himself or someone else, states that he is translating the text, which is written in “Chaldeao Eloquio” into Latin, but the text was originally written in Greek.<sup>137</sup> The reliability of this note and what the “Chaldeao Eloquio” was referring to have been a subject of discussion. “Chaldeo Eloquo” may refer to Arabic, Syriac or any language of the East.<sup>138</sup> But whatever it may indicate, it is clear from several internal evidences that the the *Vorlage* of the Latin text was in Arabic.<sup>139</sup> The statement on a Greek original is hard to assess. Probably this statement was written on the assumption that if the Byzantine emperor is the author of this letter, he would have written in Greek. The original language of this Latin text and its authorship will be discussed in detail in chapter III and IV, after I present an edition and translation of the Arabic letters of Leo.

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<sup>135</sup> Copenhavor, *Champier*, 67-68, 136ff.

<sup>136</sup> Allut, *Champier*, 142-143; Gero, *Iconoclasm.*, 156, n. 15.

<sup>137</sup> This note precedes Leo's letter. The version I used for this study is not paginated.

<sup>138</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 156-158 with n.16. Hoyland claims that it refers to Arabic, citing Daniel and Wasserstein (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 497-498, n.150). However, the examples in the works of Daniel and Wasserstein seem to reflect only the case of medieval Spanish writers. Cf. Daniel, *Arabs*; Wasserstein, “Lament.”

<sup>139</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 161. Gero considered the possibility that “Chaldea Eloquio” refers to Syriac, but concluded that the extant Latin version is a translation from Arabic. Gero’s claim of the Arabic *Vorlage* seems to be proved by comparing this Latin text with the Arabic letters of Leo. See text analysis in chapter III.

#### 4. The letter of ‘Umar in Arabic and Aljamiado manuscripts

The letter of ‘Umar is preserved in two different manuscripts: (1) from the beginning to the middle is from the manuscript of the early 16th century, which was first written in Arabic and then translated into Aljamiado, the language of Moriscos;<sup>140</sup> and (2) from the middle, in the late ninth/early tenth century Arabic manuscript. The last part of the Aljamiado text overlaps the beginning of the Arabic version.<sup>141</sup> The Arabic text ends abruptly; the ending seems still lost.

Both texts were discovered, edited and translated without knowing the existence of the other. The Aljamiado version was included in the manuscript Biblioteca Nationale Madrid 4944. This manuscript was edited and translated into French by Cardaillac in 1972.<sup>142</sup> When Cardaillac was editing and translating this text, she was aware of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar in Armenian. Based on the assumption that the letter of ‘Umar in Armenian is genuine, she concluded the letter of ‘Umar in Aljamoado is “a reprise” of the letter of ‘Umar of Ghevond, which was arranged orderly with additional citations.<sup>143</sup> She also claimed that this text is “a copy

<sup>140</sup> The term, “Moriscos” is used to refer to Muslims who remained in Spain after Reconquista. They are known to have converted to Christianity “publicly,” but kept their Islamic faith secretly. From the sixteenth century and afterwards, these so called Crypto-Muslims preserved their texts in Arabic and Aljamiado. Scholars began to pay attention to the Aljamiado literature and history of Moriscos recently, and produced a number of articles and book. In order to understand the situation in which the letter of ‘Umar in Aljamiado was produced and preserved, I depended mostly on the studies of Perry, López-Baralt, Ingram, Wiegers, and Chejne (see bibliography at the end). As in the case of Christians in the *Dār al-Islām*, it seems that Muslims living under Christian rule could not avoid assimilation to their Christian neighbors to some extent. For the use of Arabic in both oral and written form was prohibited, they produced a literature which is called “Moorish *aljamiado* literature (for this term, see López-Baralt, *Islam*, 171).” Probably the motivation for the production of literature written in Romance language in Arabic script varies: many religious texts were translated from Arabic into Aljamiado in the purpose of preserving their cultural and religious traditions, or to hide the texts from outside threats from Christian persecutors, and most of all, probably as a result of Moriscos’ loss of Arabic.

<sup>141</sup> See chart in Gaudeul, *Correspondence*, ii.

<sup>142</sup> See Cardaillac’s edition and translation of the manuscript in *Aljamiado*. BNM 4944 can be divided into two parts: anti-Jewish polemic and anti-Christian polemic. The letter of ‘Umar is the last of five anti-Christian polemical treatises. For discussion on the author of each works in BNM 4944 and their content, see Chejne, *Islam*, 85-92, 194-197 (notes); Aparicio, “Disputa.”

<sup>143</sup> Cardaillac, *Aljamiado*, 145.

of the beginning of the 16th century,” which was redacted on the “original” text of the 14th century.<sup>144</sup> The Arabic version of the letter of ‘Umar was edited and translated into French by Sourdel in 1966.<sup>145</sup> For this work was only preserved from its middle and the ending was lost, Sourdel could neither identify it nor decide the authorship of this text. Thus, he titled it “An anonymous anti-Christian pamphlet,” according to its content. After comparing its script with those appearing in other early manuscripts, Sourdel concluded that it might have written around the late ninth century to the early tenth century.<sup>146</sup>

The true nature of these two works came to be uncovered later. In his article published in 1984, Gaudeul told how, “in coincidence,” he realized the textual relationship between the anonymous Arabic pamphlet and the letter of ‘Umar in Aljamiado. When he was reading several Christian-Muslim polemical writings, Gaudeul discovered that the anonymous pamphlet and the letter of ‘Umar in Aljamiado were discussing the same themes using similar expressions. His close analysis of the two texts arrived at the conclusion that the beginning part of the anonymous pamphlet in Arabic and the ending part of the letter of ‘Umar in Aljamiado overlap, comprising a more complete work. The extant Aljamiado text is a translation from a work written in Arabic.<sup>147</sup>

The letter of ‘Umar consists of following parts: Isnād, title, a short eulogy and ‘Umar’s theological arguments. The Isnād gives the names of three Muslim scholars from Hims who

<sup>144</sup> Cardaillac, *Aljamiado*, 149.

<sup>145</sup> Sourdel, “Pamphlet.” This short work belongs to “the collection of the documents of Damascus” preserved in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic arts in Istanbul. For general information about these manuscripts, see J. Sourdel-Thomine and D. Sourdel, “Nouveaux documents,” and “A propos des documents.”

<sup>146</sup> Sourdel, “Pamphlet,” 2-3.

<sup>147</sup> For English and French translation of this reconstructed letter of ‘Umar, see Gaudeul, “Correspondence” idem, *Correspondence*.

owned the text and passed it to the other. Gauduel rejected the reliability of Isnād, but it is more likely to be genuine.<sup>148</sup> Then the title follows: “Written by ‘Umar, son of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (God have mercy on him). From the servant of God ‘Umar, king of the believers to Lyon, king and emperor of the Romans.”<sup>149</sup> And ‘Umar gives a short “prologue” to explain the purpose of his writing. He mentions that it is to the request of Leo, who asked ‘Umar to write a letter concerning their respective faiths.<sup>150</sup> Then he begins his discussion. ‘Umar claims that the Bible was falsified, denies the divinity of Christ, attacks Christian practices of venerations of the crosses, images, and relics. He also criticizes the fact that Christians do not follow the teachings of Jesus but only what are easy for them to do. In doing so, he gives long citations from the Gospel where Jesus instructed Christians about the way of life. ‘Umar also attempts to defend Muslim laws and practices, and Islamic prophetology. At the end, he claims that the spread of Islam to the world confirms that it is one true religion.<sup>151</sup>

As in the case of letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin, the themes ‘Umar deals with in his letter are what were frequently discussed by Christian and Muslim polemicists from the early

<sup>148</sup> They are famous Hadith scholars whose names are reported in several Muslim biographies, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī’s *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Vol 1: 321-326; Vol. 6: 369-370; vol. 9: 383-384). All of them are from the same city of Ḥims. There are discussion on the reliability of this Isnād and who is the end of this chain. (Cf. Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 132; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 494; Palombo, “Correspondence,” 244, n.71). At any rate, this Isnād is incomplete. The last among the transmitter, Abū Ḍa’far Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Ta’ī died in 885 (Cf. Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 132, n.1) and the extant Aljamido version is the redaction of the fourteenth century text. Thus who owned this texts after Abū Ḍa’far and when and by whom this text was transmitted from Ḥims to Muslims in Spain and translated from Arabic into Aljamido is unknown.

<sup>149</sup> Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 132. The title is adapted from Gaudeul’s translation of the Aljamido text. Preceding Isnād, another title is given: “This is the epistle that ‘Umar b. ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz, king of the believers, wrote to Lyon, king of the Christian infidels (Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 132). Probably this title is given either by transmitters or by the Aljamido translator.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>151</sup> For ‘Umar’s letter, see ibid., 133-156.

Abbasid period. Nowhere in the text is it found that the caliph ‘Umar is the true author of this letter.

### *5. The provenance of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar and their textual relationship*

The letters of Leo and ‘Umar drew the attention of many scholars, and several different views on the provenance of these texts and the relationship between them have been suggested. Here I will briefly present the conclusions from the earlier studies.

#### *5.1. Beck*

The traditional view on the original language of the extant Armenian letter of Leo is that it was a translation from a Greek composition, as Beck claims. Beck’s claim is based on his observation of the text. In one passage Leo said, “...our Greek language”; he also called Pentateuch “nomos,” using Greek word, “νόμος”; Leo used an Armenian rendering of Greek names for Chronicles and Canticles.<sup>152</sup>

#### *5.2. Jeffery*

In locating the letter of Leo, Jeffery paid attention to the passage which mentions the sect of al-Jahiz. Leo gives a list of names of Islamic sects, and their doctrines. The passage about the followers of al-Jahiz runs as follows: “Yet this religion, so young, and professed by a single nation, already presents numerous schisms...further Jahdi, who deny both the existence of God,

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<sup>152</sup> Beck, *Vorsehung*, 44, n.50.

and the resurrection, along with your pretended Prophet...”<sup>153</sup> Jeffery understood this “Jahdi” as the famous Muslim theologian al-Jahiz who died in 869. Based on this passage, Jeffery placed the letter of Leo in Armenian and the extant *Armenian History* in the second half of the ninth century or in the early tenth century.<sup>154</sup>

He suggests the possibility that the exchange of religious letters between Leo and ‘Umar may be historical, based on the fact that we have evidences from both Byzantine and Armenian writers who reported it independently,<sup>155</sup> and that some Muslim sources report diplomatic contacts between Leo and ‘Umar.<sup>156</sup> Yet, he also raised the possibility that, even when the event itself is historical, the extant letter of Leo in Armenian was not written by Emperor Leo, but is a production of later Christian writers who wrote this text under Leo’s name.<sup>157</sup>

As for the relationship between the letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin and their original language, Jeffery suggested that both letters are from the same material which might have been written in Greek. Probably, the extant Armenian letter of Leo is the “expansion” of this earlier text while the Latin version has been preserved it in a “reduced” form.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 295.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 276. Newman suggests that this Jahdi refers to the Yazīdī, whose theology fits well with the description given by Leo (Newman, *Dialogue*, 49).

<sup>155</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 331.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 271. Yet, he also points out that they are not religious correspondence. As for the lack of Muslim sources on this event, he explains that there are still many materials remain unpublished. In 1940’s, when Jeffery publishes his article, the report from al-Mubarrad was unavailable.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 331.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 274-275, 331-332.

### 5.3. Khoury

Khoury's view on the origin and the relationship between two letters of Leo is similar to that of Jeffery and Beck. Khoury also places the letter of Leo in Armenian in the second half of the ninth century.<sup>159</sup> He claims that the letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin are produced out of "the same exchange of letters between the emperor and caliph."<sup>160</sup> Like Jeffery, Khoury also claims that both Armenian and Latin texts are translation from Greek.<sup>161</sup> He also rejected the Abel's claim that the letter of Leo in Latin is of Byzantine origin.<sup>162</sup> Even though Khoury did not translate the entire Latin version, he presents the brief outline of the content the Latin text with references to the Bible and the Qur'ān.<sup>163</sup>

### 5.4. Meyendorff

Meyendorff's reading of Leo's reply to 'Umar concerning the veneration of the crosses and images led him to conclude that the Armenian letter of Leo shows the attitude toward the images at the court of Constantinople in the days before the iconoclastic edict was declared in 726.<sup>164</sup> In the Armenian letter, Leo defends the veneration of the crosses, but not the veneration of images. Leo first defends the veneration of the crosses saying, "Further, in your letter are some words apropos of the Cross and pictures. We honor the Cross because of the sufferings of that Word of God incarnate borne thereon, as we have learned from a commandment given by

<sup>159</sup> Khoury, *Théologiens*, 202-203.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 201 with n. 4.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 208-211. Abel claims that the author of the letter of Leo in Latin is neither Leo III or VI, but Leo Synkellos, who is also known as Leo the Mathematician. Cf. Abel, "Lettre," 348, n.1.

<sup>163</sup> Khoury, *Théologiens*, 213-218.

<sup>164</sup> Meyendorff, "Byzantine." 127.

God to Moses, and from the predictions of the Prophets. The metal plate which Moses, bidden by God, placed on the forehead of the pontiff or high being, and it is in imitation of this sign that we Christians sign our foreheads with the cross, as of the Word of God who suffered for us in His human nature...” Then he moves to the issue of the veneration of images, “As for pictures, we do not give them a like respect, not having received in Holy Scripture any commandment whatsoever in regard to this.” Leo says Christians have a desire to preserve the “images of the disciples of the Lord” because of their attachment to them. Leo does not show a hostile “iconoclastic” attitude here, but again at the end of the same passage he says, “but as for the wood and the colors, we do not give them any reverence.”<sup>165</sup>

Leo’s stance in the issue of the veneration of images is interesting, whether this Armenian text was written by the iconoclast Emperor Leo himself or someone else. Such attitude is only attested in the Armenian letter; Leo in the Latin version is silent on this topic.<sup>166</sup> Meyendorff points out that the letter of Leo in Armenian is the good example which shows that the “role of the images” became less important in Christian apologetics toward Islam in the early stage of iconoclasm.<sup>167</sup> He also accepts the historicity of this correspondence and the authenticity of the letters of Leo, without discussing it in detail.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>165</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 322.

<sup>166</sup> The same is the letters of Leo in Arabic, which will be discussed in detail in chapter II and III. However, it has to be noted that an apologist simply did not discuss this issue or did they avoid raising that topic for other reasons than iconoclastic stance.

<sup>167</sup> Meyendorff, “Byzantine,” 127.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 125. He mentions the account of Theophanes in passing.

### 5.5. Gero

Gero's study on the letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin leads to conclusions which are quite different from those of Beck, Jeffery, and Khoury. His close observation of two versions of the letter of Leo, and the *Armenian History* led him to the following conclusions.

(1) While other scholars considered Ghevond as the first Armenian writer to mention this correspondence, Gero claims that Ghevond took the framework of this event from a tenth century Armenian writer, Thomas Acruni.<sup>169</sup> For Gero, the extant *Armenian History* is the eleventh and twelfth century “revised” version of Ghevond’s late eighth century chronicle. This eighth century version had dealt with local Armenian matters only. Then the reviser of Ghevond added the events that took place outside Armenia to Gheovond’s work.<sup>170</sup>

(2) Then he claims that the extant Armenian letter of Leo is an anti-Muslim tract which was originally composed in Armenian in the twelfth century and came to be interpolated into the extant *Armenian History*. Gero’s argument is based on his observation of the Armenian text, the citations from the Bible in particular. Following the comparison between the cited Biblical passages in the Armenian text and their corresponding verses of the Armenian Bible and the Septuagint, he concludes that Leo’s reply is using the Armenian Bible rather than the Septuagint. Gero also could easily rebut Beck’s argument of the appearance of Greek words in the text; the author might have used the Greek terms in order to show it to be the letter written by the Byzantine emperor. Moreover, Gero also claimed that not much knowledge in Greek is needed to use the Greek words that appear in the Armenian letter of Leo, for they are only limited to

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<sup>169</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 162.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 138-40.

several theological terms and proper names. Some of these words reflect the fact that the writer only knew these words in Armenian transliteration, but not in Greek original. The closing of the letter is better understood in the Armenian context than Leo's political situation around 717.<sup>171</sup>

(3) Gero claims that the letter of Leo in Latin and Armenian are two independent works, and it is even hard to see that they were written to respond to the same Muslim attack. Gero points out that there are several themes shared in both texts, but the number of themes which appear in one text but are absent in the other is also noteworthy.<sup>172</sup> Gero's analysis of the Latin version is based on his discovery of the *editio princeps* of Champier's *Triplici*, which contains additional information that was not included in the *PG* version.<sup>173</sup> As to its original language of the Latin text, even though Gero also considered the possibility that it was translated from Syriac or Aramaic, he finally concludes that the *Vorlage* of the extant Latin letter seems to have been composed in Arabic by a Melkite author in the East. This text may have been written to be "explicitly directed at" Muslims, and during the course of transmission came to be identified as the letter of Leo to 'Umar. He also suggests that the translation may have been done in the East or Gaul in the Crusading period.<sup>174</sup> As for the appearance of *Filioque* doctrine, he took it as a later insertion, probably done by the Latin translator, be it Champier or not.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 164-170. Gero's claim that the extant Armenian letter of Leo is Armenian original may be rejected by Jeffery's statement that there was no anti-Muslim tract in Armenian before the fourteenth century. See Jeffery, "Gregory," 219.

<sup>172</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 153-154.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 154-155.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 154-162.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 158-159.

### 5.6. Gaudeul

Gauduel's discovery of the more complete letter of 'Umar from the manuscripts in Arabic and Aljamiado cast a new light on the study of the Leo-'Umar correspondence. After reconstructing the letter of 'Umar from the Arabic and Aljamido manuscripts, Gaudeul compared it with the extant letter of Leo in Armenian. To his surprise, both texts fit together as if the writer of each text are discussing on the same themes, as if Leo, a Christian writer answers to the questions of 'Umar, a Muslim interlocutor. Not only do the same themes appear, but they are in the same order as well. The attestation of the unusual expression such as "Jesus' coming naked into the world" confirms the direct relationship between the two texts. It makes Gaudeul concludes that the extant Armenian letter of Leo is a reply to the reconstructed letter of 'Umar.<sup>176</sup> Gaudeul did not include the Armenian version of the letter of 'Umar, for he took it as the secondary composition written based on the citation of 'Umar that appear in Leo's reply.<sup>177</sup> As for the Latin letter of Leo, he considers it to have been written in the Western milieu in the tenth century, probably originally in Greek, and is an independent work from Leo's Armenian letter.<sup>178</sup>

Based on his analysis of 'Umar's letter and Leo's reply in Armenian, he concludes as follows: The letter of 'Umar might have been composed in Syria around 885-900 by a Muslim writer who adopted 'Umar's name. Then a Christian who read it wrote a reply to 'Umar's letter and attributed it to Leo. He suggests that they might have been written in the city of Hims in Syria, even though he shows skepticism toward the reliability of the Isnād that appear at the

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<sup>176</sup> Gaudeul, "Correspondence," 125-126, 130-31.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 113-114.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 115-116. He even considers the Latin text as a simple apologetic work, rather than a letter.

beginning of the Aljamido text.<sup>179</sup> Then the original texts were lost, but the letter of Leo has been preserved by Christians and the letter of ‘Umar by Muslims and translated into Armenian and Aljamiado. Whether Muslims read the letter of Leo is unknown. Even though he suggested some answers concerning the date and place of their composition, as to the questions of authorship and the original language, and the relationship between the authors, he also left room for debate.<sup>180</sup>

### 5.7. Hoyland

Some earlier views of Jeffery, Gero, and Gaudeul were later replenished by Hoyland, which may be summarized as follows. First, Hoyland rebutted Gero’s argument that the extant *Armenian History* is a redaction from the eighth century “local” Armenian history by Ghevond.<sup>181</sup> Gero’s claim for the Armenian origin of the letter of Leo is also rejected, for Leo’s use of the Armenian Bible is “a common practice among translators.”<sup>182</sup> Second, based on his observations upon both texts, Hoyland concludes that the text is not written as being “one sided,” as Gaudeul has claimed.<sup>183</sup> In the Armenian letter, Leo is not only answering to ‘Umar questions, but also criticizing him. In turn, ‘Umar responds to Leo. When discussing the same theme, ‘Umar’s responds do not “exactly fit” to Leo’s attack. These indicate that there were several exchanges of letters.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, in his letter ‘Umar mentions previous letters Leo wrote to him

<sup>179</sup> He could find the names of three Muslim scholars from Hims in Muslim biographies, but accepted to be fictitious. See Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 132, n.1-3.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 127-128.

<sup>181</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 491-492.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 492-493. Gero also noticed that the extant Latin letter of Leo is depending on the Latin vulgate when citing the verses from the Bible, rather than translating the original text. Cf. Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 159.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 126.

<sup>184</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 495-496, where he presents examples from the texts.

concerning Christianity. Some of the statements which Leo mentions in his letter are not in agreement with each other, or even contradictory to each other.<sup>185</sup> Based on his observations of the Armenian letter of Leo and letter of ‘Umar, Hoyland suggests following the conclusion to explain all these passages: “A possible solution, then, is that a number of Leo-‘Umar/’Umar-Leo letters were composed in the course of the eighth century, and that what has come down to us is a compilation from or rehashing of such works.”<sup>186</sup>

As to the two versions of the letter of Leo, for Hoyland, similarity in argument shared by both texts proves that they are somewhat related. However, at the same time, differences between them are also “too great” to think that one text is from the other. To solve this problem, he suggests that both text were from the same earlier material, probably written in Greek, and redacted differently.<sup>187</sup> From the themes discussed in both texts, Hoyland placed the letters of Leo and ‘Umar in the eighth century.<sup>188</sup>

### 5.8. Akinian, Mahé, and Greenwood

Later, the question of the original language and the date of composition was revisited by Akinian, Mahé, and Greenwood on linguistic and theological ground.

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<sup>185</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 496. Hoyland gives several examples in his article, but more are found in the letter of Leo. For instance, Leo said, “It is now eight hundred years since Jesus Christ appeared... (Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 296), but in earlier passage, he also said, “It is now a hundred years more or less since your religion appeared... (Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 295),” which indicates A.H. 100, C.E. 717. The later statement may have been added later according to the period of ‘Umar’s reign in 717-720, or a trace of earlier material (Cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 498). At any rate, this shows that there were several stages of redactions have done in the letter of Leo.

<sup>186</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 496.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 498.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 498-500. He also pointed out that some passages also indicate later date, the late eighth to early ninth.

Akinian claims that Leo in the Armenian text is from Greek for following reasons. Leo's unusual use of Greek loanword for "Paracletos" and "Eucharist," instead of their Armenian equivalences which were more commonly used, evidence the literal translation from Greek.<sup>189</sup>

Mahé also rejected Gero's hypothesis of Armenian original based on Leo's use of the Armenian Bible, saying that it may be due to the "voluntary harmonization" by the later copyist of translator.<sup>190</sup>

In addition to all these, Greenwood shows other evidences for Greek original: He points out that Leo's statement on the spread of Christianity from Greeks and Romans to Barbarians is strange for Armenian authors to write, who always claims that Armenians were the first to accept Christianity. He also mentioned Leo's reference to the date of composition with the statement that "it is more or less eight hundred years since Christ appeared" or the use of *hijri* date is also uncommon for Armenian writers before the tenth century.<sup>191</sup>

### 5.9. Kaplony

Kaplony also considered the extant Latin letter of Leo and the Armenian and the Latin texts are from the same earlier text.<sup>192</sup> As to the Latin version, he claims it was a Melkite tract, which says, "duae operations et duae locutaiones in Christus."<sup>193</sup> It is interesting that Kaplony gives an explanation on the strange debate between Leo and one of 'Umar's envoy, 'Abdallah

<sup>189</sup> Akinian, *Leontius*, 84-86. For this study, I re-cited Akinian through the French translation given by Mahé in his *Byzance*, 124-125.

<sup>190</sup> Mahé, *Byzance*, 124.

<sup>191</sup> Greenwood, "Ghewond," 204-205.

<sup>192</sup> Kaplony, *Damascus*, 235-6.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 220.

ibn ‘Abd al-‘Alā. Kaplony’s identification of ‘Abdallah - as a crypto-Zoroastrian is based on his analysis of the theology reflected in ‘Abdallah’s argument.<sup>194</sup> Based on his analysis of the letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin, and also on the account of al-Mubarrad and other Christians and Muslim sources about diplomatic contact between Leo and ‘Umar, Kaplony concluded that the event might be historical and it would have taken place in sometime in 100/718-719.<sup>195</sup>

### 5.10. Palombo

Recently, Palombo proposed a new possibility on the origin of the letter of Leo and ‘Umar. While the previous studies generally accept that the extant letter of ‘Umar in Arabic and Aljamiado is a Muslim text, she claims that the letter of ‘Umar was also written by a Christian author. Her argument is based on linguistic grounds and on the content of the text as well. She points out that the Arabic used in the Arabic manuscript is not classical Arabic, but closer to “Middle Arabic” or “Christian Arabic.”<sup>196</sup> Throughout the text, the author shows his “deficiencies” in using correct Arabic.<sup>197</sup> The paleographical features also show similarities with what were found in the Christian Arabic manuscripts produced in the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period.<sup>198</sup> Moreover, the text even show a Greek influence when it refers to Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom.<sup>199</sup> In addition to these linguistic features, some passages of the

<sup>194</sup> Kaplony, *Damascus*, 224-225.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 237. Kaplony’s close analysis of al-Mubarrad’s account was cited by Rochow, “Diplomatischen,” 306-312.

<sup>196</sup> The discussion on the use of the term, “Middle Arabic” or “Christian Arabic” to refer to the Arabic used by Christian authors in the early Islamic period has been developed by Blau and others. See introduction in chapter II.

<sup>197</sup> Palombo, “Correspondence,” 255-257.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 254-255. See also, Sourdel, “Pamphlet,” 2.

<sup>199</sup> Palombo, “Correspondence,” 257. Gaudeul also points out the appearance of the names of John Chrysostom and Basil in Arabic transcription of Greek word. He explains it by assuming that the author of the letter of ‘Umar was familiar with Byzantines. See Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 150, n. 90.

letter of ‘Umar betrays the fact that it may written by a Christian writer. When the author discussed teachings of Islam, he did it in the way that was easily answered by or even refuted by his Christian respondent.<sup>200</sup>

Based on these observations, she concludes that the extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar are from an earlier material written by a Christian author as “a single dialogical work,” which was written in Arabic.<sup>201</sup> She raises the possibility that the extant Armenian text may have been translated, not directly from Arabic, but via Greek, which can explain the existence of “Arabism” and “Graecism.”<sup>202</sup> The extant Latin text is a translation from Arabic,<sup>203</sup> and most likely, originally composed in Arabic.<sup>204</sup> Then, she proposes that the author of this work was a Christian living under the Muslim rule, probably in the eighth century Syria-Palestine.<sup>205</sup> She describes this work as the sun in the center and other extant historical sources and letters of Leo and ‘Umar as rays that came out of it.<sup>206</sup>

The conclusions of each of the previous studies shed light on the origin of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar, and their relationship. As were the new texts discovered, the new conclusions were made based on the study of the new sources, and reinterpretation of the already known ones. It is the same with the case of the new Arabic source of the letters of Leo. Thus, as

<sup>200</sup> Palmonbo, “Correspondence,” 253-254.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 251, 258ff. As to the relationship between the letters of Leo and ‘Umar see ibid., 237-243.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 241-242. She also claims that the “Chaldean” appears in the editorial note in the letter of Leo refers to Arabic, or it may refer to Garshūnī. That the editorial note is not composed by Champier or the Latin translator but a translation seems clear. Cf. Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 158, n.19.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. Palmonbo, “Correspodemce,” 249-250.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 260ff.

mentioned above, it would be better to set aside the discussion of these previous studies until the new Arabic letters of Leo will be edited, translated and studied in the comparison of the Latin letter of Leo in following two chapters. Then I will attempt to answer the questions concerning the origin and history of these texts in larger perspective and in the light of the new sources.

## *Chapter II: The New Arabic Source of the Letters of Leo*

### *Introduction*

#### *1. Discovery*

In the previous chapter, I have explored the extant historical reports on the legend of the religious correspondence between the Leo and ‘Umar, and the letters attributed to them.

Recently, a new source has become available. In 1975, in the St. Catherine’s monastery in Mount Sinai, numerous manuscripts leaves and fragments, the existence of which were previously unknown, were found during the reconstruction of the monastery building destroyed by fire.

These new materials include some fragments of Codex Sinaiticus, and the works in Greek, Arabic, Syriac, Latin and Georgian.<sup>1</sup> In 1986, Meimarēs published a catalogue of these materials; the catalogue gives brief descriptive titles of each work with simple paleographical information, such as the size of the manuscripts, number of folios of each text, and materials used in manuscript production. It also includes photographs of the first two folios of each work.<sup>2</sup> According to the catalogue, the Arabic letters of Leo are included in the Sinai Arabic New Finds manuscript no. 14 (hereafter NF 14).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the discovery of these new materials and brief descriptions of some important works, see [www.sinaimonastery.com/en/index.php?id=106](http://www.sinaimonastery.com/en/index.php?id=106).

<sup>2</sup> Meimarēs, *Catalogos*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 41, 43.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the Arabic letters of Leo and provide the edition of the texts with an English translation. It will be done in the following way. First, I will present the physical status of NF 14, such as the size of the manuscript, the number of quires that it contains, and the degree of overall damage. Then I will focus on the second and third work of NF 14. Their handwritings, language, use of special signs, structure and later corrections and additions will be discussed in detail. It should be noted that the discussion will be on the basis of observations of high-resolution photographs of the manuscript rather than on direct observation of the manuscript itself. The photographs of the letters of Leo in Arabic will be included at the end of this study.

## *2. Physical descriptions of NF 14*

NF 14 is a small manuscript, sized in 90-94\*104-140mm. It consists of five quires; 1r-19v, 20r-39v, 40r-59v, 60r-79v, 80r-90v.<sup>4</sup> There is no pagination, and the folio numbering on the left and right side of the top margin is given by a modern librarian. The manuscript is preserved not complete; the forepart of the first work is lost, and as for the third work, only first six folios survive. There is damage on the fore-edge, head, and tail of the manuscript. The first 10 folios, from 1r to 20v are seriously damaged; only the upper half of these folios survive. As for the remaining folios of the manuscript, there is slight damage on the top margin; therefore, some words or phrases of the first line of each folio have to be reconstructed, according to the context.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Meïmarès, *Catalogos*, 43. Palombo suggests that the parchment pages used in regular intervals were used to strengthen the “ligature” of the manuscript (Palombo, “Correspondence,” 260, n. 144).

There is also water damage on some folios. The writings of the last two folios are faded and some words are hard to decipher, due to water stains and mold.

### 3. Titles

According to Meïmarēs' catalogue, NF 14 contains three works. Meimares provided titles for each in Arabic and Greek.<sup>5</sup>

The first work is partially preserved from 1r to 62r. Its forepart is lost. Based on the content of the text, Meïmarēs entitles it, “A work which contains questions and answers concerning orthodox faith.”<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, it does not contain colophon or any information about its author or copyist. In the last line on 62r, the author or the copyist calls himself “this man,” but still he cannot be identified. It ends with a short phrase, “The work has finished with God’s aid.”<sup>7</sup>

The second work begins from 62v: “A letter from Leo, the Byzantine Emperor to ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, the Commander of the Faithful, which contains religious debate.”<sup>8</sup> As in the case of the first work, the second works has no colophon. It ends on 87v.

The third work begins from 88r and continues to the end of the manuscript. It is also a letter between a Christian and a Muslim. While the second work clearly identifies its sender and recipient, the third work does not include any information about its author or recipient. Meïmarēs

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Meïmarēs, *Catalogos*, 41 (in Greek), 43 (in Arabic). In this study, I use the Arabic titles.

<sup>6</sup> كتاب يتضمن اسئلة واجوبة حول العقيدة الارثوذوكسية (See Ibid., 43).

<sup>7</sup> تم الكتاب بعون الله

<sup>8</sup> رسالة من اليون ملك الروم الى عمر بن عبد العزيز امير المؤمنين تتضمن مناقشة دينية (See Ibid., 43). The first few lines of the Arabic text on 62v simply reads, “From Leo the Byzantine Emperor to ‘Umar Ibn Abd al-‘Azīz, the commander of the Faithful, Peace.”

considered the two letters as a series of letters written by Leo, and entitled it, “A refutation against the letter from the Commander of the Faithful.”<sup>9</sup> It ends abruptly on 90v, but seems to have continued in the missing pages.<sup>10</sup>

This study deals with the letters of Leo. Thus, from now on, I will leave the first work aside, and will discuss the second and the third work.

#### *4. The first Arabic letter of Leo*

##### *4.1. Handwriting*

The letters of Leo are in written cursive-Kufic form.<sup>11</sup> Diacritical markers are hardly used, which sometimes makes it more difficult to read. For instance, there is no orthographical distinction between د / د; ر / ر; ش / ش; ض / ض; غ / غ; ظ / ظ; ت / ت; ح / ح, خ / خ and ئ / ئ. Final ق and ف can be distinguished easily by their different shape. The tale of ق is written in round form while ف is relatively flat. Thus, sometimes words have to be read carefully, according to the context. There is also line spacing as if each page consists of two or three paragraphs. However, the thought carries on, and there is no significance in spacing lines. When a sentence ends in the middle of the line, the copyist justifies the line by stretching the last consonant longer than usual to make it reach to the left end. Sometimes, words are written separately. For instance, when a word is too long to be written, its fore part is written at the left end of the line and remaining part

<sup>9</sup> (رسالة من أمير المعنين) على ردنا (See Ibid., 43).

<sup>10</sup> Based on the handwriting and the nature of the third work, I also accept Meimareš’ view that it is another letter attributed to Leo.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, final min or shin/sin are written in more rounded way than typical kūfic handwriting. One may take this text as written in Maghribi script (for stylistic characteristics of the Maghribi script, see van Boogert, “Maghribi”). Swanson describes that the letter of Leo in Arabic is written in “Kufi-Naski” handwriting (Swanson, “Arabic letter,” 378).

at the right end of the next line. As a result, it may be read as two independent words; yet, in many instances, the context will confirm that it is to be read as one word. The words or phrases written in the bottom line are placed in the middle, instead of being written at the right end.<sup>12</sup>

#### *4.2. Special signs*

Another interesting feature is that the first letter of Leo contains special signs. The forms of these sign vary; sometimes they look like a triangle, a circle, or a circle with a dot inside. These signs appear almost randomly. Unfortunately, the purpose of these signs is yet to be determined.

#### *4.3. Corrections*

Once the work was copied, later corrections followed. Corrections were made by inserting words and phrases in the margins or in spaces between lines. When the phrase to be inserted was too long, the corrector used a special marker that looks like English capital T. He wrote T where the phrase is to be inserted, and wrote full phrase in the margin, using the same marker T at the beginning of the phrase.<sup>13</sup> When the entire line has to be corrected, the corrector

<sup>12</sup> Some of these paleographical features are similar to those that appear in the Sinai Arabic manuscript 154, which contains the oldest extant Christian Arabic apology, “On the Triune Nature of God,” probably written in the middle of the eighth century (Hereafter, “Triune.” For detailed bibliographical information, see chapter IV). In presenting the paleographical features of the Sinai Arabic manuscript 154, Samir mentioned that these features are “sign of great antiquity.” See Samir, “Apology,” 60. The unusual appearance of qāf, written with a dot below the letter fā’, which Samir has left unanswered, was later identified as one of the typical features of the Christian Arabic manuscripts produced in the eighth to the ninth century Palestine by Sala in his “Paleographic.” The same point is also mentioned by Levin (See Palombo, “Correspondence,” 255, n.120). In the letters of Leo, fā’ with a dot below does not appear. The copyist only distinguishes final form of fā’ from final form of qāf.

<sup>13</sup> In short, it is very similar to the modern footnote editing system.

erased the undertext and wrote a new sentence over it. In this case, it is impossible to figure out what was previously written. All these corrections and insertions were made in different handwriting with different ink.

#### 4.4. Language

The Arabic letters of Leo show typical linguistic features that Blau called “Christian Arabic”<sup>14</sup> Here only a few examples will be sufficient. The long vowel becomes shortened: سلم (62v:1).<sup>15</sup> There is inconsistent use of the jussive form after negation لم يكن لم (75r:7) and (75r:8). Probably the reason of using يكون after لم is the author's or copyist's attempt to use more correct classical Arabic.<sup>16</sup> Final hamza is omitted السما (67r:12). There are interchangeable “seats” for final hamza: طوبا (80v:6) and طوبى (80v:8), etc. Most of these features are found in other early Christian Arabic manuscripts in the eighth century.

#### 4.5. Structure and redactions

The main structure of the first letter of Leo can be divided into two parts: 62v to 84r and 84r to 87v. The first part consists of the opening section, the questions of ‘Umar, and Leo's answers. The second part deals with Leo's refutation against Muslim doctrine and laws. It ends

<sup>14</sup> Blau's three volumes on the linguistic characteristics of the South Palestine Arabic manuscripts, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic*, are the major tool for this study.

<sup>15</sup> For indication of a folio page and line, see section 7 below.

<sup>16</sup> This may be considered as copyist's simple mistake. Yet, scholars have been pointing out this so-called “pseudo-corrections” as one of the characteristics of middle Arabic. For discussion on this “pseudo-corrections” with other examples taken from other manuscripts and their analysis, Hary, *Multiglossia*, 62-69.

abruptly; the rest of the letter may be missing.<sup>17</sup> Each part then consists of several sections, and each section is divided into three or four subsections. Leo discusses one theme in one section.

The redactions of the extant first Arabic letter are hypothetical; but several internal evidences suggest that it is not a single composition. Rather, it seems to have been compiled from earlier written materials, which might have been written by the same author or at least the one who read the previous letter. Then the copyist might have collected them together later and copied them as if they comprise one single letter. This is shown in following points: (1) Leo mentions in 85v, “I have demonstrated in my first letter to you the situation of crucifixion, the matter of Eucharist, the story of Nativity of Christ and his story.” This is the only instance that Leo mentioned the existence of his “first letter.” The themes of the first letter mentioned by Leo are what Leo himself discussed in 64r-84r: the situation of Christ’s crucifixion in 70v-71r, 74v; the matter of the Eucharist in 71v-73r; the story of Nativity of Christ and his story in 68v. If he was referring to another “lost” letter of Leo which precedes the extant text, he might have mentioned it somewhere in 64r-84r that he had explained the same issues in his “previous letter.” However, that is not the case. (2) The contents of the preface in 62v-64r also supports the hypothesis that the part from 62v to 84r had been written as an independent work from the rest of the letter in 84r-87v. One of the functions of the preface in the Arabic composition is to explain the cause of his composition and provide a summary of the entire work. The preface only covers

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<sup>17</sup> Leo finished his first letter, saying “Accordingly, I have explained and written to you concerning what you asked about. And it is written...” This is not the end of the entire work; whenever Leo finishes his argument on each point, he closes the discussion with similar statement. Moreover, Leo does not provide any colophon, dedication, or a typical closing phrase such as praising God for his assistance for completion of the work. For instance, the anonymous author of the first work of NF 14 closes his composition, saying, “تم الكتاب بعون الله” The composition has been done by the aid of God.” However, the first letter of Leo ends abruptly with the word “كتب,” which can be read either as “it was written” or “he wrote.”

the content from 64r to 84r, but does not discuss anything that comes from 84r. This may show that the part in 62v to 84r and the other part in 84r-87v were independent works. (3) Leo's tone in the first letter also changes. From the beginning to 84r, Leo contends himself with explaining out the topics 'Umar has posed and defending Christian doctrine and practices. Sometimes Leo refutes Muslims that they do not understand Christian teaching correctly, but he focuses on answering 'Umar's questions. On the other hand, from 84r to the end, Leo more actively engages in the debate, refuting Muslim doctrine and laws from Christian perspectives. Based on these observations, it seems reasonable to think that two earlier compositions, which were composed "in sequence," were circulated independently and then compiled together by the later copyist.<sup>18</sup>

#### *4.6. Early Publication<sup>19</sup>*

Swanson's article on the letter of Leo in Arabic included in the first volume of CMR is the first publication concerning the content of this work. His remarks on the Arabic letter of Leo is based on seven pages at random: the first two pages from the *Catalogos* of Meimarēs, and the other five that Swanson and Gero have shared. From his observations of these photos, Swanson draws two conclusions. First, from its handwriting, he conjectured that the extant manuscript might have been copied in the late ninth century. Second, from the content of the letter, he

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<sup>18</sup> After it has been compiled together into a single work, it appears that several recessions have been produced. Among them are the first Arabic letter of Leo in NF 14 and the Arabic *Vorlage* of the Latin letter of Leo. See chapter I and IV.

<sup>19</sup> In order to prevent confusion, it has to be noted that these early publications seem to have been based on the assumption that NF 14 contains only one letter of Leo. It is probably due to their limited accessibility to the manuscript.

related the letter of Leo with the “Triune.”<sup>20</sup> The second point is of great interest, for the letters of Leo are now thought to be written in the same milieu where the “Triune” was composed.

In addition to Swanson’s article, Roggema also mentioned the Arabic letter of Leo. Based on her knowledge of existence of the Arabic letters of Leo, Roggema proposed an interesting hypothesis on the relationship between the Arabic letter of Leo in NF 14 with other letters of Leo and ‘Umar. Both Leo and ‘Umar clearly mention “previous” letters. Thus, Roggema poses the possibility that the one included in NF 14 may be the letter from Leo to ‘Umar which was sent prior to other texts.<sup>21</sup>

Recently, in discussing the origin of the extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar, Palombo briefly discussed this text. She postulates a hypothetical common source for all extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar, and claims that this common source might have been written in the Melkite community in Syria-Palestine where the “Triune” and other early Melkite apologies were also composed. She suggests the possibility that the Arabic letter of Leo may be closest to original, but also points out the necessity of close examination of this text before final conclusion.<sup>22</sup>

##### *5. The second letter of Leo*

The second letter of Leo is partially preserved. Therefore, a few words about this work are sufficient. It shares similar features with the first letter. It was written in Christian Arabic in the same handwriting. The nature of the text is polemical. It comprised of opening sections and

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<sup>20</sup> Swanson, “Arabic Letter.”

<sup>21</sup> Roggema, “Pseudo-Leo III’s First Letter to ‘Umar,” 376.

<sup>22</sup> Palombo, “Correspondence,” 259.

the refutation against Muslims that they do not follow the teaching of the Qur'ān. Since Leo did not give any prefatory account at the beginning to explain how he would unfold his argumentations, the themes discussed in the missing part are unknown.

#### *6. Authorship, date, and place*

The first letter of Leo begins with identifying the author and recipient of the text - the Byzantine Emperor Leo as a sender and the Caliph 'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz as a recipient. However, from the content of the text, it does not seem plausible that the first Arabic letters of Leo were written by Leo himself nor were they sent to 'Umar. First of all, these names only appear at the beginning of the first letter, but not elsewhere in the text. As for the second letter, there is no identification of its sender and recipient. Likewise, nothing in the first and the second letter reflect that the emperor is the author of the texts. No political or diplomatic statements are found. Also, nothing in the first and the second letter indicates or hints at the date and place of composition. Therefore, it is only through the analysis of the content of the texts that makes possible to conjecture who, where, when, and to whom these texts were written. The thorough analysis of the content of the letters of Leo will be done in the chapter III. The discussion on the authorship and origin of the texts will continue in the chapter IV.

#### *7. Preliminary remarks on the edition and translation*

As editing the first and the second letter of Leo, I have attempted to reproduce the texts as accurate as possible. However, some changes are inevitable:

- (1) Later additions and insertions will be treated as the part of the texts but mentioned with notes.

- (2) The various shapes of special signs cannot be reproduced in this edition, but I indicated the appearance of these signs with asterisk marker (\*).
- (3) The words and phrases written in the middle of the bottom line of each folio are placed at the right justified margin of the edited texts.
- (4) Line spacing will not be indicated. As mentioned above, it does not show any significance in reading of the texts.
- (5) Damaged words and phrases will be reconstructed and written in bracket [ ]. This will not be indicated in the translation but only in the edition of the Arabic texts.
- (6) Words and phrases in < > are not from the texts but are inserted by me for smoother reading in the English translation.
- (7) When the Arabic text is cited, I clearly indicate page and line number, when necessary. For instance, 78v:10 indicates “on folio 78v, the tenth line from top.” I also followed the pagination given by the modern librarian, which is written in the top margin.
- (8) When an alternative reading may be suggested, it will be given in the notes with further explanations.
- (9) The division of the texts into sections and subsections, and the titles given to them are not from the texts but from me for better understanding of the texts. Leo does not follow logic when he discusses each theme; rather it seems that ideas are loosely connected in his mind. Sometimes he moves back and forth between ideas when they are, in his view, interrelated. The same is the case of the “Triune.” Samir expresses a similar difficulty as he was editing some parts of this apology:

At this point, I have to make a preliminary remark. It is difficult to discover the structure of this treatise, and that of each part of it. This author (like many of his time) did not divide it into parts or chapters or sections... It is difficult to choose the right titles and thus indicate the structure of the text, not because of the complexity of the author's mind, but because his style is very fluid. It is much more of an oral type, where ideas follow each other by association, rather than by a logical sequence.<sup>23</sup>

I have attempted to make proper divisions and did my best to provide appropriate titles to sections and subsections; yet, some sections and subsections can probably be given better titles later.

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<sup>23</sup> Samir, "Apology," 64-65.

بسم الاب [و]لابن وروح القدس

من اليون ملك الروم الى عمر بن عبد

العزيز امير المؤمنين سلم

اما بعد فانا<sup>24</sup> نومن باله الواحد الذي

ليس قبله الله ولا بعده الله ونعلم

ان الله حق خلق هذا العالم بفضل منه

اذ لم يكون اليه كتبت الي تذكر

شان المسيح عيسى بن مریم وامر هذا العالم

وسا افسر لك من ذلك تفسيرا شافيا

خلق الله الانسان من اوضع شى من الخليقة

من التراب الذي هو جوهر الارض ثم شرفه

بعد عظمه واستخلفه على خلقه

وعلمه وبين له الطريقين وما جزا كل

واحد منهمما فجعل الله يعلم الناس

---

<sup>24</sup> Reading fainnā.

في كل خلق وابنيه على [اما]نة الانبيا

كما يعلم المعلم كتابته قليل قليل

بقدر ما يستطيع من العلم فكان الله

قد تقدم الى ادم واوصاه وقال الله له

لا تقرب الشجرة ولا تطعمها فعصى ادم

الله واطاع الشيطان وخالف ما امره

الله به فلما ان عصا يمت عده الله

له بعد تسع مالية وستة وثلاثين سنة

فاورثه الموت واولده من بعده

فلما<sup>25</sup> يفقه الناس في ايات الله

وبما ارسلت<sup>26</sup> به الرسل وتثبتوا في الكتب

في طول الزمان والاحقاب التي كانت

بين المسيح وادم احب ان يرى تمام فضله

عليهم وبين لهم حسن سياسته لهم وسعة

رحمته بارساله المسيح الى هذا العالم

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<sup>25</sup> Reading falamma.

<sup>26</sup> Reading ارسل.

ونجد في كتاب [ب] [إ][الله] ان من يرث الميراث

يقضى الدين وانا ورثنا عن ابينا ادم

الموت والخطية عن المعصية ولم يكن

ذلك يزل بنا ابدا حتى يقوم من جوهرنا رجل

كامل البر وطاعة الخالق ومعصية

الشيطان العدوا ثم ان المسيح اذ فعل

ذلك ورث الحياة والزلفة والكرامة

كما ورث ادم الموت والخطية عن

المعصية وكذلك كان دين الله

ليس فيه عوج ولا فظ فلم تزل الخطية

في ولد ادم والموت في طلبهم حتى

شرق المسيح في العالم فيبين شان الآخرة

ولم يكن قبل ذلك يذكر شى من امر

الآخرة وجانا ايات الانبياء لصدق

قوله فطهر من البرص واعطا السمع

من بعد الصم وينطق الكلام<sup>27</sup> من بعد الخرس

وقام كل مكتع جايوه اليه وطرد

الجنون من البشر وبعث الموتا ومشا

على الما وحول الما خمرا مع ايات

كثيرة لم اكتب اليك بها وليس المسيح

فعل هذه الایات فقط ولكن اصحابه

والذين كانوا معه ورسله الذين هم

تلاميذه اعطاهم السلطان ذلك

ليرسلوا بالناس من طغيانهم الى

الله الواحد ولو لا ان الناس رأوا الایات

على يدي التلاميذ ما كانوا يتركوا

انساكهم وما يعبدون ابا وهم

كتبت الي تسل عن المسيح والقربان وتقول

ما الصليب وما القربان وتقول لم تسجدون

---

<sup>27</sup> For technical reason, it is not shown in this edition that only Kaf is missing in this word.

لعيسى رسول الله [وت] جعلونه الها وهو شاهد

على نفسه في الانجيل اني رسول الله الى الناس

فمن صدقني صدق الذي ارسلني ومن كذبني

كذب من ارسلني وقال للحواريين

اذ رفعه الله اليه اني اصعد الى ربى وربكم

والاهي والهكم وهو يشهد على نفسه

انه رسول الله وتقول ان التوراة حرفت

وبدلها عزير نفسه وكتبها خطأ ولم

تذكر فيها القيامة ولا الجنة ولا النار

وتقول ان مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل ادم

وتقول كيف كان الله يدخل في جوف

امراة في الفم والتنن<sup>28</sup> وتقول كيف كان

ياكل ويشرب وينام ويفرح ويصلى ويتجاوز

من هذا كتبت به وقد علمت بأنه انما

---

<sup>28</sup> Reading في الفم التنن without و.

جعلك على ذلك قلة [لملك] بال المسيح وتدعني

على ذلك انك تقول ان مريم بنت عمران اخت

هرون وموسى والدة عيسى فكيف يكون هذا

وقد ماتت مريم وهرон وموسى بمخرجهم

من مصر في الطريق ولم يدخل احد منهم

بيت المقدس وإنما ماتت مريم اخت هرون

بالشراة<sup>29</sup> قبل تخلق مريم ام عيسى وقبل تخلق ابوها

بزمان من الدهر فاما مريم ام المسيح فانها نزلت

داود النبي ومن سبط يهودا بن يعقوب

فإن أحببت أن تعلم علم ذلك وننتهي إليك حتى لا

يكون منه في شك ولا في أمر فافحص

عن الكتب العتيقة التي أنزل الله علىبني اسرائيل

في التوراة والزبور والأنبياء ثم افحص عن الحديثة

الإنجيل وما أنزل الله على يدي حواري عيسى فانك

---

<sup>29</sup> From the Hebrew word, צָרֻעַת, which is used to refer to leprosy or skin disease in Leviticus 14; Exodus 4:6; Numbers 12:10. However, Miriam once had a skin disease but did not die of it. She was healed by Moses' prayer.

فإنك ساتجد من شأن المسيح امرا مضيا

وطريقا قائمة وتنشرح إليها وتسقر

نفسك من الشك اذا صدقـت كتبـ

الله بعضـها بعضا والأنبيـاء بعضـهم

بعضا حتى يتفقـ في المسيح الذي انـزل الله فيـ

الـعنـيقـة والـحدـيـثـة عندـ ذلك تـعـرـف وـتـلـعـم

حالـ المـسـيـح وـاـخـبـرـك اـمـرـ دـيـنـا وـكـيـفـ

نـعـبـدـ الله وـ الشـرـيـعـةـ الـتـيـ نـحـنـ عـلـيـهـاـ حـتـىـ تـفـهـمـ

انـ شـاـ اللهـ ثـمـ اـقـيـمـ لـكـ عـلـىـ ماـ اـكـتـبـ بـهـ الـيـكـ

بـيـنـةـ وـشـهـوـدـ مـنـ الـأـنـبـيـاءـ وـالـعـنـيقـةـ

وـالـحـدـيـثـةـ اـنـ الـذـيـ نـقـولـ فـيـ المـسـيـحـ حـقاـ

فـاـفـهـمـ مـاـ كـتـبـتـ بـهـ الـيـكـ وـابـصـرـ الـيـهـ

[و]ـ تـدـبـرـهـ وـتـرـدـدـ فـيـهـ حـتـىـ تـفـهـمـ انـ شـاـ اللهـ

[ف]ـ اـقـصـ عـلـيـكـ منـ اوـلـ ماـ خـلـقـ اللهـ السـماـ

[و]ـ الـارـضـ لـاـ تـسـعـهـ وـلـاـ يـعـلـمـ اـحـدـ كـيـفـ هو<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> This phrase would remind its readers a famous Islamic phrase, بلا كيف, “Without asking How!”

<sup>31</sup> The same phrase “....God from God, light from light...” is repeated in 81r: 10.

وانما ابصر موسى النبي بظواهر [ر] سينيا نور والذي

كلمه نور وذلك النور قال له يا موسى لا

تحف فمن نوره الذي هو منه ضوء فسماه

كلمته ومن ضوء نوره ضوا فسماه روح

القدس فلذلك نقول الاب والابن وروح القدس

وكله من الله شيء واحد لا نفرق بينهم نور

واحد ومن ذلك النور الواحد اتسعت

الارض النور وروح القدس من النور شيء واحد

فلذلك نقول الاب والابن وروح القدس

الله من الله ونور من نور والله من الله <sup>31</sup> شيء واحد

لا نفرق بين احد منهم فهذا حال

الابن والامر الذي هو فيه فاما قوله

في كتابك ان مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل

ادم خلقه من التراب وقال له كن فكان

فيرا شانه وفعاله وامره يشبه ادم او من اجل

ان المسيح اطاع [الله<sup>32</sup> صى<sup>33</sup>] او من اجل ان

ادم تولج اليه الشيطان بالكذب

فاطاعه وعصى ربه حتى ذلاه في الموت

ام ليس تعلم ان المسيح هو كلمة الله واية

روح القدس وان جسم المسيح يومك هذا

في السما وان الله في المسيح بكلمته

وروحه من اجل ان كلمته روح من الله وحيث

تكون كلمة الله وروحه فثم الله فبالمسيح

نسجد لله من في السموات والارض الا من عصى

واخطى ولا تظن ان الله تبارك وتعالا

في مكان قليل ولا في مكان كثير

لكن الله في كل مكان سوا فسما الله كلمته

التي بها خلق كل شئ اينا فذلك نقول بن الله

[لا] ان الله ابو كلمته وحيث ما كانت

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<sup>32</sup> Final hā is legible.

<sup>33</sup> For logical sense, it seems that عصى has to be left out.

كلمة الله فثم الله [كلمة] الله من الله

وروح الله من الله وكلمة الله تخلق ما

يشا وروح الله يخلق ما يشا وهو شيء احـد

واحد لا تحسب انا نعبد الالهـين

اثنين ولكنـا نعبد الـها واحدـا

لا نشرك به شيئاً وهو الحي الدائم\*

وسـا اقـيم لكـ على ذلكـ منـ الـبيـنـاتـ والـشهـودـ

ما لا تـطـيقـ انـ تـجـحـدـهـ وـهـوـ تـصـدـيقـ لـقـولـيـ

منـ انبـياـ اللهـ العـدـولـ بـانـ اللهـ دـعـاـ عـيسـىـ

ابـنـاـ وـبـكـلـمـتـهـ خـلـقـ كـلـ شـىـ وـقـالـ فيـ الزـبـورـ

انـ اللهـ بـكـلـمـتـهـ خـلـقـ كـلـ شـىـ وـقـالـ

داـودـ ايـضاـ بـكـلـمـةـ الرـبـ السـماـ

تشـدـدـتـ وـبـرـوحـ فـمـهـ جـمـيعـ قـوـاتـهـ<sup>34</sup>

وـقـالـ دـاـودـ ايـضاـ لـلـدـهـرـ

يـاـ رـبـ كـلـمـتـكـ فـيـ السـمـاـ\*ـ وـقـالـ

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<sup>34</sup> written on the left side margin in different ink and different handwriting.

بعث الله كلمته [وشف]اهم وشهد ایوب

الصديق على روح القدس قال روح القدس

خلقتنی وقال موسی النبي روح الله

كانت على الما وقال اشعيا النبي

روح القدس خلقتني وقال موسی

النبي الذي رفع السما بغير عمد هو

يمشى على البحر كالارض وقال اشعيا النبي

روح الرب مسحتني وقال داود النبي تبعث

روحك خلقتني وتجدد وجه الارض

روحك الطيبة تهدينی في الارض

المستقيمة فاي شهادة اقوم من هذه

واي بيان ابين من هذا هذا مما في العتقة

مع اشياء كثيرة غير هذه ان الكلمة

[و] الروح من الله يخلقان الخالقين واذ يدل

\* ايضاً بينة وشهود من العتقة

قال اشعيا النبي ان [العذرا] تحبل وتنذر ابنا

وتنذر اسمه عما[نو][يل وتفسیره

الله معنا وقال داود النبي انت ابني وانا<sup>35</sup>

اليوم ولدتك سل مني فاعطيك الام

ميراثك واملكك اقصا الارض

وقال زكريا النبي تهالى وافرحى يا بنت

صهيون واطربى يا بنت اورشليم

فان ملكك ياتى وهو راكب حمار

وجحش بن اتان فهذه شهادة في الابن

ان الله دعا كلمته وحكمته ابنا ولا

تظن ان الله يتقبل صوم ولا صلاة

احد من الناس كما يتقبلها في المسيح

فقد نحيت اليك وفسرت لك ما لا تطبق

ان تجهله ولا تخرج منه لاني لم اقيم لك

شاهد الا انبیا عدول ورضاه

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<sup>35</sup> is written in the left margin in different ink and different handwriting.

فان احبيت ان تعلم [علم<sup>36</sup> المسيح وامرہ فقد

فسرت لك ذلك على احسن الوجوه

واجملها وهذا العلم البالغ الشافي

وهذا كتابكم يقول ان الله ارسل

كلمته وروحه التي منه الى مريم فخلق

\* منها انسان كامل بالنفس والجسد \*

فسكن الله بروحه وكلمته في ذلك

الانسان بغير انقطاع ابدا فان انت

قلت كيف سكن الله في جوف انسان

فانا نضرب لك مثل ذلك حتى تبصره ان

شا الله \* اما تعلم ان الشمس على وجه

[ا]لسما وقرونها ونورها في الارض ام لا

تعلم ان الشمس في السما وتدخل من الكوة

في المدخل فيضي ذلك المدخل بالذى

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<sup>36</sup> The final min is legible.

من الشمس ولم تنقضـ[ى] الشمس شيئاً

وهي في البر والبحر فان كانت الشمس التي

هي مخلوقة ومثلاً في الخليق ولو شئت

اكثرت عليك من هذا فما ظنك

بالذى هو اعلا واجل وليس تعلم ان الله في

السما وفي الارض وما بينهما وليس

الله في مكان كبير ولا في مكان

قليل بل هو في كل مكان سوا فالله في

المسيح وفي السما وفي الارض وفي كل

مكان سوا ولكن الله ساكن في المسيح

بالمجد والكرامة والعظمة والرافعة

والقرابة إليه من اجل كلمة الله التي فيه

فان كلمة الله من الله والله مع كلمته

وروح الله من الله والله مع روحه

ما كان من الله [ه] و الله و تقولون لنا

انا كفار و تدعونا مشركين فحن لم

نكر بل امنا بمن نعرف وليس اقول لك

انهما الاهين اثنين معاذ الله ان تقول

نصراني يومن بالله بانه يعبد الهين اثنين

ولكن انما نرد الكلمة الى الله فلذلك

نقول ان المسيح بن الله لان الله ابو كلمته

فحن نومن بالله الاب الذي لم يولد و نومن

بالله الابن المولود من الاب الذي لم يلد

و نومن بالروح التي لم تلد و لم تولد

ثلاثة اسما الله واحد و رب واحد فهو

[ا] لاب والابن الكلمة والروح روح

[ا] لقدس التي هي معه فهو لى ثلاثة اسما

[و] هي شى واحد و روحه واحد و ذمار

واحد الله واحد وقد اخ[تار الله هذا  
الانسان فسكن فيه بكلمته ليحشر به  
الناس يوم القيمة وليجعله ديان  
وقاض بين الملائكة والبشر لينظر  
هذا الانسان الذي يرا الله الذي لا يرا  
وهو ساكن فيه بالكلمة والمبشرة  
والروح وحيث تكون روح الله فثم الله  
فان المسيح حيث جا لم يجي بجيش ولا بسيف  
ولم يامر الا بالانصاع في هذا الدنيا  
وان نسلك في طريق البر الشديدة  
بالصوم والصلوة وامرنا ان نغفر لمن  
ظلمنا واسا علينا وامرنا بالصدقة  
بسر وعلا نية وامرنا بالصلة التي ليس فيها  
ريا حتى نبلغ الذي وعدنا به المسيح في  
ملكوت السما

فاما الذي سالت ع[نه] [من] امر دين النصرانية

فهو كالذي وصفت لك في كتابي وما

فسرت لك وكتبت به اليك في شأن ادم

انه مات من معصية ربه فلم يزل ولده

بعده يسعون في سخط الله فكان ذلك

دين الله عظيم عليهم في كل خلق وامة

حتى قام المسيح فاتم وصايا الله التي امر بها

في كل نوره وكل شى من الكتب ثم داوره

الشيطان ان يریغه عن طريق الله ليخطأ

كما اخطأ ادم فلم يستطع اليه شيا

ثم ان الشيطان تولج الى اليهود نفوسوا

على المسيح وحسدوه لما اتبعه كثير من

السو البشر فامنوا به لما كانوا يسمعون

منه ونزل على يديه من الخير العظيم

فاحب المسيح ان يمو[ت] [مك]ان البشر الخطأ

اذ لم يخطا ولم يكون [هل] للموت وليقرب

نفسه الله قربانا مكان خطيانا

وما كان بالله الذي في المسيح بكلمته وروحه

عجز ولا ضعف ان ينجي المسيح من اليهود

وان يدمر عليهم لو شا ولكن الله بكلمته

وفضله خلا بين المسيح وبين اليهود فصلبوه

وذلك حي ومات وقبر بغير شبهة وكان

للقبر حراس من اليهود ثلاثة ايام حتى قام

المسيح باذن الله وامرها وروحه التي حلت

في المسيح فخزى الشيطان وخزيروا اليهود

وظهر البر ونور الحق للبشر بقيمة

المسيح وامنوا عند ذلك البشر وصدقوا

ان المسيح حق ولو لا ان المسيح صلب ومات

و قبر وقام وار [ى نفـد] ه ولـبـث بـعـد قـيـامـتـه

اربعين يوما لم يكونوا الناس يصدقون

بالقيامة ابدا فاما صلب المسيح وموته

وقيامتـه كالـذـي كـتـبـتـ بـهـ اليـكـ وـمـنـ

وفضل من الله على البشر ورضا عنهم

فهذا تأويل امر المسيح ودين النصرانية

فاما سوالك عن القربان والذي ذكرت

فيه وسالت عنه فسا اقص عليك من ذلك

ما نعلم شأنه ان شاء الله فقد سمعت

في كتابك ان الحواريون قالوا ليعسى

ادعى لنا ربك ينزل علينا مائدة من

السماء قال انقوا الله ان كنتم مؤمنين

قالوا نريد نأكل منها وتطمان فلوبنا

ونعلم انا قد صدقنا ونكون من الشا

هدين

قال عيسى اللهم انزل [ علينا] مائدة من السما

تكون لنا عيدا لا ولی[نا] وآخرنا واية منك

وارزقنا وانت خير الرازقين قال اني

منزلها عليكم فمن كفر عن بيته عذابا

لا اعذبه احد من العالمين فهی تلك

المائدة التي انزلها على يدي عيسى للحواريين

فنحن مستمسكين بها الى اليوم وانك

قد علمت انه ليس من نشد الا و له قربان

او زبد<sup>37</sup> يجعل الكرامة الله ورضاه

ونفع لمن تقربه بنية صادقة

الا يكون اناس ابدا اسوا الله وانما

اعمالهم مع الشياطين والاوثان

والاصنام فاولايك الذين اخطأوا

طريق الله و هلكوا واسمع يايهما

الانسان

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<sup>37</sup> قربان وزبد appears again in 72v:8 when Christ says that he offers himself as “sacrifice and gift” to God for the remission of sins of the world.

ان المسيح لما كان قد يقع به اليهود بليلة

وهي ليلة الصليبوه اخبر اصحابه الذين

هم تلاميذه جا اليهود فاعلم به وحدثهم

بقيامته وانهم سايغرون منه ويرجعون اليه

بعد قيامته ثم ان المسيح ليلة ذلك طعم

مع اصحابه واخذ الخبر على يديه ثم برك

وصلا عليه وقال لهم اطعموا منه فان هذا

فجري<sup>38</sup> اقربه لله قربان وزبد<sup>39</sup> على خطايا العالم

ثم فعل مثل ذلك على الكاس التي هي الخمر

فقال لهم اشربوا منه فان هذا هو دمي

ابذاله<sup>40</sup> على يدي خشبة الصليب فجعلوا

[ا]لتلاميذه الخبر والخمر بروح القدس والصلوة

التي علمهم واسلمها لهم المسيح \*

[ف]اسلموها الى من كان بعدهم لكيمما

يقربوها ولا تقطع ولا تنظر الى

<sup>38</sup> This word may show the Syriac influence, adopting Arabicized of the Syriac word, ‘Paghra, which means body, to Garshuni, meaning “my body.” However, there is no other instance in this text that Syriac word has been used instead of Arabic. Or, it can be read فخري, meaning “my glory,” in the context of John 17:22, which reads, “The glory that you have given me I have given them so that they may be one, as we are one.”

<sup>39</sup> “sacrifice and gift,” see 72r:8-9.

<sup>40</sup> Reading ابذله ‘abdhulahu.

الخمر والخبز كما ه[ي خب[ز وخمرا ولكن  
 انظر الى علو ذلك وفضله وما فيها  
 من روح القدس وبركته وكانت  
 اليهود تنظر الى المسيح انسان مثل  
 احدنا ثم بعث الموتا وارى ايات  
 كثير التي كتبت اليك بها فاما في  
 مراد<sup>41</sup> العين فانسان مثل احدنا واما  
 العمل فمثل الله فمن امن منهم فلتح ومن  
 قسا قلبه وكفر شقى و هلاك فهذا  
 حال القربان وامرها فقد فسرت لك منه  
 ما لا تطيق ان تجهله ولا تعيره وامر  
 عيسى بخبز وخمرا يقدسهما القسيس  
 بكلمة الله ويدعوا الروح عليهما فتكو[ن]  
 فيهما مغفرة الذنوب لمن اخذه بنية<sup>42</sup>  
 صادقة وامن به كما امر المسيح

<sup>41</sup> Meaning “intended thing,” what the eye sees.

<sup>42</sup> Reading بنية, meaning “with intention.” It is modified by the adjective صادقة which follows it, meaning as “with faithful intention” or “with faith.”

و هما يكفيا [كما] كفا جسد المسيح

فاذاك انا<sup>43</sup> نومن ان في هذا الخبز والخمر

بعد ان يقدسان مما كان في جسد المسيح

ابد الله وروحه فامرنا ان نعمل ذلك ونذ

كر فضل المسيح علينا وبذل نفسه من

ورانا حتى نبلغ القيامة فتنقبل صفة

وجه المسيح بغير خزي ولا تغير بان المسيح

لم يصلب وانما شبه لليهود فان الله الذي

هو في المسيح ليس عنده خيال ولا شبها

ولا باطل ولكن صلب المسيح حق وموته

حق وصعوده الى السماء حق وجيء في

اخر الازمان من السماء الى هذا العالم حق

وهودياب العالمين بالله الذي هو فيه

فانصت ولینفعك عقالك فقد فسرت

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<sup>43</sup> Reading ان inna.

لَكَ حَالُ الْقَرْبَانِ وَامْرُهُ [وَ] حَالُ الصَّلَبِ

وَسُجُودُ النَّصَارَى لِلْمَسِيحِ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ

وَسَمِعْتَ أَنَّ بْنَى اسْرَائِيلَ كَانُوا يَسْجُدُونَ

لِلتَّابُوتِ الَّتِي أَمْرَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى يَضْعُبُ بِهَا

لَوْحَى التُّورَاةِ وَانْمَا كَانَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ خَشْبٍ

لَيْسَ لَذَهَبٌ كَانُوا يَسْجُدُونَ وَلَا لَخَشْبٍ

وَلَكَنْ وَلَامِرَ اللَّهُ وَلَكَتِبِهِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَهَا

عَلَى مُوسَى النَّبِيِّ وَهُوَ فِي تِلْكَ التَّابُوتِ

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوا بْنَى اسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ

مِنْ طُورِ سِينَا جَوَا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِ

مُوسَى إِلَى أَرْضِ الشَّامِ وَبَنُوا بَيْتَ

الْمَقْدَسِ فَكَانُوا يَسْجُدُونَ فِي بَيْتِ

الْمَقْدَسِ وَبَطْوَرِ سِينَا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يَدْعُونَ

مُشْرِكِينَ وَلَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنْكُمْ تَسْجُدُونَ

لربين ولا تعبد [ون الـ]هين ولا لذهب

ولا لخشب فذلك اعظم او من حلت

فيه كلمة الله وروحه والمسيح اعظم

واجل وتلك التابوت فحنن نسجد لكلمة

الله وروحه الحالة في عيسى والتي بها

خلق الله السما والارض وليس بمخلوقة

ولكنها خالفة فليس ينبغي لنا ان نسجد لها

في ذلك الجسد فاما حال الصليب فان

المسيح لما اتوه اليهود وطلبوه وصلبوا

معه لصين احدهما عن يمنه والآخر

عن يساره ليكذبون بهما قوله فنزلت

[ا] لارض يوميذ وانكسفت الشمس وتشققت

[ا] لصخور وانخرقت ستور مذابح اليهود

[م] ان اسفلها الى اعلاها صدق ذلك

كثيرا منهم وامنوا به \*

فلما ان قام المسيح انقوا ذلـك انطلقوا

على بيت منهم كانوا هم يلون ذلك

الامر فدخلهم رعب شديد بما رأوا

من حال المسيح ما ظهر لهم فاخذوا تلك

الصلـيب الخشب وقالوا انا سانسل عن

هذه الخشب ونكلـفها نحن خاصة

دون الناس فدفنوهـن ولم يكن احدـهم

بموضعـهن غير اهل ذلك البيت ولم يكون

الرجل رئيس اهل ذلك البيت يطلع عليهمـ

والده ولا اخوه الا عند الوصـية حيثـ

حضرـه الموت فيقول له عند الوصـية

سوف تـكلف هذا الخـشب وتنـسل عنهاـ

يوم من الدـهر فـلما اـحبـ المسيح انـ

يـجري قـيـامـته وـسـلطـانـه وجـزـى اليـهـودـ

ويـظـهـر رـحـمـته وـفـضـلـه فيـ النـاسـ

وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْ[صَلِيبِ] بِمِنْ خَيْرٍ وَشَاعَتْ

النَّصْرَانِيَّةُ فِي الْبَحْرِ وَالْبَرِّ بِثَلَاثَةِ سَنَةٍ

وَالصَّلِيبُ مَدْفُونٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَا يَعْلَمُ

بِهِ أَحَدٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ وَاحِدٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ

ذَلِكَ الْبَيْتُ فَاحِبُّ الْمَسِيحِ فَاظْهَرْ صَلِيبِهِ

فِي مَلْكِ مِنْ مُلُوكِ الرُّومِ يُقَالُ لَهُ قَسْطَنْطِينُوسْ

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ بِنَصْرَانِيِّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ وَكَانَ قَدْ

خَرَجَ إِلَى أَعْدَاءِهِ يَقْاتِلُهُمْ فَجَعَلَ يَدِعُوا اللَّهَ

وَيَسْتَغْيِثُ بِهِ وَيَقُولُ اللَّهُمَّ خَالِقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ

وَالْأَرْضِ اتَّهَبْ لِي الْمَلَكَ وَتَعْطِينِي السُّلْطَانَ

مِنْ تَشَا<sup>44</sup> بِرْ حَمْتَكَ وَفَضْلَكَ وَاسْلَكَ اتَّنْتَرِينِي

وَتَهْدِينِي إِلَى أَقْوَمِ الدِّينِ وَاحِبِّهِ إِلَيْكَ \*

بَيْنَ مَا هُوَ يَدْعُوا اللَّهُ وَيَتَضَرِّعُ إِلَيْهِ

[وَ] هُوَ يَشِيرُ إِلَى أَعْدَاءِهِ وَجَيْشِهِ مَعَهُ

[لَكَنْهُ رَفَعَ عَيْنِيهِ إِلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ]

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<sup>44</sup> Reading تشا.

فابصر عمودين ع[ظيم]ن نيرين احدهما

معترض على الآخر كهية الصليب

وفيهما كتاب انور منها بلسان الملك

بالروميه فانك دعوت الله ان يبين لك

اخير الاديان واحبه اليه وان هذه

الاية اخير الاديان واحبه الى الله واقربه

اليه فاجعل رايتك التي تشير بها الى اعداك

كما رأيت فامر عند ذلك فغيرت

رایاتهم وصيافت صلب ثم ان الله تبارك

وتعال اظفره باعداه او لايك الذي

كان يتوجه اليهم واظفره الله

بغيرهم فلما رجع لم يطمين قلبه حتى

سال عن صليب المسيح فقالوا له حين

قام المسيح من القبر غيبوا الخشب التي

هي الصليب فلم يكون احد يعلم موضعهن

الا رجل من اهل [ذلك] البيت فارسل الملك  
 والدته من الروم ومعها جمع عظيم  
 وكان يقال لها هلانه حتى انتهت الى  
 اورشليم وهي بيت المقدس فسالت  
 عن عظما اليهود واسرافهم ومن بقي من  
 اولك الاولين حتى بلغت اهل ذلك  
 البيت الذي يعلمون علم الصليب وانها  
 عذبت عند ذلك من قدرت عليه عذاب  
 شديد وقالت لهم ان كنتم تحبون انفسكم  
 وترجون الحياة فاخروا الى صليب  
 المسيح فلما صار امرهم الى رجل  
 واحد من اهل ذلك البيت السو جد  
 وكفر حتى امرت به الملكة ان يعذب  
 فطرح في جب ثلاثة ايام ولم يطعم  
 شيئا ثم انه حين ايقن بالشر وبخوف  
 الموت

فإذا الحراس الذين يحر[سو] نه أخبروا

الملكة السيدة ان هي اخرجتني فاني

ادلها على حاجتها فلما اخرجوه واراهم

المكان وقال لهم احفروا فانكم

سا تجدون الذي تريدون فامر الملة

عند ذلك فحفروا المكان فيبين ما هم

يحفرون خرج اليهم دخان كثير طيب

الريح فلما حفروا حفر كثير ظهرت

لهم ثلاثة خشباث فاخرجن واشتبهن على

الملكة السيدة ولم تعرف ايهم خشبة

المسيح فإذا هم بجنازة يخرجون بها من المدينة

فأمرت الملة عند ذلك فوضع على

الميت احد ثلاثة الخشباث فلم يتحرك الميت

ثم وضع ايضا عليه الخشبة الثانية فلم يتحرك

فلما وضعوا عليه الخشبة الثالثة قام

الميت

ليس به فلتة و [ . . . ]<sup>45</sup> فان كثير من بقية

اليهود الذين كانوا في ذلك الزمان

حيث روا ذلك امنوا وصدقوا بال المسيح

فاما الرجل الذي دل على الخشبة فامن به

وصير اسقف على بيت المقدس حتى مات

ثم ان الملكة عند ذلك بنت مكان

القبر والجلجة حيث صلب المسيح بنا حسنا

عظيما مع بيع اخرى ثلثها من مالها

وتركت شى يسير من خشبة الصليب

في بيت المقدس وانها حملت الى ابنها

عود الخشبة الى الروم فهذا شان الصليب

[و] تقسيره وامرہ وحاله فلذلك نسجد

[ل] لمسيح بالصلب لنذكر فضل المسيح

[ع] لينا وموته من ورانا والصلب

[إ] ية النصرانية وعلامة الدين وبالصلب

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<sup>45</sup> The upper part of the manuscript is missing. Only final mīm is legible.

عن الشياطين ومن امن [به ومن<sup>46</sup>] كفار الارض  
 والصليب شرائع النصر [انيه] وياتها واعلم  
 ان يد المسيح في الصليب لمن امن به فهذا  
 الصليب الذي هو الصليب وجبريل رايس  
 الملائكة يسير بالصلب بين يدي المسيح يوم  
 القيمة والصلب هو نور وقرة عين لمن  
 امن به وهذه امانة عظمة<sup>47</sup> لاهلنصرانية  
 وطريق الحياة الدائمة فكم من مجنون واعما  
 وابرص واخرس ومقد وسفيم قد شفاه الله  
 وبالصلب الى اليوم والى الابد فهذا شأن  
 المسيح وحاله وهذه النصرانية والدين  
 المستقيم فلا يغرنك سلطان ولا مال  
 ولا صحة فان ذلك كله مثل الحلم الذي يراه  
 الانسان في منامه فاذا استيقظ من نومه  
 علم ان الذي راي في نومه باطل كذلك  
 \*غير الدنيا وملكتها

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<sup>46</sup> The final nūn is legible.

<sup>47</sup> Reading عظيمة.

واعلم ان المسيح [بفضل]ه علينا ويتسع راقته

يدخلنا ملكته كما شهد على نفسه

ونرجوا بذلك رحمته وثواب الانبياء فهذه

ابواب ثلاثة قد بين المسيح انه من الله ونور من نور<sup>48</sup>

لما تكلم وشهد على نفسه وبما عمل

من الآيات الكثيرة والعجائب العظام

التي لم يعملها احد من الناس ولا من رسل

الله الا الله وحده بكلمته وروحه المقدس

حين يخلق ويعفر الذنوب ويشفى كل سقم وهذا

سلطان وقدرة وبما ارا الحواريين في

طور تابور من نور وجهد من مجده

وكرامته حين يجلأ لهم لم يطيقون ان ينظرون

الى ذلك النور فكفا بهذه الآية عظم

[الذ]ور وهدى لمن يعقل ويقبل الحق على نفسه

[و]من خالف الحق نفسه ظلم والله هو

[الغ]ني الحمود وقال المسيح للحواريين

[و] لبني الاسرائيل ايضا امين امين اقول لكم

<sup>48</sup> written in the left side margin.

السماء والارض يغيران [وكلام]ي لا يغير ولكن

يثبت واستقام لذلك [ع][لى قوله الى انقضا

الدنيا قال الحواريين<sup>49</sup> حين ارسلهم ينشرون

ملکوت السماء وتنبأ على اسمه اني اعطيت

ملکوت كل سلطان السموات والارض

فاخرجوا وعلموا كل الامم ما قد اوصيتكم

واعمدوهم باسم الاب والابن وروح القدس

وانا معكم ايام حياتكم الى انضا الدنيا

امين \* فانظر ايها الانسان هل يكون ما قال

المسيح في المعمودية في كل امة وفي كل

ارض من المشرق الى المغرب وكل حين في

كل حقب ترا ذلك ام لا في الامم كلها كما

قال حين يدخلون في دين المسيح ويعمدون باسم

الاب والابن وروح القدس في مشارق الارض

ومغاربها في كل حين من الدهر فلو لم يكن

المسيح الله من الله ونور من نور<sup>50</sup> ورحمة لخلقه ما ثبت

قوله ولا استقام

<sup>49</sup> Reading للحواريين.

<sup>50</sup> is written between lines above the word . نور من نور . The phrase, "...he is from God, light from light..." also appear 78r:4.

امره في الام [كلها] من مشارق الارض

ومغاربها من اول يوم تكلم بها

المسيح الى يومنا هذا والى الدهر كله

ولو لم يكن المسيح الله من الله لم يأخذ سلطان

السموات والارض ولا استطاع ذلك

كما لم يستطعه غيره ولا يملك سلطان

السموات والارض الا الله وكلمته وروحه

فلذلك قال المسيح اني اعطيت<sup>51</sup> سلطان

السموات والارض وما فيها فلو لم يكن المسيح

الله من الله ما اجترا ان يقول على نفسه مثل

هذا القول وانما اعطى المسيح سلطان السموات

[و] الارض بالجسد الذي تجسد منها فكان انسان

كامل فاذا اقسم الله فانما يقسم بنفسه

[ ] <sup>52</sup> يقول في التوراة ان الله حين وعد

[ابر] هيم صفيه<sup>53</sup> الارض المقدسة حلف

معزته وقال حي انا انا الرب وملت

كرامتي السما والارض

<sup>51</sup> Reading in the passive, “I was given...”

<sup>52</sup> At this point, it seems impossible to reconstruct this damaged spot. At the end of the missing word, final form of nūn appears.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. 83r:7, where Leo uses خليل.

ان هذه الارض التي انت [فيها] غريب

هي لك ولذرائك ولا نجد ان الله تبارك

وتقدس اسمه اقسم بشى قط الا بنفسه

فماذا القسم الذي تقولون الا بـ هو وكلمته<sup>54</sup>

وروحه فان الله لا يقسم الا بكلمته وروحه

فقد بين امره في كتبه لمن يومن ويقبل الحق

والهدى وتبا داود ايضا بروح القدس

في انسان<sup>55</sup>

على المسيح وقال ان الله قال انت ابني وانا اليوم

ولدتك سلني وفاعطيك الشعوب لميراثك

وملكتك اقطار الارض فكانت

الامم ميراث المسيح بالجسد الذي تجسد منا

فكان انسان كامل فلم تعيبون علينا ان نومن

بالاب والابن وروح القدس والله يقسم بذلك

على نفسه ثم ان المسيح ايضا صعد

فوق جبل من جبال الجليل فاتاه الحواريين

يسمعون من قوله

<sup>54</sup> Reading كلامته، without و.

<sup>55</sup> This line is written in black ink, which is different from the color of the ink used in other lines.

فتح فمه انه [قال له] فزكا الذين يومنون

به ويقبلون وصيته ويتبعون اثره

ويعلمون بطاعته وقال طوبى للذين

هم متواضعين بالروح فلهم ملکوت

السما طوبى للذين يكونون في الدنيا

انهم هم يقترون في الآخرة طوبا

للمساكين انهم هم يرثون الارض

طوبى للذين يجوعون ويعطشون للبرفي

الدنيا انهم هم يشعرون في الآخرة

طوبى للرحمه ان عليهم تنزل الرحمة

طوبى لطاهرين القلوب انهم الى الرب

ينظرون طوبى للذين يصلحون بين

الناس فانهم ابنا الله يدعون

طوبى للمطرودين من اجل البر في

الدنيا ان لهم ملکوت السما

طوبى لكم اذا عيروكم وطردوكم  
 وقالوا عليكم كل كلام سو كاذبين  
 من اجل حيني افروا وابشروا ان  
 اجركم كثير في السما وكذلك  
 طردوا الانبياء الذين من قبلكم انتم  
 ملح الارض وانتم نور العالم كذلك  
 فليضي نوركم بين يدي الناس لكثيما  
 ينظرون الى اعمالكم الحسنة ويحمدون  
 ابوكم الذي في السما فلو لم يكن المسيح  
 الله من الله ونور من نور<sup>56</sup> لم يجترى ولم يزكى  
 الذين يعيرون ويطردون فيه ويقال  
 لهم كل شر من اجله ويقول لهم ابشروا  
 وافروا فان اجركم كثيرة في السما  
 فمن الناس من الانبياء والرسل الذين  
 كانوا يدعون الناس الى الله اجتروا  
 ان يقول لاحد من الناس قول مثل هذا

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<sup>56</sup> written above the word نور which precedes it. The phrase, "...God from God, light from light..." appeared in 66r:10.

انما كان انبيا الله ورسله يقولون

رب لا تضيع اجرنا فانما نموت

من اجلك كل يوم ونعيير ونطرد ونلقا

من الناس البلا الشديد فيك اللهم تعظم

لنا الاجر والنور مع ملائكتك ولم اجد

من انبيا الله لا موسى الذي كلمه الله

وجعلهنبيا لبني اسرائيل ولا غيره من الرسل

للناس الذين كانوا يدعونهم الى الله

طوبا لكم اذا عيروكم وطردوكم

وقالوا لكم كل شر من اجلنا ابشروا

وافرحوا فان اجركم كثيرة في

السماء لأنهم كانوا عبيد مملوكين

يقبلون رسالات ربهم ويعبرون ويطرد

ون ولذتهم يرجون بذلك اعظم الثواب

عند الله ولكن المسيح لانه من الله

ونور من نور<sup>57</sup> نزل من السماء لخلاص ادم وذراته

من ضلاله ابليس

---

<sup>57</sup> نزل is written above نور.

ليهديهم الى نوره وعمل طاعته كان  
 يزكى الذين يعيرون ويطردون فيه ويقال  
 لهم كل سو من اجله ويبشرهم بالاجر  
 العظيم والثواب في ملکوت  
 السما لان بيده السماوات والارض  
 وانه الله من الله وانما يجازى اولياه  
 الذين يؤمنون ويرغبون في الآخرة ويعملون  
 الاعمال الصالحة لمملکوت السما  
 والحياة الدائمة والنور والملك الذي له  
 مع ملايكته المقدسين وانبياء ورسله  
 فنحن ان شا الله ولا قوة الا بالله الذي  
 نعيبر بال المسيح ونطرب فيه ونؤمن به  
 ونرجوا من الله اجرنا في ملکوت  
 السما مع ملايكته فالحمد لله الذي  
 رزقنا الإيمان باليسوع وجعلنا من اولياه  
 واهل طاعته وقال المسيح ايضا

للمواطنين ولبنى اسرائيل امين امين اقول

لكم لتكزن هذا الانجيل في كل

الدنيا ولپیلغن کل امة فانظر هل

بلغ ذكر المسيح وانجيله في الدنيا

كلها فاھتدی به کل امة في الارض

ام لا فلو لم يكن المسيح الله من الله ونور من نور<sup>58</sup>

## لم يبلغ انجيله و ذكره و عبادته في اقصا

الدنيا وفي ادناها لم يبق امة في الدنيا

الآن قد امنوا باليسوع وبنوا الكنائس على

اسم المسيح انظروا في مشارق الارض

وِمَغَارِبُهَا مِنْ الْهَنْدِ إِلَى أَقْصَا الدُّنْيَا

وَجْزَائِرُ الْبَحْرِ وَهُلْ تَرَى مَكَانًا إِلَّا يُذَكِّرُ

فيه المسيح وإنجيله وكذلك تنبأ داود النبي

بروح القدس عن قول المسيح وخروج

الحوارين في الدنيا كلها في كل الأرض

خرج قولهم وفي اقطار الارض

بلغ کلامہم

<sup>58</sup> من نور written on the left hand margin.

و كذلك كان لقد بلغ قول الحواريين وبشراهم

المسيح في كل الدنيا وفي كل امة من

المشرق والمغرب واليمين والشمال فلو

لم يكن المسيح الـه من الـه ما استطاع

ذلك كما لم يستطعـه احد من الانبيا

وبـلـغ ذكرـه وعبـادـتـه في كل الـامـمـ

فقد كان ابرـهـيـم خـلـيل الله<sup>59</sup> فـيـضـهـ اللهـ فيـ

كـرـامـةـ فـلـمـ يـوـمـنـ بـهـ اـحـدـ مـنـ النـاسـ

فـيـ ذـلـكـ الزـمـانـ وـلـاـ سـمـيـ كـلـمـةـ اللهـ وـلـاـ

وـجـدـواـ ذـكـرـهـ حـتـىـ اـمـنـ النـاسـ بـالـمـسـيـحـ

وـجـدـواـ ذـكـرـ اـبـرـهـيـمـ فـيـ اـنـجـيـلـ المـسـيـحـ

ثـمـ كـانـ مـوـسـىـ نـبـيـ اللهـ كـلـمـهـ اللهـ ثـمـ

فـيـضـهـ الـيـهـ فـيـ كـرـامـةـ وـنـورـ فـلـمـ يـوـمـنـ

بـهـ اـحـدـ مـنـ النـاسـ وـلـاـ سـمـيـ كـلـمـةـ اللهـ

وـلـكـ كـانـ يـوـمـنـ بـهـ حـيـاـ كـذـلـكـ

يـوـمـنـ بـهـ رـاسـ الـمـلـاـيـكـةـ اـبـنـيـ اللهـ

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<sup>59</sup> In this passage, Leo uses the Qur'anic term خـلـيل for Abraham. Cf. Q 4:171. In 79v, Leo also describes Abraham as His (i.e., God's) friend, using different world: اـبـرـهـيـمـ صـفـيـهـ.

ثم هلم الى داود وساير الانبياء لم يستطعوا  
ان يهدوا الامم ولم يسمى احد منهم  
كلمة الله وروحه ولم ينزل واحد  
منهم من السما ولم يطلع الى السما كما  
طلع المسيح الذي جعل في قلوب الامم  
ان يؤمنوا باليسوع ويهدون به من ضلا  
لتهم  
التي جروا عليها منذ ثلاثة الف سنة  
قطعوا منها وكفروا بالطاغوت  
حين بلغهم انجيل المسيح وذكره ولم  
يرونه قط ولم يعلمون ما هو ولكن  
من اياته التي عملوها الحوارين على اسم  
المسيح علموا انه الله وانه لا يستطيع  
ان يعمل تلك الايات احد الا الله الذي  
ايد الحوارين بروح القدس وذلك لأن الامم  
كانوا في غفلة من ربهم عاكفين  
على عبادة الاصنام حتى جاهم

ذكر المسيح بغية فقبلوا وامنوا به

فلم يبقا في الدنيا امة الا قد بلغهم

ذكر المسيح وانجيله وفهم عبادة المسيح

يقطعنون ذكره ويدعونهم الى ذكره

وعبادته منذ ثلاثة الف سنة يقطعوا

منها وكفروا بالطاغوت حين بلغهم

ذكر المسيح وانجيله فقد فسرت لك امر

النصرانية ودين المسيح الذي ارتضا لنا

ولم ادعك في شك من امر شئ منه وامر

النصرانية اضوا من الشمس وابين من ضوء

النهار وانت تابا الا<sup>60</sup> تدعونا مشركين

ولم يدعنا صاحبك وقرانك مشركين

بل قال لتجدن اشد الناس عداوة للذين امنوا

اليهود والذين اشركوا فجعل اليهود والذين

اشركوا جروا على حدة ثم قال لتجدن

اقرب الناس مودة للذين امنوا الذين قالوا

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<sup>60</sup> Reading 'illā.

<sup>61</sup> Reading 'illā.

نَحْنُ الْمُصَارِى بَانِ مِنْهُمْ قَسِيسِينَ وَرَهْبَانٍ وَانْهُمْ  
 لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى  
 الرَّسُولِ تَرَا اعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مَا  
 عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَيَقُولُونَ رَبُّنَا أَمْنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا  
 ذُنُوبُنَا وَاتَّبَعْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ فَإِنْ يَكُونُ  
 يَكُونُ أَفْضَلُ مَا فَضَّلْنَا صَاحِبَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ  
 تَابُونَ إِلَّا<sup>61</sup> تَدْعُونَا مُشْرِكِينَ قَالَ أَنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
 وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالْمُصَارِى وَالصَّابِينَ وَالَّذِينَ  
 اشْرَكُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْضُلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
 فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ فَلَا تَرَى كَيْفَ  
 فَرْقُ بَيْنِ الصَّابِينَ وَالْيَهُودِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ  
 وَقُولُهُ فِي سُورَةِ الْعُمَرَانِ لَيْسَ سُوَا مِنْ  
 مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أَمْ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَةَ اللَّهِ  
 بِاللَّيلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ فَمَنْ هَذِهِ الْأَمَةُ  
 الَّتِي مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ بِاللَّيلِ  
 وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ غَيْرَ الْمُصَارِى وَقُولُهُ

لو اراد الله ان يتخذ ولد لاصطفا مما

يخلق ما يشا ثم قال يا مريم ان الله

اصطفاك وطهرك واصطفاك

على نسا العالمين فقد بين لك ان الله

اصطفها وطهرها

واكرمها على نسا العالمين فقد

بين لك وتبا انت الا<sup>62</sup> ان تختلف ما

امرک به صاحبك ثم قال لا تجادل

أهل الكتاب الا بالتي هي احسن

وقال لا جدال في الدين وانت

تبا الا<sup>63</sup> الجدال وقد نهيت عنه

واعلم ان المسيح والنصرانية

ابين من ضو الصبح وانور من شعاع

الشمس وقد فسرت لك بذلك

ما لم ادعك منه في عما من

شهادات الانبياء ومن القول به

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<sup>62</sup> Reading 'illā.

<sup>63</sup> Reading 'illā.

من العقيقة والحديثة فاما قولك

في كتابك ما صلبوه نفسا

بل شبه لهم وبل رفعه الله اليه فان

كان شبه لهم فلا ذنب لنا

ولكن من ايمانا به وحبه الذي

في قلوبنا دعانا الى ان

صدقنا واما بشبه ان كان

شبه لنا مع انه لم يشبه لنا

ولكن صلبه حق وقد قال لو شيت

ان يقوم حولى خمسين الف جند

من اجناد الملائكة فعلت

ولكن لا بد ان تتم نبوة الانبياء

ويجي تصديق قولهم فقد بينت

لأك في اول كتابي حال الصليب

وامر القربان وشأن ميلاد المسيح

وشانه واما قولك انه مثل ادم

فقد علمت ان ادم لم يكون له اب  
 ولا ام فلما نفح فيه الروح قام وجعل  
 فيه الحركة فاما المسيح فقد نجده  
 في كتابك روح الله وكلمته  
 القاها الى مريم فروح الله من الله  
 وكلمة الله من الله وصعد من  
 حيث جا فهو منه واليه رجع فاقهم  
 كتابي وتذبره واعلم ان الامر  
 مستقيم وانما جا بالرابة والرحمة  
 وانفذ البشر من الخطية ثم قال  
 في كتابك لا تستغفر لاحد  
 منهم مات ابدا ولا تقوم على  
 قبره ولا يحل لك ان تسلم على احد  
 من اهل الكتاب قرایت  
 ان كانت للرجل منكم  
 ام نصرانية فماتت

لا يحل له ان يدفنها ولا يستغفر لها

ولا يسلم عليها في حياتها وقد

عظم الله حق الوالدة وايضا

الرجل منكم يتزوج المرة من اهل

الكتاب وهو يبasherها

حللا احلها الله له لا يحل له

ان يسلم عليها ولا يدفنها ولا

يقوم على قبرها وهو بيا

شرها<sup>64</sup> فسبحان الله ما اعظم

هذا لا يستغفر الرجل لامراته

ولا لوالدته ولا يقوم على قبرها

ولا يمشي في جنازتها

ثم قال في كتابك ان الله يضل

من يشا ويهدى من يشا وخلق

منهم شقي وسعيد وما

عمل الانسان من خير او شر

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<sup>64</sup> Reading بياشرها.

كان قد كتب<sup>65</sup> ذلك عليه وقضاء الله

عليه فان كان هذا كذلك فلا حمد له

ولا ذنب عليه فان عذبه الله على شى خلقه له

واضلله وطبع على قلبه وكان قد كتب

ذلك عليه فقد ظلمه الله نعوذ بعزة

الله وجلاله ان يضل احدا او يكتب

عليه الشقا ثم يعذبه فلم انزل الكتب

على الانبياء الا لينذرون الناس من اعمال

السو ويبيين لهم اعمال الخير فمن عمل عمل

النار كانت الحجة لله عليه لما انتهت

به الانبياء ولو كان الامر على ما تقولون ان

كل ما يعمل الانسان من خير او شر

فقد كتبه عليه قبل يخلقه انما<sup>66</sup> ارسل الله

الانبياء الى الناس رحمة ولقد كان الكتاب<sup>67</sup>

والقدر يكفى فلا تطن باهله العظيم

الحليم انه يكتب على الانسان الشقا

<sup>65</sup> Read in the passive.

<sup>66</sup> Reading ما.

<sup>67</sup> Reading المكتوب, “what has been written, what was prescribed.” Cf. Latin 324A-B.

ثم يعذبه وما كان ليفعل ذلك لعزته

الرب اعدل واحكم وامجد من يمجد

يظلم احد من الناس بل رحمة وسعت

السموات والارض فله الحمد على حلمه

ولكنا نقول ان الله خلق الانسان بصيرا

سميعا وبيبا له الخير والشر وعلمه وحذرها

ونصره وانذره ورغبه فيما عنده

وقال ان عملتم خيرا كافيتكم عليه

وان عملتم شرا عاقبتكم عليه فلا حجة

للإنسان على ربه يوم القيمة بل خطفهم

على الموعدة فلا يهلك من يهلك

منهم الا عن بينة وكتاب قد انزله

الله عليه وبين له ما ياتى وما يذر

ولا حول ولا قوة الا بالله

فقد فسرت لك ما سالت عنه وكتب

به اليك وكتب

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله المنعم المرشد المعين على الخير

المرغوب اليه في تنوير ما يقصر عنه

علم البشر وعقولهم قد اتاني

كتابك وفهمت الذي ذكرت

وعرفت الذي تزكينا به من دخولك

في ديننا ومقالاتكم لنا فيما

تجادلونا عنه حتى ظن كل متكلم

منكم ومجادل انه لا دين لنا

ولا حجة ننطق بها عن انفسنا تبصرنا

من طول سكوتنا وكفنا عنكم

باوضع المنازل عندكم

واحقرها في انفسكم فسالتني

ان اكتب اليك في ذلك كتابا

واوضح لك به جوابا وانير به

قولا ما تجهله من امر ديننا

ودينك فقد سالت في ذلك

امرا صعبا لا يعين عليه الا الله  
 وذلك لأنك بمنزلة استحقرت  
 لمكانك من الشرعة فيها جميع  
 الناس فليس لمكلفك منه  
 النصف لمكانك من الشرعة  
 والضجر والتجبر الذي اعطيت  
 من السلطان وان العلم لا يوعيه  
 الا الصدر المتواضع والقول لا  
 يقبله الا الحليم المحتمل لما يسمع  
 فاما من كان بمثل منزلتك  
 من الشرعة فلا يامنه مكلمه  
 من اجهام اذاه عليه ولن يسلم  
 مدارسة من شر ضجره وسرعه  
 غضبه وقد عرفت انك اية  
 المسلم الذي يومن بلسانه بكتب  
 الانبياء ويکفر بها اذا

قريت<sup>68</sup> عليه انك لا تصدق بما في

كتب الانبيا وبما انزل على العباد

في الانجيل من القول ولا بقول في ذلك

الا ما في قرآنك ولن يدعك سلطانك

تخضع لامر الله في كتبه ولا تقبل نصيحة

ناصح لك يكلمك بالرشد ولم ارى

صاحبك اذ جادله اهل الكتاب

اسرع اليهم بغضبة ولا تطاول عليهم

بسلطانه ولكنه قال لهم امنا بما انزل علينا

وانزل اليكم وان الاهنا والا هكم الله واحد

ثم نهاك عن مجادلتنا فابيت ان تطيعه

حيث يقول لا تجادلوا اهل الكتاب

الا بالتي هي احسن فكان من حفظكم

وصيته فيما ارد ذلك على ديننا وقذفك

ايانا بالقبح والزامك ديننا اسم الكفر

والاشراك في كل محضر اذ لم تعرف

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<sup>68</sup> Reading in the passive, meaning, "...when it was read to him..."

انه لا ينبغي لك ان تعيب علينا دين الله

خاصة دونهم بما وصف به ديننا

من الاقتصاد وامرک ان تطلب

من ملك يوم الدين ان يهدیك من الظلاله

الى الصراط المستقيم ليس صراط

اليهود المغضوب عليهم ولا صراط

من ليس من اهل الكتاب من المجروس

ولا الضالين من مشركي العرب

في الجاهلية بل صراط النصارى وهي

الامة المقصدة الذي انعم الله عليهم

من اهل الكتاب قبلكم ولم تعلم انه

المسلم انه من يكون من حزب من في السما

فله من الفضل ما ليس لغيره ومن في

الارض فكفا ان المسيح بكينونه في

السما فضل على جميع الانبياء الذين هم

في الارض كذلك من اتبعه وامن به

من النصارى فله من الفضل عند الله

ما ليس لاحد من سائر الاديان

وان قلت انا من حزب المسيح ومن يومن به اية  
 المر فعليك فيما تخالف به قول المسيح بعدك  
 من لزوم وصيته هو يرد عليك قوله ويخبرك  
 انك انما تود عيسى المسيح بلسانك وتبرا منه  
 بقلبك ومخالفتك كتابه وان قلت ان كتابي  
 يقول من ابتغ غير الاسلام دينا فلن يقبل منه  
 وهو في الاخرة من الخاسرين انه في القرآن كتابك  
 ما ينقض عليك هذا الاية وذلك حيث  
 يقول اسلم الله ما في السموات والارض  
 طوعا وكرها افلا من بحق كتابك  
 قد دخل في الاسلام جميع الناس والبهائم و  
 لطير والشياطين ان شاؤوا وان ابوا فان كان  
 كذلك فهل منزلتك من الله في حلف  
 الاسلام الا كمنزلة من دخل فيه منهم  
 وليس تفخر باسلامك علينا وليس لك من  
 الفضل على احد من في الدنيا من ساير الخالقين  
 ومن هدى

فاعلم ان دين الله هو الايمان وليس الاسلام

بدين يدين الله به ولو لا انه كذلك لم

يجعل صاحبك فصلا بين المؤمنين وا

المسلمين حيث يقول المؤمنين والمؤمنات

والمسلمين والمسلمات خترك بذلك

ان الاسلام ليس بالايمان من المؤمنين

وانتم المسلمين اسلتمت تومنوا بال المسيح

كلمة الله وروحه الحالة في بدنك

فلم تفعلوا ومصداق ذلك حيث

يقول رسولك قالت الاعراب امنا

قال لم تومنوا نكر عليهم ذلك

لكن قولوا اسلمنا ولم يدخل الايمان

في قلوبهم ثم اتبع ذلك وقال سوا

[ع][يهم انذرتهم ام لم تتنذر هم لا

[يو][منوا ختم الله عل قلوبهم وسمعهم

وا[بص][ار هم فالله ير غمك تقول لا

تومنوا

*The First letter of Leo*

*1. Opening*

*1.1. Opening formula, Authorship, Greeting*

(62v) In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. From Leo, the Emperor of Byzantium to ‘Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz, the Commander of the Faithful, Peace.

*1.2. Doxology*

Now then, we believe in one God, before and after whom there is no (other) god. We know that God, by His grace, truly created this world, for the world itself cannot exist for itself.<sup>69</sup>

*1.3. Preface*

You have written to me mentioning about the story of Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, and the matter of this world. Now, I will explain to you about this with satisfactory explanation. God created man from the lowest element of his creation, from dust, which is the substance of the earth. Then he ennobled him and then He exalted him and appointed him as the vicar of His creation and instructed him and showed him the two ways<sup>70</sup> and what the reward for each one is. And God began to teach man (63r) about all creatures and their descendants according to the faith of the prophets, just as a teacher teaches his lesson little by little, as much as one can understand it.

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<sup>69</sup> Literally, “for it is impossible for it to be.”

<sup>70</sup> i.e., the way of good and bad.

Then He approached Adam and commanded him, saying, “Do not come near the tree, nor eat from it.” But Adam disobeyed God and obeyed Satan, and transgressed against what God had commanded him. When he disobeyed Him,<sup>71</sup> he died. But <after he died>, God made him return to Him after nine hundred and thirty six years.<sup>72</sup> He made Adam and his descendent inherit death.<sup>73</sup>

But the people have not yet understood the signs of God and what the prophets taught about Him, and could not comprehend the Scriptures,<sup>74</sup> during the long time between Adam and Christ. He wanted to show the fullness of His grace to them and to manifest the goodness of His economy and the power of His mercy to them, by sending Christ to this world. (63v) We find in the Scripture of God that, “Whoever inherits the inheritance shall pay the debt <first>.”<sup>75</sup> We have inherited from our ancestor, Adam, death and sin due to disobedience. But this status has remained with us until a man of our nature, a man perfect in faith and who was obedient to the Creator and disobedient to the Satan the enemy, rose up. When Christ obeyed God,<sup>76</sup> he bequeathed life, rank and honor, whereas Adam bequeathed death and sin, due to disobedience. Thus, there is neither deviation nor blunt in the religion of God.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, sin abided in the descendants of Adam and the death was after them only until Christ rose up in the world and

<sup>71</sup> Literally, “when he opposite to what God had commanded him...”

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Genesis 5:5, which says, Adam died when he was nine hundred thirty years old.

<sup>73</sup> I understand the subject of اورتے as God, who first made Adam and his descendants die as the punishment of Adam’s sin. Or it may be read as “It (i.e., the devil) has made him and his descendants inherit death.” This alternative reading is supported by the phrase in the “Triune,” which says, “But the Devil has already allured Adam, and seduced him, and caused him to inherit (اورتے) death and disobedience.” Both Leo and the author of the “Triune” describe the result of Adam’s fall. See Samir, “Apology,” 90 (trans.), 92 (text).

<sup>74</sup> Literally, “... and they tarried on the Scriptures...”

<sup>75</sup> An allusion to Romans 6:23; Paul expresses death as the wage of sin.

<sup>76</sup> Literally, “when Christ did so...”

<sup>77</sup> The word, دین الله is taken from Q 110:2.

elucidated the world to come.<sup>78</sup> No one before him had spoken about the matter of the world to come. Then came for us the signs of the prophets in order that we might believe in his word. Christ cleaned the leper, gave hearing to (64r) the deaf, made the dumb speak, made all the lame brought to him able to stand, cast out the evil spirit from men, raised the dead, walked upon the water, transformed water into wine, and other signs that I am not writing about. Not only Christ performed these signs, but his followers, those who were with him, and his apostles who were his disciples did as well. He gave them such power so that they might lead the people from their evil ways to one God. If they (i.e., people) had not seen the signs through the disciples, they would not have abandoned their sacrifices and what their fathers have venerated.

## *2. The questions of 'Umar*

### *2.1. On the Cross and the Eucharist*

You wrote to me asking about Christ and the Eucharist, saying, “What is the Cross? And what is the Eucharist?”

### *2.2. Jesus is not the Son of God, but His prophet*

You also said, “Why do you venerate (64v) Jesus, the prophet of God and why do you regard him as God? But he testifies about himself in his Gospel, ‘I am the prophet of God to men. Therefore, whoever believes in me, he believes in the one who sent me, and whoever denies me, he denies the one who sent me.’<sup>79</sup> When God lifted him up to Him, he said to the

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<sup>78</sup> i.e., the kingdom of God.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. John 12:44.

apostles, ‘I am ascending to my Lord and your Lord, and to my God and your God.’<sup>80</sup> He testifies about himself that he is the prophet of God.”

### *2.3. The alteration of the Scriptures by Ezra*

You said, “The Torah has been altered. The prophet Ezra himself altered it and wrote it wrongly. The Torah does not mention resurrection, paradise, or hell.”

### *2.4. Adam and Jesus are the same to God as human beings: he ate, drank, slept, etc. How could God enter into Mary’s unclean body?*

You said, “What Jesus is to God is like what Adam is to God.<sup>81</sup> Also, you said, “How could God enter into a woman through odorous mouth, and how could God eat, drink, sleep, rejoice, pray, and grieve, as you have written about him?” I know it is only (65r) because of the lack of your knowledge about Christ which makes you tell me so.

### *2.5. Mary, the mother of Jesus is Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses*

You said that “Mary, the daughter of Imran,<sup>82</sup> the sister of Aaron and Moses,<sup>83</sup> is the mother of Jesus.”

<sup>80</sup> Cf. John 20:17.

<sup>81</sup> Q 3:59.

<sup>82</sup> Q 66:12.

<sup>83</sup> Q 19:28.

### *3. Leo's answers*

#### *3.1. On Mary*

But how can this be? Mary, Aaron, and Moses died when they left Egypt during their journey, and no one among them entered the Holy House (i.e., Jerusalem). Rather, Mary, the sister of Aaron died of a skin disease,<sup>84</sup> long time before Mary, the mother of Jesus was born and her father was born. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a descendent of David the prophet, and she was from the tribe of Judah, son of Jacob.

#### *3.2. On the divinity of Christ*

##### *3.2.1. Introduction*

Therefore, if you want to know about this, then we will explain to you so that you have no doubt about this or any other thing concerning it. Examine the Old Testament which was sent by God to the children of Israel - the Torah, Psalms, and books of the Prophets. Then examine the New Testament - the Gospel and what God has sent through the apostle of Jesus. (65v) Then you will find from the story of Christ a clear matter and a right way. You will be pleased with it and will have no doubt, when the Holy Scriptures prove one another and the prophets prove one another, so that it comes to an agreement concerning Jesus Christ, whom God sent, in the Old and the New Testament. Then you will understand and know the reality of Jesus. And I will explain to you about the matter of our religion, how we worship God, and our laws which we follow so that you understand, God willing. Then I will explain to you about what I am writing to

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. Numbers 12:10-15, 20:1. See discussion in the section 3.1 in the chapter III.

you, <giving> proof and testimony from the prophets and the Old and New Testament, that what we say about Christ is true. So understand what I have written to you and comprehend it. Ponder it carefully and reflect it repeatedly until you come to comprehend it, God willing.

### *3.2.2. The oneness of God: the first analogy of the fire that appeared to Moses*

I shall tell to you God first created heaven and earth, which cannot encompass Him nor can one comprehend how He is. (66r) Moses only saw light on Mount Sinai, and that which he called light, that light said, “Moses, fear not!” From His light, which was from Him, was His ray. So He called it His Word. And from the ray of His light, He lit. So He called it the Holy Spirit. Hence we say, “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” and all of them are from God, one thing. We do not make distinction between them, and <they are> one light. This very one light illuminates the whole earth. The light and the Holy Spirit from the light are one; therefore, we say, “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, god from god, light from light, God from God, one thing.” We do not make distinction between each one of them. Therefore, this is the reality of the Son and the matter in which he is.

### *3.2.3. Christ is not like Adam to God*

As for your statement in your Scripture that, “Jesus to God is like Adam <to God>. He created him (i.e., Adam) from dust, and said to him, ‘Be!’ and he was,”<sup>85</sup> we consider that the story about him, and his actions and matters about him may look similar to those of Adam, (66v)

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<sup>85</sup> Q 3:59.

save for the fact that Christ obeyed God. However, Adam, unto whom Satan entered with lies, obeyed him (i.e., Satan) and disobeyed his Lord so that He humbled him down with death.

### *3.2.4. The omnipresence of God: God is everywhere*

Do you not know that Christ is the Word of God and the sign of the Holy Spirit, and that the body of Christ is today in heaven?<sup>86</sup> God is in Christ as His Word and His Spirit, for His Word and Spirit are from God. Where the Word of God and His Spirit are, is God.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, through Christ, we worship God, the one who is in heaven and on earth, not the one who disobeyed and sinned. Do not suppose that God, the most Blessed and the Most High, dwells in small place or in many places;<sup>88</sup> but He is equally everywhere. God called His Word, by which He created everything, ‘Son.’ Therefore, we say, ‘the Son of God’ because God is the Father of His Word. Wherever (67r) the Word of God is, is God. The Word of God is from God and the Spirit of God is from God. The Word of God creates whatever He wishes and the Spirit of God creates whatever He wishes. He is one. Do not think that we worship two gods; we worship one God. We do not associate anything with Him. He is the eternally living one.

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<sup>86</sup> Allusion to Jesus’ bodily ascension to heaven in Acts 1:9.

<sup>87</sup> The text reads, “God is in Christ as His Word and His Spirit, for His Word is Spirit from God.” However, this does not make sense. Leo’s argument in this passage is simple: Christ is God because God is in Him as the Word and Spirit which are from Him. The same argument appears again in 69r:10-69v:1 with the same expression.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. 69r:7, which says, “....in great place or small place.”

### 3.2.5. Testimonies from the Old Testament

I will tell you about this (i.e., the divinity of Christ) with evidences and witnesses that you are not able to deny, and the prophets of God, the Just shall give the proof of my words saying that: God called Jesus, ‘Son,’ and through His Word, He created everything. He (i.e., David) said in the Psalms, “Through His Word, God created everything.”<sup>89</sup> David also said, “By the Word of the Lord, the heaven became firm and by the Spirit of His mouth all its powers <were made>.”<sup>90</sup> And David also said, “Oh, Lord! Your Word is in heaven always.”<sup>91</sup> He said (67v) “God sent his Word and cured them.”<sup>92</sup> And Job the faithful testified to the Holy Spirit and said, “The Holy Spirit has made me.”<sup>93</sup> And Moses the prophet said, “The Spirit of God was upon the water.”<sup>94</sup> Isaiah the prophet said, “The Holy Spirit has made me.”<sup>95</sup> And Moses the prophet said, “He who lifted up heaven without a pillar walks upon the sea as he does upon the land.”<sup>96</sup> And Isaiah the prophet said, “The Spirit of the Lord anointed me.”<sup>97</sup> And David the prophet said, “You sent Your Spirit and created me, and You renewed the face of the earth.”<sup>98</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Genesis 1. The ascription of this verse to David in the Psalm seems to be a mistake.

<sup>90</sup> Psalm 33:6. The second part of the sentence, “...and all its powers were made by the spirit of His mouth” was added later. It is written in different ink, in the left side margin.

<sup>91</sup> Psalm 119:89.

<sup>92</sup> Psalm 108:20.

<sup>93</sup> Job 33:4. From this part to onward, the text sometimes switches the word “Spirit of God” to “the Holy Spirit.” It seems to be an interpretation of the Old Testament verses in the New Testament context to demonstrate that the doctrine of Trinity has already proved in the Old Testament. Leo does not distinguish the “Spirit of God” from “the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Genesis 1:2.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Isaiah 61:1? It seems to be a mistake. However, Leo gives a correct citation of Isaiah 61:1 a few lines below

<sup>96</sup> I could not identify this word of Moses. The phrase that “He who lifted up heaven without a pillar” seems directly taken from Q 13:2, which says, “الله الذي رفع السموات بغير عمد ترجمه“ That God upon the sea as he does upon the land is also not identified anywhere in the Old Testament.

<sup>97</sup> Isaiah 61:1.

<sup>98</sup> Psalm 104:30.

Your good Spirit leads me to the firm land.”<sup>99</sup> Now then what testimony is more true than this and what story is more clear than this? This is from the Old Testament and there are many more beside it. The Word and the Spirit are from God, and they created creatures <together>. When proof and testimonies from the Old Testament also demonstrate <that Christ is the Son of God>: (68r) Isaiah the prophet said, “The virgin shall conceive and shall give birth to a son, and call him ‘Emmanuel’ which means God is with us.”<sup>100</sup> David the prophet said, “You are my son and today I gave birth to you. Ask me, and I will give you nations as you inheritance, and the end of the earth your possessions.”<sup>101</sup> Zechariah the prophet said, “Rejoice and delight, Oh, daughter of Zion. Sing and be happy, Oh, daughter of Jerusalem. Your king is coming, riding on a foal of a donkey.”<sup>102</sup>

This is the testimony about the Son. God called His Word and His Wisdom, ‘Son.’ But do not think that God accepts fasting and prayer of anyone among men, in the same way that He accepted fasting and prayer in Christ. I spoke and explained to you about what you cannot disregard, nor avoid it, for my witness are the prophets, who are just and pleasing <to God>.

### *3.2.6. Testimony from the Qur’ān*

(68v) If you want to learn about the knowledge about Christ and the matter about him, then I shall explain that to you in the best and the most appropriate way; this knowledge is the best medicine. Your Scripture (i.e., the Qur’ān) says that God sent His Word and His Spirit,

<sup>99</sup> Psalm 143:10.

<sup>100</sup> Isaiah 7:14.

<sup>101</sup> Psalm 2:7-8.

<sup>102</sup> Zechariah 9:9.

which are from Him, to Mary and created from her a perfect man in body and spirit.<sup>103</sup> Then God dwelled as His Spirit and His Word in that man without separation, forever.

*3.2.7. The omnipresence of God (continued): the second analogy of the sun and its rays*

If you say, “How could God dwell inside a man?” then we shall give you an example of this so that you can understand, God willing. Do you not know that the sun is on the surface of heaven, but its first rays and light are on earth? Or do you not know that the sun is in heaven, but it comes into the chamber through the window and glows the chamber with that which is (69r) from the sun, but the sun is not diminished? It (i.e., the sun) is <also> on land and sea. If the sun, which is a created thing is like any other creatures, and if you so desire I can add more <examples> to this, then what would you say about the one who is the most High and Sublime? Do you not know that God is in heaven, on earth and what is between them? God is not in a great or small place, but He is equally everywhere. So, God is in Christ, in heaven, on earth, and He is equally everywhere. But God dwells in Christ with glory, honor, greatness, mercy, and in kinship to him, on account of the Word of God which is in him. For the Word of God is from God and God is with His Word, and the Spirit of God is from God and God is with His Spirit, (69v) whatever is from God, is God.

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<sup>103</sup> Q 4:171.

### *3.2.8. Christians' belief in one God and the teaching of Christ*

You say that we are infidels,<sup>104</sup> and you call us ‘polytheists.’<sup>105</sup> But we are not infidels; we believe in the one whom we know. I am not saying that they are two gods, God forbids! You say that a Christian believes in God by worshipping two gods. But we only take His Word as God. Therefore, we say Christ is the son of God because God is the father of His Word. We believe in God the Father who was not begotten, and we believe in God the Son who was begotten from the Father<sup>106</sup> who did not beget, and we believe in the Holy Spirit which did not beget nor was begotten; three names, but one God and one Lord.

He is the Father and the Son, the Word and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit which is with Him. Therefore, these are three names, but one thing and His Spirit is one, one honor, (70r) and one God. God has chosen this man (i.e., Christ) and dwelled in him as His Word, to assemble the people on the Day of Resurrection through him,<sup>107</sup> and to set him as judge between the angels and people, in order <for them> to look at this man, who sees God, who is unseen. He dwells in him as the Word, he who brings the Good News, and the Spirit. Where the Spirit of God is, God is.

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. Q 5:73.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Q 2:135.

<sup>106</sup> The sentence, “The Son who was begotten from the Father” is a later addition.

<sup>107</sup> For the word حشر, meaning “to gather,” in the eschatological context, see Gardet, *E.I.* vol. V, p.236 under the article, “Kiyamā.”

### *3.2.9. Non-violent character of Christianity and Christians' eschatological hope*

Therefore, when Christ came, he did not bring an army or a sword. Rather he only commanded us <to live> a pure life in this world. He also, commanded that we should live a life of virtue<sup>108</sup> by fasting and prayer. He commanded us to forgive the one who does evil to us and trespasses against us. He, also, commanded us to do charity privately and with <good> intention. And he commanded us to pray without hypocrisy so that we will be worthy of what Christ has promised us in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>109</sup>

### *3.2.10. Christ's obedience to God and his death for God's economy*

(70v) As for what you have asked us about Christianity, it is the same as I have described to you in my letter, and what I have explained and written to you about the story of Adam. He died due to his disobedience against his Lord; thus his descendants after him were still in the wrath of God; so God's judgment was severe for them, for every person and nation, until Christ rose up. He completed the commandments of God in complete glory and in everything in the Scriptures.

But Satan tempted him to lead him astray from the way of God so that he might commit sin just as Adam sinned. But he (i.e., Satan) was not able to do anything.<sup>110</sup> Then Satan entered unto the Jews; and they envied Christ and grudged him when sinners believed in him when they listened to him and wonderful good deeds were done by him. (71r) Then, Christ desired to die

<sup>108</sup> Literally, "we should walk upon the way of strong faith..."

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Matthew 6:5.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13.

for the sinners.<sup>111</sup> Even though he did not sin, nor was he kin to death, he offered himself to God as an offering for our sin. And it was not that God, who is in Christ as His Word and his Spirit, was weak or incapable; rather if He had wished, He could have saved Christ from the Jews and destroy them. But, God, by His Word and His grace, allowed the Jews to do what they wanted to do to Christ. So they crucified him. Therefore, he lived, died and was buried, not being made to appear like that.<sup>112</sup> There were Jewish guards at the grave for three days until Christ rose up by God's will, His command, and His Spirit, which dwelt in Christ. The Jews and Satan were disgraced and the faith and the light of the truth were shown to the people through the resurrection of Christ. And at that time, people believed trusted that Christ is true. If Christ had not been crucified, died, (71v), buried, or resurrected and revealed himself and remained forty days after his resurrection, people would never have accepted his resurrection to be true. As for the crucifixion of Christ, his death and his resurrection, it is as I have written to you. God's gift and grace are upon the people, and in them He was pleased. This is the interpretation of Christ and Christianity.

### *3.3. On the Eucharist*

#### *3.3.1. The table from heaven*

As for your question about the Eucharist and what you said and asked about, I will tell to you what we know about it, God willing! I read in your scripture, "The apostles said to Jesus,

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<sup>111</sup> Meaning, all mankind who are still subject to sin.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. 85v, where Leo alluded Matthew 26: 53-54. In 85v Leo claims that Christ died willingly to fulfill what was foretold about him. Christ's crucifixion is true and it has been done by the will of God and Christ. See also Q 4:157.

‘Ask your Lord to send us a table from heaven.’ He said, ‘Fear God, if you are believers.’ They said, ‘We wish to eat from it and have tranquil heart, to know that we were truthful, and to be among the witnesses.’ (72r) Jesus said, ‘Oh, God! Send us a table from heaven that it may be a feast and a sign from you for the first to the last among us. And provide us with the means of sustenance for you are the best of the providers.’ He (i.e., God) said, “I will send it to you; for the one who disbelieves, I shall punish him with a punishment by which I will not punish anyone in the world.”<sup>113</sup> And this is the very table which God has sent down to the apostles through Jesus. And we adhere to it to this day.

### *3.3.2. The true sacrifice*

You know that anyone, who seeks <God>, offers a sacrifice and a gift, glorifying God. He (i.e., God) is pleased with him and gives grace to whoever approaches Him with faithful intention, except they who transgress against God and their deeds are only with Satan, idols, and graven images. Thus, they who have gone astray from the way of God shall perish.

### *3.3.3. The last supper*

(72v) Listen, O Man, when Christ was killed, the Jews came to him at night, and it was the night of the crucifixion. He told his followers who were his disciples that Jews would come.<sup>114</sup> Thus, he told them about it (i.e., the crucifixion) and spoke to them about his

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. Q 5:112-115.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Matthew 20:17-19, 16:21; Mark 9:31, 10:33-34; Luke 9:22, 18:31-33.

resurrection and that they would abandon him but would return to him after his resurrection.<sup>115</sup>

Then at that night, Christ ate with his followers. He took bread in his hands, blessed it and prayed over it, and said to them, “Eat! This is my body<sup>116</sup> which I offer to God as a sacrifice and a gift for <the forgiveness of> sins of the world.”<sup>117</sup> Then he did the same with the cup which was filled with wine, and said to them, “Drink! This is my blood which I will offer through the wood of the Cross.”<sup>118</sup> Thus the disciples consecrated that bread and wine with the Holy Spirit and the prayer which Christ taught them and handed down to them. Then they (i.e., the disciples) handed it (i.e., the prayer) down to those who came after them so that they might offer it (i.e., as a sacrifice). Do not conclude and do not consider (73r) the wine and the bread to be ordinary bread and wine, but consider the sublimity and grace, and the Holy Spirit and his blessing in them. But the Jews regarded Christ as a man, like one of us. Then he resurrected the dead and showed many signs which I have written to you. Seen by eyes, <he is> just a man like us, but as for the deeds, <he is> God. Thus whoever believes in him is victorious, and whoever hardens his heart and disbelieves is wretched and shall perish. This is the reality of Eucharist and its matters. I have explained to you that which you cannot ignore or reproach.

Jesus commanded concerning the bread and wine that the priest should consecrate them with the Word of God and call the Holy Spirit upon them so that there will be forgiveness of sins in them for whoever receives it with faith<sup>119</sup> and believes in it, just as Christ has commanded.

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 36-38.

<sup>116</sup> Alternative reading: “This is my glory.” See n. 38.

<sup>117</sup> Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19.

<sup>118</sup> Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24; Luke 22:20.

<sup>119</sup> Literally, “with faithful intention.”

(73v) And they are sufficient just as was the body of Christ sufficient. Therefore, we believe that in this bread and wine, after they are consecrated with what is in the body of Christ, God and His spirit abide. Thus he commanded us to do that (i.e., to celebrate the Eucharist). We must remember Christ's grace upon us and his self-sacrifice on our behalf, so that we come <to the hour of> resurrection and meet him face to face without any shame.

### *3.3.4. Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension are true*

Do not reproach <us> that Christ was not crucified, and that was made to appear like that to the Jews.<sup>120</sup> As for God, Who is in Christ, there is no illusion or likeness or falsehood with him. The crucifixion of Christ is true, and so are his death, his ascension to heaven, and his coming down from heaven to this world at the end of time. He is the judge of all human beings by God, Who is in him. So listen and understand!<sup>121</sup> I have explained (74r) to you about the reality of Eucharist and its matter, the status of the Cross and the veneration of Christians of Christ.

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<sup>120</sup> Q 4:157.

<sup>121</sup> Literally, "So listen and let your mind help you."

### *3.4. On the veneration of the Christ*

#### *3.4.1. The veneration of the Ark of the Covenant of the ancient Israelites and the veneration of Christ of Christians*

You have heard and do know that the children of Israel were venerating the Ark of the Covenant in which God commanded Moses to put the two tablets of the Torah.<sup>122</sup> It was only made out of wood. It was not the gold or wood that they venerated, but the commandment of God and His Scriptures which He sent down to Moses the prophet, and it was in the Ark of Covenant. Afterwards, when the children of Israel left Mount Sinai, they came to the land of Sham after Moses died.<sup>123</sup> And they built the Holy House <there>.<sup>124</sup> Then they venerated God in the Holy House and on Mount Sinai. Yet, they were not called ‘polytheists,’ nor was it said to them, “you are venerating (74v) two lords” or “you are worshipping two gods,” or “gold” or “wood.” Therefore, that (i.e., the Ark of Covenant) is the greatest, saving for the one in whom the Word and Spirit of God dwell. Thus, Christ is greater and more exalted <than><sup>125</sup> the Ark of Covenant. So we venerate the Word of God and His Spirit which dwell in Jesus and through which God created heaven and earth. It (i.e., the Word of God) is not created by Him, but it is the creator. Therefore, we must venerate it which is in that body.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Exodus 25:10, 31:18, 34:4.

<sup>123</sup> Moses died and could not enter into the Promised Land (Cf. Deuteronomy 34:5-8).

<sup>124</sup> Cf. 2 Chronicles 3:1; 1 Kings 6:1-35, 8:1-11.

<sup>125</sup> Or, it may be read as “Christ is greater and more exalted, and <also is> the Ark of Covenant.” This passage seems to have been corrupted. Now, Leo constantly emphasizes the point that Christians are not venerating the body of Christ, but the Word and Spirit of God in him. Leo compares it with the veneration of the Ark of Covenant of ancient Israelites; even though the Ark of Covenant, in which the Torah was placed, is great and worth to be venerated by ancient Israelites, Christ, in which the Word and Spirit of God dwell, is even greater than that. Thus, it seems more reasonable to read *وَمِنْ*, “than” rather than “and.”

<sup>126</sup> This is a convoluted sentence. The Arabic reads: *وليس ينبغي لنا ان نسجد لها في ذلك الجسد* which means, we must “not” venerate it which is in that body. This sentence, however, does not fit to Leo’s argument. From the previous sentence, which says, “So we venerate the Word of God and His Spirit, which dwell in Jesus...,” it is clear that Leo

### *3.5. On the veneration of the Cross of Christ*

#### *3.5.1. Christ's crucifixion*

As for the reality of Cross: when the Jews came to Christ, they searched for him and crucified him with two robbers, one on his right side and the other on his left,<sup>127</sup> in order to falsify his word by them.<sup>128</sup> On that day, the earth shook, the sun disappeared and the rocks were split. And the curtain of the Jewish temple was torn from bottom to top. Many among the Jews trusted it and believed in him.<sup>129</sup>

#### *3.5.2. Hiding of the Cross*

(75r) When Christ was resurrected, the Jews were afraid of it. So they <gathered in> a house of one of them in haste. Since they had commanded that matter (i.e., the crucifixion of Christ), a great fear came upon them as they saw and realized the reality of Christ that revealed to them. Then they took that wooden Cross and said, “We will be asked about this wooden Cross, and we ourselves, not anyone else, will answer for it.” Then, they buried them (i.e., crosses). And there was no one at the place they were buried, except the family of that house. And the man, the head of that house did not tell about them <to> his son or to his brother, but did tell only at the moment of his last will and testament. When he was dying, at the time of his last

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has intended to say that Christians should venerate the Word of God and His Spirit, which are in the body of Christ. Moreover, elsewhere, He keep arguing that Christ is God for God is “in him” as His Word and Spirit. For Leo, where the Word and Spirit of God are, is God. (Cf. 66v). Thus this sentence should be read without negation.

<sup>127</sup> Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:33; John 19:18.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Matthew 16:21, 20:17-19; Mark 9:31, 10:33-34; Luke 9:22, 18:31-33.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Matthew 27:45-54; Mark 15:33-39; Luke 23:44-47.

will and testament, he said to him (i.e., to his son or to his brother), “You will answer for the wooden Cross. One day, you will be asked about it.”

But when Christ wanted to bring about his resurrection and his power and to punish the Jews, and to show his mercy and grace to the people (75v), they had blessing in the Cross and Christianity spread out, throughout the sea and the land for three hundred years. But the Cross was still hidden in the ground. No one knew about it except the man from the family of that house.

### *3.5.3. Vision of Constantine*

Then Christ wanted <to reveal the place of his Cross>, He showed his Cross to one of the Byzantine emperors, named Constantine, who was not a Christian at that time. When he was out to do battle against his enemies, he began to call upon God, asking for His help and saying, “O God, the Creator of heaven and earth! If You wish, give me kingship and grant me power if You want, by Your mercy and grace. I ask You to show me and guide me to the truest religion, which is the most beloved to you.” While he was calling God and petitioning Him, he was with his army confronting his enemies.

But he lifted up his eyes to heaven (76r) and saw two great illuminating pillars, one across the other, in the shape of the cross. And there was a writing in Greek written in them, which was more luminous than them (i.e., the pillars): “You have called upon God to show you the truest religions and what is the most beloved to Him. This is the sign of the best of religions and the most beloved and the dearest to God. Therefore, mark your banners with which you are aiming at your enemies as what you have seen.” Then he commanded <his armies to do as God

commanded>. Then the banners were changed and attached with a cross. Then God, the most Blessed and Exalted, made him victorious against his enemies he was engaging with, and He made him triumphant without any difficulty.

When he returned, he could not find tranquility of heart until he asked about the cross of Christ. Then they said to him, “When Christ was resurrected from the grave they (i.e., the Jews) hid the wood, which is the Cross.” But there was no one who knew the place the crosses were buried, (76v) except for the man from the family of that house.

### *3.5.4. Finding of the true Cross*

Then the emperor sent his mother, whose name was Helena, from Byzantium with a large group. She arrived in Jerusalem, which is the Holy House.<sup>130</sup> Then she inquired about the nobles and the prominent figures among the Jews, and those who are descendants of their forefathers, until she reached the family of that house which knew about the Cross. At that time, she severely tortured whom she was able to find, and said to them, “If you love your lives and want to live, bring out the Cross of Christ to me!” When the turn of the man from the family of that evil house came around, he denied <that he knew it> and blasphemed, so the queen commanded that he be tortured. He was put in a cistern for three days, without having any food.

Then when he believed that bad things <would happen to him> and <felt> fear of death,<sup>131</sup> (77r) the soldiers, who were guarding him, reported the noble queen: “If she lets me out

<sup>130</sup> Leo presents two names in this passage, first the Hebrew name “Jerusalem” and then the Arabic name, “Holy House,” to refer to the city of Jerusalem. Elsewhere in this text, “Holy House” is more commonly used.

<sup>131</sup> Literally, when he was sure about <the happening of> the bad things and the fear of death...

of here, then I will show her what she is asking for.” When they brought him out, he showed them the place and said to them, “Dig up and you shall find what you want.” Then the queen commanded that <they do so>, and they dug up the place. While they were digging up, thick smoke with good smell came to them. When they dug up deep, three pieces of wood appeared to them. They were taken out, but they looked similar to one another to the queen; and she did not know which one among them was the wooden Cross of Christ.

At that moment, there were people coming out of the city carrying a coffin. Then the queen ordered <to put pieces of wood upon the dead>. One of the three pieces of wood be placed upon the dead, but he did not move. Then the second piece of wood was also placed upon the dead, but he did not move. When the third piece of wood was placed upon him, the dead one rose up.

### *3.5.5. Building churches in Jerusalem and sending the Cross to Constantine*

(77v) There is no mistake or [ . . . ]<sup>132</sup> about it. Many among the rest of the Jews, who were present at that time, when they saw it, they believed in Christ and trusted him. As for the man who showed the wooden Cross, he believed in him and became a bishop of Jerusalem until his death. Then the queen built at the place of the grave and Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, a great, beautiful building, along with other churches; she paid for one third of the cost. And she left a small part of the Cross in Jerusalem, and carried the wooden Cross to her son in Constantinople. This is the story concerning the Cross and its interpretation, matter, and reality.

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<sup>132</sup> This word cannot be identified.

Therefore, we venerate Christ through the Cross in order that we remember the grace of Christ upon us and his death for us.

### *3.5.6. Christ's Cross as the sign of Christianity*

The Cross is the sign of the Christianity and the symbol of the religion. Through the Cross, (78r) Satan and those who believed in him, and those who were infidels on earth were defeated. The Cross is the laws of Christianity and its sign. Therefore, know that those who believe in Christ has his grace in his Cross. This Cross is the very Cross -the archangel Gabriel will be marching with the Cross in front of Christ on the Day of Judgment.<sup>133</sup> And the Cross is light and consolation<sup>134</sup> to those who believe in it. It is the <object of> great faith for the Christians and the way to the eternal life. Therefore, how many of those who were insane, blind, leper, dumb, lame and sick has God cured by the Cross, even to this day, and forever! Therefore, this is the story and the reality of Christ, of Christianity and of the true religion.

Do not let power or wealth or good health deceive you. All of these are like a dream that a person has when he is in sleep. But when he awakes from his sleep, he realizes that what he saw in his sleep is false, not belong to this world or anything of it.

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<sup>133</sup> Probably an allusion to the second coming of Jesus with the divine sign. See Matthew 24:30.

<sup>134</sup> Literally, “coldness of eyes.” Cf. Q 25:74.

### *3.6. Veracity of Christianity*

#### *3.6.1. Introduction*

(78v) And know that through his grace upon us and the plenitude of his mercy, Christ leads us to his kingdom, just as he testified about himself. Thereby, we hope for his mercy and the reward of the prophets. So there are three ways that He (i.e., Christ) has shown that he is God from God and light from light:<sup>135</sup> when he spoke and testified about himself; through many miracles and great wonders he performed which neither man among people nor anyone among the prophets of God performed except God alone by His Word and the Holy Spirit; and when he creates, and forgives sinners and cures all the sick. It is through the power and ability, and light and utmost glory of his, and his honor that he has shown to the disciples on Mount Tabor. When he was revealed to them, they were not able to see that light.<sup>136</sup> Thus, it is sufficient by the sign of the greatness of the light, and <it is> right guidance for anyone who realizes and accepts truth for himself. And anyone who is against truth, he himself is doing wrong. God is the Rich [and] the Praiseworthy.<sup>137</sup>

#### *3.6.2. Christ spoke about himself*

And Christ said to the disciples and also to the children of Israel, “truly, truly, I say to you. (79r) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.<sup>138</sup> But it stood firmly and is established.” Therefore, his word will ring out to the end of the world. He said to

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<sup>135</sup> “...from light” is written in the left side margin.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-10; Luke 9: 28-36.

<sup>137</sup> Q 35:15; 57:24.

<sup>138</sup> Luke 21:33.

the disciples as he sent them to propagate the kingdom of heaven and its repentance in his name, “I was given the kingdom of all the powers of heaven and earth. Therefore, go teach all nations what I have commanded you and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I am with you always during your living days, to the end of the world. Amen.”<sup>139</sup> O men, behold, do you see what Christ has spoken about the baptism, in every nation and on the whole earth, from East to West, and throughout the passage of time, or not? In all nations, it is just as he (i.e., Christ) said when they (i.e., people) accept the religion of Christ and are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, from East to West, at all times. Therefore, if Christ were not God from God and light from light,<sup>140</sup> and if it were not mercy for his creature, then his word would not have stood firm and would not have been established (79v) the matter concerning him in every nation from East to West, from the day when Christ spoke about it to our days, and through all ages. And if Christ were not God from God, he would not have taken the power of heaven and earth and he would not have been able to do it, just as no one else was able to do it. No one rules over the power of heaven and earth except God and His Word and His Spirit. Therefore, Christ said, “I was given the power of heaven and earth and what is between them.”<sup>141</sup> Thus, if Christ were not God from God, he would not have dared to say about himself like this. It is only Christ who was given the power of heaven and earth, in the body which became incarnate among us; therefore, he was a perfect man.

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<sup>139</sup> Matthew 28:18-20. Cf. Mark 16:15.

<sup>140</sup> The phrase, “from light” is written between lines above the word لـلـight.

<sup>141</sup> Matthew 28:18.

*3.6.3. God takes an oath by himself and his promise to Abraham has been fulfilled through Christ*

Thus when God takes an oath, he does it only by Himself.<sup>142</sup> And when it says in the Torah that when God promised Abraham, his friend,<sup>143</sup> the holy land, He swore by His power and said, “I am living, I am the lord, and my glory has filled heaven and earth.”<sup>144</sup> (80r) This land in which you are a foreigner is for you and your descendants.”<sup>145</sup> We never find that God, Blessed and Exalted be His name, takes an oath <by anything at all>, but only by himself. Then what is the oath that you speak about? The Father is His Word and His Spirit. If God takes an oath only by His Word and His Spirit, then He shows the matter about Him in His Scripture to those who believe, and accept the truth and the right guidance.<sup>146</sup>

David also prophesized by the Holy Spirit in man about Christ,<sup>147</sup> and said, “God said, ‘you are my son and today I gave birth to you. Ask me. Then I will give you nations as your inheritance and the end of the world your possessions.’”<sup>148</sup> Thus the nations were the inheritance of Christ through the body, which became incarnate among us. Therefore, he was a perfect man. Why do you chide us that we believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? God takes an oath of that (i.e., inheritance) for Himself.

<sup>142</sup> For the theme that God takes an oath only by himself, see the Letter to the Hebrews, 6:13-17. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews asserts that God promised to Abraham that He would bless him and multiply him, taking an oath by Himself as assurance of the fulfillment of His promise.

<sup>143</sup> Q 4:125; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23. See also 83r:7.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Numbers 14:21.

<sup>145</sup> Genesis 17:8.

<sup>146</sup> For هدی cf. Q 2:2.

<sup>147</sup> Or we may read without later addition “تَبَّا دَاوِدْ اِيضاً بِرُوحِ الْقَسْطَنْسِ عَلَى الْمَسِيحِ، فِي اِنْسَانٍ as, في انسان” David prophesized by the Holy Spirit which descended upon Christ...” However, all later additions and corrections are considered to be the part of the text in this study.

<sup>148</sup> Psalm 2:7-8.

### *3.6.4. Christ's praise to the righteousness and believers as children of God*

Christ also went up to a mountain of Galilee, and then the apostles came to listen to his teaching. (80v) Then he opened his mouth. He said to them<sup>149</sup> and praised those who believe in him, accept his commandment, follow his way, and are obedient to him. He said, “Blessed are those who are bumble in spirit, for they shall have the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who weep in the world, for they shall be at rest in the next world. Blessed are those who are poor, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness in the world, for they shall be satisfied in the next world. Blessed are those who are merciful, for they shall have mercy. Blessed are those who are pure of heart, for they shall see the Lord. Blessed are those who make peace among people, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for their righteousness in the world, for they shall have the kingdom of heaven (81r) Blessed are you when they blame you and persecute you and say false and every evil words against you because of me. Therefore, rejoice and be glad. Your reward shall be great in heaven. For in the same way, they persecuted the prophets before you. You are the salt of earth and the light of the world. Therefore, let your light shine before the people so that they might see your good works and praise your Father who is in heaven.”<sup>150</sup>

If Christ were not God from God and light from light,<sup>151</sup> he would not have dared to praise those who are reproached, rejected and insulted with evil words on account of him. And

<sup>149</sup> In the MS, “He said to him...”

<sup>150</sup> Matthew 5:1-16.

<sup>151</sup> “...from light” has been added later. See 81r in edition.

he said to them, “Be glad and rejoice. Your reward shall be great in heaven.”<sup>152</sup> So who among the prophets and messengers who called the people to God dared to speak to anyone among people with such word? (81v) The prophets of God and his messengers only said, “Lord! Do not make our reward lost.<sup>153</sup> We die for you every day, and we are reproached, rejected, and are greatly afflicted by people on account of you. Oh, God!<sup>154</sup> Increase for us the reward and the light together with Your angels.” But I haven’t found anyone among the prophets of God, neither Moses, whom God spoke to and established as a prophet for the children of Israel, nor anyone else from the messengers to the people who called them to God <saying>, “Blessed are you when they reproach you and reject you, and calumniate against you on account of me.<sup>155</sup> Be glad and rejoice. Your reward shall be great in heaven.”<sup>156</sup> Since they were subservient servants, they accepted the messages of their lord and were reproached and rejected. But thereby, they hoped for the greatest reward with God. But, since he is from God and light from light, Christ came down from heaven for the salvation of Adam and his descendants from the error of Iblīs,<sup>157</sup> (82r) so that he would lead them to His light (i.e., the light of God) and be obedient to Him. He praised those who were reproached, rejected and despised on account of him. And he told them the good news about the great reward and inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, since heaven and earth

<sup>152</sup> Matthew 5:12.

<sup>153</sup> An allusion to Q 11:115: “And be patient, for indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.”

<sup>154</sup> اللهم is adapted from the Qur’ān. Cf. Q: 5:114. This word appears several times in the text.

<sup>155</sup> MS: من أجلانا.

<sup>156</sup> Matthew 5:11-12.

<sup>157</sup> Iblīs is the Islamic word for Satan. In the Qur’ān, “Iblīs” appears 11 times; he is described as being arrogant refusing to prostrate him (Cf. Q 15:30-33, 38:74-76). Iblīs is also known as the tempter of Adam and Christ, which fits well to the context of this letter (Cf. 63r, 70v). For Iblīs, see Wensick-Gardet, “Iblīs,” 668-669.

are in his hands.<sup>158</sup> He is God from God. He rewards his friends who believe <in him> and hope for the next world, and do good deeds to receive the kingdom of heaven, the life eternal, light, and the kingship which is His, together with His holy angels, His prophets and messengers. Thus we are, God willing and there is no power save that of God,<sup>159</sup> those who are rebuked and blamed on account of Christ, but believe in him and hope for the reward from God for us in the kingdom of heaven, together with his angels. Praised be He, who gave us the faith in Christ and made us His friends and a people in obedience to Him.

### *3.6.5. Proliferation of Christianity as the proof of the veracity of Christianity*

#### *3.6.5.1. Christian churches in the whole world*

Christ also said (82v) to the disciples and to the children of Israel, “truly, truly, I say to you; go preach out<sup>160</sup> this Gospel in the whole world that it might reach every nation.”<sup>161</sup> Therefore, behold! Do you see whether the pronouncement about Christ and his Gospel reached out to the whole world, and every nation in the world was led to the right way by it, or not? If Christ were not God from God and light from light, his Gospel, the pronouncement about him, and worshipping of him would not have reached to the whole world.<sup>162</sup> There was no nation left in the world but believed in Christ and built the churches in the name of Christ. Behold, from east of the land to the west, from India to the end of the world, and islands of the sea! Do you see

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Matthew 28:18. Also see above, 79v.

<sup>159</sup> Q 18:39.

<sup>160</sup> The word ψήφισμα is from Greek, κηρυγματίζω, meaning proclaiming the Gospel.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Matthew 10:7.

<sup>162</sup> Literally, “from the nearest to the farthest of the world.”

any place where <the name> of Christ and his Gospel are not proclaimed? And likewise David the prophet also prophesized by the Holy Spirit the proclamation about the word of Christ and the evangelization of the disciples to the whole world, “Their word went out and their sayings reached out to the end of the world.”<sup>163</sup> (83r) And likewise, the words of the disciples and the Good News about Christ reached the whole world and every nation, from east to west, from north to south. If Christ were not God from God, he would not have been able to do it, just as no one from the prophets could. The pronouncement about him and the worshipping of him reached out to all the nations.

### *3.6.5.2.. Miracles as the proof of the divinity of Christ and the veracity of Christianity*

Abraham was the friend of God.<sup>164</sup> God poured down grace upon him. But no one believed in him <as the Word of God> at that time, nor was he called the Word of God. And people did not find the reference to him until they believed in Christ and found the reference to Abraham in the Gospel of Christ. Then, there was Moses the prophet, to whom God has spoken and poured down grace and light upon. But no one believed in him <as the Word of God>, nor was he called the Word of God. But they believed in him when living; and likewise, the head of the angels, the sons of God, also believed in him.<sup>165</sup> (83v) After that, there were David and the rest of the prophets. They were not able to lead the nations to the right faith, and none of them

<sup>163</sup> Psalm 19:4.

<sup>164</sup> See n. 143 above.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Jude 9? Jude 9 is an allusion to the *Assumption of Moses* where Archangel Michael disputes over Moses' corpus with Satan. However, to the best of my knowledge, the idea that Moses was believed by the archangel is not attested anywhere in Christian literature. Referring the angels as sons of God may be an allusion to Genesis 6:1-4.

was called the Word of God and His Spirit. None of them came down from heaven nor went up to heaven as did Christ, who made the people believe in Christ in their heart and be guided by him from their straying that they have been following for three thousand years. They abandoned it and rejected the idols<sup>166</sup> when the word about Christ and his Gospel reached them. They never saw him nor did know who he was. But through his signs, which the apostles performed in the name of Christ, they came to know that he was God. No one could perform such signs except God, who empowered the apostles through the Holy Spirit. Since the nations were ignorant of their Lord, they were engaged with the veneration of the idols until (84r) the word about Christ came to them with a purpose; and so they accepted him and believed in him. Therefore, there was no nation in the world to which the word about Christ and his Gospel did not reach, and which did not understand how to worship him. They (i.e., the apostles) spoke the word about him and led them (i.e., people) to the word about him and the worshipping of him. After three thousand years <from the fall of Adam>, they (i.e., people) left their wayward life and renounced the idols when the word about Christ and his Gospel came to them. Thus, I have explained to you the matter of Christianity and the religion of Christ, the one who is pleased with us.

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<sup>166</sup> Cf. Q 2:256-7. The word طاغوت is a technical Islamic term meaning “an alternative to the worship of Allah.” It is found in the Qur’ān for 11 times. Some commentators used this word as a synonym of اصنام, which is also found in 83v or اوڻان. The possible origin of this word from Arabic, Syriac, Hebrew and Ethiopian was suggested. Generally, it seems to be originated from the verb meaning “go to astray” and in the context, it is used to refer to “idolatry.” See Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary*, 202-203.

#### *4. Leo's refutation against Muslims*

##### *4.1. Refutations against Muslims: four themes and the use of the Qur'ān as a proof text*

###### *4.1.1. Muslims do not follow the teaching of the Qur'ān which favors Christians*

I did not leave you with any uncertainty on any matter about him (i.e., Christ) and the matter of Christianity; it is more illuminating than the sun and more clear than the light of the day. But you refuse <this> but <insist on> calling us polytheists. But neither your lord<sup>167</sup> nor your Qur'ān has called us polytheists. Rather, it says, “You shall find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers to be the Jews and Pagans”<sup>168</sup>; therefore the Jews and the Pagans are considered apart <from Christians>. It also says, “You shall find the nearest among men in love to the believers to be those who say, (84v) ‘we are Christians.’ For among them are priests and monks, and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to what God sent to the messenger, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears, since they recognize of the truth. And they will say, ‘Our Lord! We have believed. So forgive us our sins and count us among the witnesses.’”<sup>169</sup> So what praise is more favorable than the praise that your lord has attributed to us? But you refuse <this> but <insist on> calling us polytheists.

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<sup>167</sup> Probably, صاحبک, “your lord,” refers to Muhammad. This word appears in 84r and 84v, and in both cases, they appear to be later correction. The corrector erased what was written previously, and wrote over it. What was written before the correction is completely illegible. It is most likely to had been رسلک “your prophet.” This is clearly shown from the second letter of Leo. Leo says in 90v:10 that “The proof of this is when your prophet says...” and cites Q 49:14. As in the case of the first letter, the corrector always use the word “your lord” to refer to Muhammad (Cf. 89r:7, 90v:3), saving for this instance. Probably, it is what had been written previously. The corrector might have missed this word and did not change it into “your lord.”

<sup>168</sup> Q 5:82. *الذين اشکروا* is translated here as Pagan, but it means “those who associate something with someone.” When it is used with God, it means “Polytheists.”

<sup>169</sup> Q 5: 82-83.

#### *4.1.2. Christians are different from other People of the Book*

It says, “And as for those who believed, who were the Jews, Christians, Sabeans, and who were the Pagans, God will reward them on the Day of Resurrection according to their differences.”<sup>170</sup> Therefore, do you not see how it distinguishes between Sabeans, Christians and Pagans? It also says in Sūrah Al-‘Imrān, “It is not the same; those who are among the People of the Book is the community standing, reciting the verses of God all night long and worshipping <Him>.”<sup>171</sup> Then who else is this community among the People of the Book that recites the verses of God all night long and worship <God>, if it is not Christians?

#### *4.1.3. The Qur’ān approves that God chose Mary*

It says, (85r) “If God had intended to take a son, he could have chosen from what he created whatever he willed,”<sup>172</sup> and furthermore, it says, “Oh, Mary! God has selected you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world.”<sup>173</sup> This shows that God has chosen her, purified her and glorified her above the women of the world. Therefore, this shows you <the validity of Christian teachings on Mary and Christ>. But, you refuse <this>, but are disagree with what your lord has said.

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<sup>170</sup> Cf. Q 2:62.

<sup>171</sup> Q 3:113.

<sup>172</sup> Q 39:4.

<sup>173</sup> Q 3:42.

#### *4.1.4. The Qur'ān forbids disputes over religions*

Furthermore, it says, “Do not dispute with the People of the Book, except with what is the best.”<sup>174</sup> It also says, “Let there be no dispute over the religion.”<sup>175</sup> But you refuse <this>, and only engage in disputation, even though you are forbidden to do so.

#### *4.2. On the validity of Christ’s crucifixion and his divinity*

##### *4.2.1. Christ’s crucifixion is true*

And, know that Christ and Christianity are more clear than the morning light and brighter than the rays of the sun. And I have explained this to you, without omitting to you any testimony of the prophets, and the account about him (i.e., Christ) (85v) from the Old and New Testament.

And as for your statement in your Scripture: “They did not crucify him, but he was made to appear like that to them; rather, <the fact is that> God lifted him up to Him.”<sup>176</sup> If it was made to appear like that to them, then, it is not our fault. But because of our faith and love for him, which are in our heart, He (i.e., Christ) called us and we trust him and believed what was made to appear. Even though it was made to appear like that, nothing else was made to appear so for us. But, his crucifixion is true. And he said, “If I had wanted fifty thousand legions of angels to stand around me, I would have done so. But the prophecies of the prophets have to be fulfilled and the confirmation of their word has to be brought forth.”<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Q 29:46.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Q 2:256: “Let there be no compulsion in religion.”

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Q 4:157-158.

<sup>177</sup> Matthew 26:53-54. See also Luke 24:44-47.

#### *4.2.2. Adam and Christ are not same to God*

I have demonstrated to you in my first letter the circumstance of the crucifixion, the matter of Eucharist, the story of Nativity of Christ and his story.<sup>178</sup> And, as for your statement that, “He (i.e., Christ) is like Adam,”<sup>179</sup> (86r) you are well aware of the fact that Adam did not have a father or a mother. When God breathed out the spirit unto him, he stood up.<sup>180</sup> He gave him movement. As for Christ, we find him in your Scripture to be the Spirit of God and His Word which He directed to Mary.<sup>181</sup> Therefore, the Spirit of God is from God and the Word of God is from God. And he (i.e., Christ) went up whence he came; he is from Him and returned to Him. So understand my letter, ponder it, and know that the mater <about Christ> is right. He came only with mercy and compassion, and delivered man from sin.

#### *4.3. Accusation of Muslim law*

##### *4.3.1. Muslim law on greeting, prayer and funeral*

He (i.e., your lord, Muhammad) says in your Scripture, “Do not ask forgiveness for anyone among them who died ever, nor stand at his grave.”<sup>182</sup> It is not permitted for you to greet anyone among the People of the Book.<sup>183</sup> I read that if a man among you had Christian mother, and she died, (86v) it is not permitted for him to bury her or to ask forgiveness for her or to great

<sup>178</sup> It seems that the first letter refers to the previous part of the letter of Leo from 62v-84r. See discussion in the introduction of this chapter in 74-76.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Q 3:59.

<sup>180</sup> Q 32:9; Genesis 2:7.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Q 21:91, 4:171.

<sup>182</sup> Q 9:84.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Q 4:86 “And when you are greeted with a greeting, greet [in return] with one better than it, or [at least] return to it [in a like manner].” For prohibition of greeting non-Muslims, see Sahīh Muslim 2167a.

her during her lifetime. But God truly glorified the mother. Furthermore, <even when> a man among you marries a woman from the People of the Book, and has intercourse with her since God permits her to him, it is not permitted for him to greet her, bury her or to pray at her grave, though he has intercourse with her. Praised be God, how great <a wrong> this is! A man can neither ask forgiveness for his wife or mother, nor pray at their grave, nor walk in their funeral procession.

#### *4.4. Attack on Islamic fatalism*

And he (i.e., your lord, Muhammad) says in your Scripture, “God leaves straying those whom He pleases, and guides whom he pleases.”<sup>184</sup> And he created some with misfortune and some with good fortune. Whatever good or evil deed a man does (87r), God has already decreed it and decided it for him.<sup>185</sup> If it is so, then he neither deserves praise nor is he responsible for <his> fault. If God punishes him because of something that He created for him, leads him astray, and imprints on his heart, and He has decreed that for him, then God does injustice to him. God forbids, that He, the Mighty and Exalted, leads one stray or predestines misfortune for him and then punishes him <according to what He made for him>.<sup>186</sup> He sent down the Scriptures to the prophets in order to warn the people about the evil deeds and to show them good deeds. Hence, he who does a deed which merits hell, then God has a cause against him as the prophets have spoken to him. If it were so as you say, that all good and evil acts that anyone does, God already

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<sup>184</sup> Q 14:4.

<sup>185</sup> For the passages on predestination, see Q 9:51, 57:22-3.

<sup>186</sup> Literally, “The power of God and His sublimity save us from that He leads...”

predestined them for him before He created him, then God would not have sent His prophets to people as mercy,<sup>187</sup> and certainly what was written <before their birth> and the predestination would be sufficient. Therefore, do not think that God, the Greatest and the most Gracious, determines misfortune for man (87v) and punishes him <according to it>. The Lord, the most Just, Wise, and Glorious among all, because of His power, does not do injustice to anyone. Rather <His> mercy fills heaven and earth. Praised be He for His clemency.

Yet we say that God created man able to see and hear, and He taught him about good and evil; He taught him, warned him, helped him, admonished him, and made him be satisfied with what he has <received>. And He says that if your deed is good, your reward will be according to it. And if your deed is evil, your punishment will be according to it. Therefore, man will not have a plea to his Lord on the Day of Resurrection; rather, He prescribed for them the religious teaching. Hence, no one will perish without a proof and Scripture <of God>.<sup>188</sup> Certainly, God sent down it (i.e., Scripture) to him and showed him what will come and what will pass away. There is neither power nor strength except with God.<sup>189</sup>

### *5. Closing?*

Accordingly, I have explained and written to you concerning what you asked about. And it is written...<sup>190</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Cf. Q 21:107: “And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.”

<sup>188</sup> Literally, “Hence, anyone among those who will perish will not perish saving according to a proof and the Scripture <of God>.”

<sup>189</sup> Q 18:39.

<sup>190</sup> It may be also read as passive meaning “It has been written.” The text ends abruptly here. No colophon or closing statement is found.

*The Second letter of Leo*

*1. Opening*

(88r) In the name of God, the most Merciful and exceedingly Compassionate.<sup>191</sup> Praise be God, the benefactor, the guide to the right path, the one who assists to do the good, the one who is desired in the enlightenment of that which no human mind or intellect is capable of arriving at.

I have received your letter. I understand what you have written, and I recognized what you have stated about us from your engaging in a discussion about our religion, and in your writing to us, concerning <the point in which> you dispute with us; so that all the scholars and the disputants among you think that we do not have <right> religion and that we ourselves do not have an evidence to speak with.

*2. Refutation against the Muslims*

*2.1. The Arrogance of the Muslims against non-Muslims*

Because of our long silence and our desisting from engaging with you, you see us as the lowliest and the most despised in your estimate. You have asked me to write to you a letter, making clear for you with answer and enlightening you with the doctrine of our religion and yours, which you are ignorant. You demanded (88v) a difficult thing, which no one but only God is capable of.

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<sup>191</sup> Q 1:1.

And it is because you have insulted all people according to <their> rank, due to your rank in the law of Islam, you are not fair <to non-Muslims>, being vexed and showing off the power which is given to you. Knowledge cannot be understood except with a humble heart and no one can receive the teaching save the forbearing one, who is willing to accept what he hears. As for the one who is in the rank like yours in the Islamic law, the speaker cannot be safeguarded from the frowning of the face when it was brought <to be heard> to him. Furthermore, <the teaching of the religious> school of his cannot save him from the evil of his vexation and sudden burst of anger.

And you know that you are the evidence of the Muslim who believes in the books of the prophets by his tongue, but does not believe in them, when they were (89r) read to him. You do not believe in what is written in the book of the prophets nor the word of God sent down to man in the Gospel. Rather, you only believe in your Qur'ān. Your power does not let you submit to the commandment of God in His Scriptures, and you do not accept the sincere admonition of one who speaks to you of the correct way.

## *2.2. The Qur'ān has forbidden to dispute with non-Muslims*

When the People of the Book disputed with your lord, he did not get angry at them nor did he impose his authority on them. Rather, he said to them, “We believe in what was sent down to us and to you. Our God and your God is one.”<sup>192</sup> He has forbidden disputing with us (i.e., Christians); but you refuse to obey your prophet when he says, “Do not dispute with the People

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<sup>192</sup> Q 29:46.

of the Book except with the best.”<sup>193</sup> Therefore, *<as seen>* from your accepting his commandment concerning us, it is how he wished *<you to do>* with our religion. But you call us non-believers and abominable, and polytheists in every place. You do not know (89v) that it not right for you to slander us, *<the followers of>* the religion of God, especially disregarding what he describes the economy of our religion.

### *2.3. Christianity is the community of God*

And he commanded you to ask of the lord of the Day of Judgment to guide you from the error to the straight path<sup>194</sup>; *<it is>* not the path of the Jews, whose portion shall be wrath, or of those who are not People of the Book, like the Zoroastrians, nor the pre-Islamic polytheist Arabs. But it is the path of Christians, for Christianity is the intended community, upon whom God has bestowed his grace before you.

And you do not know that the Muslim is among those who will be in heaven, so that he is more meritorious than others who are on earth. Therefore, it is enough *<to say>* that Christ, by his existence in heaven, is superior to all the prophets on earth. Therefore, a Christian who follows him and believes in him has the grace of God, which no one else has, in any other religion.

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<sup>193</sup> Q 29:46, 2:256.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Q 1:4-6.

#### *2.4. Islam is not superior to any other religion*

(90r) If you say that “we are among those who follow Jesus and believe in him as a proof for men,”<sup>195</sup> then, since you disobey the word of Christ, you are not upholding his commandment. He (i.e., Christ) will answer and tells you that you love Jesus Christ only by your tongue, but in your heart you are not accepting him, rather you disagree with His Scripture. If you said that “My Scripture says, ‘Whoever desires other than Islam as religion, it will not be accepted anything from him, and he will be among those who are lost,’”<sup>196</sup> there is <another verse> in the Qur’ān, your Scripture, that invalidates this verse, for, precisely, it says, “All which are in heaven and earth accepted Islam, willingly and unwillingly.”<sup>197</sup> Then is your Scripture not truthful in saying that all men, wild animals, birds, and Satan accepted Islam willingly or unwillingly? If it is so, is it not that your status from God in the rise of Islam is indeed the same as all that accepted Islam? But this shows no superiority of Islam over us (i.e., Christians). You are not superior to anyone in the world, not to the rest of the creatures, whoever he is guided.

#### *2.5. Islam is not the religion of the true faith*

(90v) Therefore, know that the religion of God is the <true> faith. Islam is not the religion which God professed. If it were so, your prophet would not have made a distinction between the believers and the Muslims, saying, “The Muslim men and women, and the believing men and women.”<sup>198</sup> Thereby, we say that Islam is not the faith of the believers. You Muslims

<sup>195</sup> An allusion to Q 21:91.

<sup>196</sup> Q 3:85.

<sup>197</sup> Q 3:83.

<sup>198</sup> Q 33:35.

submitted yourselves to God. You should believe in Christ, the Word of God and His Spirit dwelling in his body. But you do not do so; the proof of this is when your prophet says, “The Arabs said, ‘We believe.’ He said, “You have not yet believed.”” He denied them <that they believed, and said to them>, “Say, ‘We have submitted ourselves.’” But faith has not yet entered their hearts.<sup>199</sup> Then following that, he said, “It is the same whether you warn them or not. They will not believe. God has set a seal on their heart, their hearing and sight.”<sup>200</sup> Therefore, God forces you to say but believe...

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<sup>199</sup> Q 49:14.

<sup>200</sup> Q 2:6-7.

### *Chapter III: The Content of the letters of Leo in Arabic*

#### *Part I: The First Letter of Leo*

This chapter discusses the content of the first and second letters of Leo in Arabic. In analyzing the text, I will not discuss particular theological topics, such as Christology or soteriology; rather I will attempt to “read and understand the texts as a whole” in order to understand how the author developed his thoughts on each topic, and how each topic was seen by Leo in the larger context of Christian teaching.

There are several reasons to analyze the text as it is written: first of all, it is due to Leo’s literary style. My foremost impression of these texts is that Leo discusses themes relatively freely. This does not mean that he wrote discursively. The letters are made of several themes, and his argument for each theme is a cluster of ideas and thoughts, which are interconnected and correlated in his mind.<sup>1</sup> Leo discusses each theme in each section, building up his argumentation gradually until he comes to the final conclusion. In doing so, Leo uses whatever he thought to be relevant to each topic. These ideas and thoughts are biblical exegesis, Christian and Islamic traditions and laws, Christian doctrines, theological formula and creeds. They are from his own time and commonly found in the works of his contemporaries.

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<sup>1</sup> Similar literary style is also found in the “Triune.” See introduction of the chapter II.

Another reason for this is that the letter of Leo is not a thorough theological tract nor philosophical speculations on any theme. This is not of his concern. The Arabic letters are written in the framework of a letter, but it seems unlikely that they were produced out of actual correspondences. Rather, it is closer to an apology, written to be read by audiences without theological knowledge.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons, I arrived at the conclusion that it is the best to understand and explain the text in the way that Leo himself presents it.

In this chapter, I will treat the texts as they are written, and attempt to understand them in their literary and socio-religious contexts to figure out how Leo combined these ideas and thoughts together, and articulated his arguments with them.<sup>3</sup> By doing so, I expect to understand the mind of this eighth century Christian apologist: what drew his attention and how he tried to convince his audiences on several theological issues that were commonly debated by Christians and Muslims.

Before analyzing the texts, I will first clarify a few points with regard to the methodology used here:

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 116. Gaudeul’s evaluation is about the letter of Leo in Latin. But this may be also applied to the letters of Leo in Arabic, for the Latin text and the first Arabic letter of Leo are from the same earlier material. This is one of the main points that I would like to prove in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Similar way was used by Samir in his edition of the “Triune” in his “Apology.” He divided the text into sections and subsections and gave commentary to each passage. Since his assessment of the literary style of the “Triune” can also be applied to the letters of Arabic, it would be appropriate to adapt Samir’s methodology in this study.

(1) In translating the Arabic and the Latin texts in the chapter II and appendix I, I have divided the texts into thematic sections and subsections. The same division of both texts and the same title given to each section and subsection will be used in this chapter.

(2) In analyzing the first Arabic letter of Leo, I will discuss it together with the Latin text. The new Arabic letters of Leo are the primary concern of this study, but the Latin text will also be examined. It is based on the working hypothesis that the two texts are from the same earlier material. This assumption is not based on the fact that both texts are ascribed to the same Emperor Leo and written to be sent to the same Caliph ‘Umar; it is due to the similarities between two texts. Nearly two thirds of the first letter of Leo in Arabic contain passages parallel to the Latin version. These parallel passages appear in both texts “in block.” Not only are both texts discussing the same themes, but even the order of themes and the arrangement of subsections for each theme are almost identical. There are frequent appearance of the same citations from or allusions to the Bible and the Qur’ān in both versions, and the use of the same analogies and traditions are also striking. Therefore, the close textual relationship between the first letter of Leo in Arabic and Latin are evident. Presumably, the Latin text is a translation of an Arabic apology, and this Arabic *Vorlage* is another recension of the first letter of Leo in Arabic. Therefore, it is necessary to do a comparative reading of the Arabic and the Latin letters and analyze both of them to understand their content as correctly as possible.

However, at the same time, each text contains themes of their own. For instance, Leo’s claim of the veracity of Christianity based on its proliferation in the world through miracles in

the first Arabic letter is not found in the Latin version. Likewise, the use of the Christian tradition such as the fall of angels is absent in the Arabic text. Both texts use Gospel passages to present their arguments but each uses different verses in the different contexts. The most reasonable answer to explain these similarities and differences is to assume that both were from the same material, but later elaborated in different directions.

When the two texts are discussing the same theme, I will present parallel passages side by side, and analyze the elements of each text. Accordingly, the reproduction of each text is necessary. Since both texts are defective and sometimes even ambiguously written, it is helpful to read one text in light of the other when they are treating the same themes. Through this comparison, the content of the first Arabic letter can be explained with clarity. When one version discusses the themes that are lacking in the other, I will explain them independently.

(3) Even though the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin do not inform about their authors nor use any typical Melkite formula,<sup>4</sup> from the content of their theology and expressions, it is evident that they were produced in the Melkite circle in the second half of the eighth century Syria-Palestine. Therefore, in order to understand some difficult passages, I will also read them in the light of the works of Leo's contemporaries, such as the works of John of Damascus and Theodore Abū Qurrah, and the "Triune" written by an anonymous author.<sup>5</sup> Especially, the

<sup>4</sup> One exception is the expression echoing the pro-Chalcedonian theology which says, "two operations and two expressions in Christ" in 320B. This indicates that this text was written by Melkites, or at least, it may hint at the final Melkite touch of the text. However, there is a possibility that this pro-Chalcedonian formula may have been inserted later by the Latin translator. Cf. Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 160.

<sup>5</sup> For the editions and translations of the "Triune" used in this study, see chapter IV.

“Triune” shares several common literary features with the letters of Leo, which may shed some light on the understanding of Leo’s theology in his letters.

(3) In discussing the texts, I will simply call the anonymous author of the letters of Leo, “Leo,” and his Muslim interlocutor, “‘Umar.” However, that does not mean that the letters of Leo were written by the Emperor Leo and the letters of ‘Umar were written by the Caliph ‘Umar. In conclusion, all extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar seem to have been composed by Christian and Muslim authors, both of whom are anonymous.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, calling the authors Leo or ‘Umar is only for convenience.

Now I will first present the table of content of the first Arabic letter of Leo and the Latin text to show how many themes are shared by both texts. The shared themes are written with underline.

[Chart 2] Table: The themes of the Arabic and Latin letter of Leo

The first Arabic letter of Leo	Latin letter of Leo
<u>1. Opening (62v)</u>	<u>1. Opening (315A)</u>
1.1. Opening formula, <u>authorship</u> and greeting	1.1. <u>Authorship</u> , editorial note

<sup>6</sup> For discussion on the authorship of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar, see chapter I and IV.

<u>1.2. Doxology (62v)</u>	<u>1.2. Doxology (315A)</u>
1.3. Preface (62v-64r)	
<u>2. The questions of ‘Umar (64r-65r)</u>	<u>2. The questions of ‘Umar (315A-315B)</u>
2.1 On the Cross and the Eucharist (64r)	
<u>2.2. Jesus is not the Son of God, but His prophet (64r-64v)</u>	<u>2.1. Jesus is not the Son of God, but His Prophet (315A)</u>
<u>2.3. The alteration of the Scriptures by Ezra (64v)</u>	<u>2.2 The alteration of the Scripture by Ezra (315B)</u>
<u>2.4. Adam and Jesus are the same to God as human beings: he ate, drank, slept, etc. and how could God enter into Mary’s unclean body? (64v)</u>	<u>2.3. Adam and Jesus are same to God as human beings: he ate and slept (315B)</u>
<u>2.5. Mary, the mother of Jesus is Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses (64v-65r)</u>	<u>2.4. Mary, the mother of Jesus is Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses (315B)</u>
<u>3. Leo’s answers (65r-84r)</u>	<u>3. Leo’s answers (315B-319A)</u>
<u>3.1. On Mary (65r)</u>	<u>3.1. On Mary (315B-315C)</u>
<u>3.2. On the divinity of Christ (65r-71v)</u>	<u>3.2. On the divinity of Christ (315C)</u>
<u>3.2.1. Introduction (65r-65v)</u>	<u>3.2.1. Introduction (315C-316A)</u>

<u>3.2.2. The oneness of God: the first analogy of the fire that appeared to Moses (65v-66r)</u>	<u>3.2.2. The oneness of God: the first analogy of the fire that appeared to Moses (316B)</u>
3.2.3. Christ is not like Adam to God (66r-66v)	
<u>3.2.4. The omnipresence of God: God is everywhere. He is in Christ as His Word and His Spirit (66v-67r)</u>	
<u>3.2.5. Testimonies from the Old Testament (67r-68r)</u>	
3.2.6. Testimony from the Qur'ān (68v)	
<u>3.2.7. The omnipresence of God (continued): the second analogy of the sun and its rays (68v-69v)</u>	<u>3.2.3. The omnipresence of God: God is everywhere and the second analogy of the sun (316B-317A)</u>
	<u>3.2.4. Testimonies from the Old Testament (317A-318B)</u>
	3.2.5. Testimonies from the New Testament (318B-318D)
	3.2.6. Testimonies from the Qur'ān (318D-319A)
3.2.8. Christians' belief in one God (69v-70r) and the teaching of Christ	
3.2.9. Non-violence character of Christianity and Christians' eschatological hope (70r)	
3.2.10. Christ's obedience to God and his death for God's economy (70v-71v)	

	3.3. The sacred history and the necessity of incarnation (319A-320A)
	3.3.1. The corruption of the angels (319A)
	3.3.2. Disobedience of Adam and his fall (319A-319B)
	3.3.3. Noah's Ark and the flood (319B-319C)
	3.3.4. Idolatry of people and the Law of Moses (319C)
	3.3.5. Idolatry of people and God's punishment (319C-319D)
	3.3.6. Necessity of incarnation and the of Christ (319D-320A)
	3.3.7. How humanity and divinity were in Christ (320B-320C)
<u>3.3. On the Eucharist (71v-74r)</u>	
<u>3.3.1. The table from heaven (71v-72r)</u>	
<u>3.3.2. The true sacrifice (72r)</u>	
<u>3.3.3. Last supper (72v-73v)</u>	
3.4.4. Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension are true (73v-74r)	

<u>3.4. On the veneration of Christ (74r-74v)</u>	<u>3.4. On the veneration of Christ (320B-321A)</u>
<u>3.4.1. The veneration of the Ark of Covenant of ancient Israelites and the veneration of Christ of Christians (74r-74v)</u>	<u>3.4.1. The veneration of the Ark of Covenant of ancient Israelites and the veneration of Christ of Christians (320C)</u>
	<u>3.4.2. Angels prostrated to Adam (320C)</u>
	<u>3.4.3. Refutation against the cult of the black stone of Kaba (320D)</u>
	<u>3.5. On the natural birth of Christ from the Virgin with the analogy of the sun (320D-321A)</u>
	<u>3.6. On the alteration of the Scriptures by Ezra (321A-321C)</u>
	<u>3.7. On the Eucharist (321C-322A)</u>
	<u>3.7.1. The true sacrifice (321C)</u>
	<u>3.7.2. Last supper (321C-321D)</u>
	<u>3.7.3. The “Manna” from heaven (321D-322A)</u>
	<u>3.7.4. The Bahīrā legend (322A)</u>
<u>3.5. On the veneration of the Cross of Christ (74v-78r)</u>	<u>3.8. On the veneration of the Cross of Christ (322A-322D)</u>
<u>3.5.1. Christ’s crucifixion (74v)</u>	<u>3.8.1. Christ’s crucifixion (322A-322B)</u>
<u>3.5.2. Hiding of the Cross (75r-75v)</u>	<u>3.8.2. Hiding of the Cross (322B)</u>

<u>3.5.3. Vision of Constantine (75v-76v)</u>	<u>3.8.3. Vision of Constantine (322B-322C)</u>
<u>3.5.4. Finding of the true Cross (76v-77r)</u>	<u>3.8.4. Finding of the true Cross (322C-322D)</u>
<u>3.5.5. Building churches in Jerusalem and sending the Cross to Constantine (77v)</u>	<u>3.8.5. Building churches in Jerusalem and sending the Cross to Constantine (322D)</u>
3.5.6. Christ's Cross as the sign of Christianity (77v-78r)	
3.6. Veracity of Christianity (78v-82r)	
3.6.1. Introduction (78v)	
3.6.2. Christ spoke about himself (78v-79v)	
3.6.3. God takes an oath by himself and his promise to Abraham has been fulfilled through Christ (79v-80r)	
3.6.4. Christ's praise to the righteousness and believers as children of God (80r-82r)	
3.6.5. Proliferation of Christianity as the proof of the veracity of Christianity (82r-84r)	
3.6.5.1. Christian churches in the whole world (82r-83r)	
3.6.5.2. Miracles as the proof of the divinity of Christ and the veracity of Christianity (83r-84r)	
<u>4. Leo's refutation against Muslims (84r-87v)</u>	<u>4. Leo's refutation against Muslims (322D-324B)</u>

4.1. Refutations against Muslims: four themes and the use of the Qur'ān as a proof text (84r-85r)	
4.1.1. Muslims do not follow the teaching of the Qur'ān which favors Christians (84r-84v)	
4.1.2. Christians are different from other People of the Book (84v)	
4.1.3. The Qur'ān approved that God chose Mary (84v-85r)	
4.1.4. The Qur'ān forbids disputes over religions (85r)	
4.2. On the validity of Christ's crucifixion and his divinity (85r-86r)	
4.2.1. Christ's crucifixion is true (85r-85v)	
4.2.2. Adam and Christ are not same to God (85v-86r)	
<u>4.3. Accusation of Muslim law (86r-86v)</u>	<u>4.1. Accusations of Muslim law (322D-324A)</u>
<u>4.3.1. Muslim laws on greeting, prayer and funeral (86r-86v)</u>	<u>4.1.1. Muslim law on greeting and prayer (322D-323A)</u>
	4.1.2. Muslims law on divorce (323A-324A)
<u>4.4. Refutation against Islamic fatalism (86v-87v)</u>	<u>4.2. Attacks on Islamic fatalism (324A-324B)</u>
5. Closing? (87v)	

## 1. Opening (62r)

### 1.1. Opening formula, authorship and greeting

315A	62r
The letter from Leo to ‘Umar, the commander of the Saracens	From Leo, the Emperor of Byzantium to ‘Umar Ibn Abd al-Aziz, the Commander of the Faithful, Peace.

The opening of the Arabic text consists of four parts: opening formula, the name of the sender and of the recipient, a short greeting, and a short doxology. It shows the influence of the Islamic literary style, which usually begins the writings with opening formula, title or a sentence identifying authorship or *Isnād*, and doxology. The opening formula, “In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (62v)” shows that it was composed by a Christian author. This formula does not appear in the Latin version.

In the opening section, both texts identify the sender and the recipient: According to the Arabic version, it is a correspondence sent from Byzantine Emperor Leo to the Caliph ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. Greek name Λεών was transliterated into Arabic الیون (Ilyūn). This form is attested here and also in the writings of some Muslim writers.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes Λεών is transliterated as لَوْن (Lāwn) as seen in the report of al-Ṣafī<sup>8</sup> and the chronicle of Agaipus.<sup>9</sup> In the Latin version, Leo’s name appears as “Lenis,” which is probably the genitive form of “Len” or

<sup>7</sup> Wright, *Al-Kāmil*, 295; Al ‘Asqālānī, *Lisān al-Mīzān*, 305; Ibn Athīr, *History* (part 5), 11ff in the body of the text.

<sup>8</sup> Samir, “Response,” 325.

<sup>9</sup> Vasiliev, *PO* 8, 503.

“Laen.”<sup>10</sup> In both texts, Leo is not specified but only referred as an Emperor. However, from the name of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, Leo is identified to be the Emperor Leo III, who was also called Isaurian. In Latin version, ‘Umar is only referred as “Omar, Regem Saracenorum.”

It is noteworthy that it is only in this part that the name of Leo and ‘Umar appear. As stated above, there is no evidence to show that it is a letter exchanged by two historical figures. No debate has been made concerning political or diplomatic affairs, which one may expect to find in the letters of secular rulers. The letter of Leo is a pure apology which only concentrates on discussion of theological themes. Probably these names were adopted by the author of these texts or might they have been added by later copyist or translator. The motive of such ascription is varied: perhaps the author wanted to provide authority to his work by ascribing it to this well-known historical figure. The legend of the religious correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar may have inspired the author to attribute his work to Leo. Or his purpose was to hide the identity of the real author, due to the polemical character of the text. That many early Christian-Arabic polemical writings were written by anonymous authors would support this assumption.

A short greeting, “Peace” in the Arabic text, is lacking in the Latin text.

### 1.2. Doxology

315A	62v
Glory to God, and manifold action of whose graces surpasses heavens, reaching to those	Now then, we believe in one God, before and after whom there is no (other) god. We know that God,

<sup>10</sup> Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 158, n. 19: “The spelling “Lenis,” which seems to presume a nominative \*Len or \*Laen, both unattested, appears to indicate that the translator simply did not recognize the equivalence of لؤلؤ with “Leo.” For discussion on the transliteration of Greek name into Arabic and Latin, see Kaplony, *Damascus*, 223.

things pleasing to Him, and penetrating His hidden things; He is bountifulness and mercy on His servants. There is no one besides him. He is the height, the greatness, the power and the reign, embracing all. We believe in one God, to whom none is similar, nor is there any other beside Him.

by His grace, truly created this world, for the world itself cannot exist for itself.

The final element of the opening section in both texts is “doxology.” The doxology in the Latin version is longer and fuller than that of the Arabic text. It describes God’s attributes such as mercy, power and grace, and emphasizes His uniqueness. The Arabic version only express God’s attribute of uniqueness as the only one divine being.

It is interesting that both versions use the vocabularies and expressions taken from the Qur’ān. As to the first phrase in doxology of the Latin version, “Gloria Deo,” Leo either could have had in mind a typical Christian eulogy “Glory to God” or could he have translated Muslim eulogy, الحمد لله, taken from Q 1:2. The phrase of God’s uniqueness is also a reminiscence of Q 21:25, “There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.”<sup>11</sup>

### *1.3. Preface (62v-64r)*

Following the opening section, Leo in the Arabic text presents a short preface before he answers ‘Umar’s questions. It is usual for the writers of Arabic literature to reveal the occasion of their composition in the preface and summarize the content of the entire work that will

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<sup>11</sup> God as the only one divine being is emphasized in the Qur’ān many times. See Q 2:163; 3:2, 6, 18; 4:87, etc. Interestingly, similar expressions are found in the “Triune.” As discussing the “Triune,” Harris pointed out that they are borrowed from the Qur’ān. Cf. Harris, “Track,” 76.

follow.<sup>12</sup> Leo clarifies the purpose of his work. He quotes the letter from ‘Umar and says, “You have written to me mentioning the story of Christ, the son of Mary, and the matter of this world. Now, I will explain to you about this with satisfactory explanation (62v).” Then he summarizes what he shall write, which covers the content in 64r-84r. To explain the necessity of Christ’s incarnation, Leo describes the creation of Adam and his fall. Due to Adam’s disobedience and sin, he and his descendants were subject to the Satan and destined to die. Out of His “mercy and grace,” God wanted to save human beings from the dominion of the Satan. Because of Adam’s sin, all men were mortal. But with the coming of Christ, they received life (63r). Then Leo claims that Christianity has been proven to be the religion of God by the fact that Christianity spread to the whole world through miracles performed by Christ and his disciples. It was Christ who gave his disciples the power to perform miracles. Leo ends the preface, saying, “If they (i.e., people) had not seen the signs through the disciples, they would not have abandoned their sacrifice and what their forefathers have venerated (64r).” Leo’s summary for what he shall write only covers the content of 65r-84r, not what he discusses in 84r-88v. In other word, the preface seems to have been written only for 65r-84r. This supports the hypothesis that the extant first letter of Leo might have been compiled from the two earlier letters, one from 62v-84r, and the other from 84r-87v.<sup>13</sup>

The appearance of opening formula, doxology, and the preface at the beginning of the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin show the strong influence of Arab-Islamic literary tradition.

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<sup>12</sup> Pederson, *Arabic book*, 22-23; Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, 200-202. The presentation of the reason of writing was also done by earlier Syriac writers. Thus, That Leo reveals the reason of his writing at the preface show he is writing in both Christian and Arab-Islamic literary tradition.

<sup>13</sup> For redaction of the first Arabic letter of Leo, see introduction in the chapter II.

Moreover, not only Leo follows the style of the Arab literature, he also adopts the Islamic terms and expressions. He mentions that the primary motivation of God's attempt to save men is "His mercy (63r)" and "grace (63r)," using the vocabularies borrowed from the Qur'ān. Apparently, the word "mercy" is taken from the Qur'ān 1:1.<sup>14</sup> The word "mercy" was the most frequently used to describe the nature of God by Leo in the first letter in Arabic (nine times to God, once to Christ). Other Qur'ānic vocabularies such as compassionate, grace, and guidance, and the holy names of God are also found throughout the text. Interestingly, God's "love," which one might expect to find in a Christian text is never found in the Arabic or the Latin letters of Leo.<sup>15</sup> These literary features show that Leo was not only familiar with the Arab-Islamic literatures, but even internalized the cultural elements of the Muslim world.

Yet, as a Christian writer, Leo's theology is based on the Bible, particularly, on the New Testament. The impact of the New Testament theology is found throughout the texts. While defending the Christian doctrine, Leo heavily depends on the letters of Paul and the letter to the Hebrews. In explaining the necessity of incarnation, he borrowed legal terms from Paul such as "inheritance and debt," to express the concept of "original sin." Leo says, "We have inherited from our ancestor, Adam, death and sin due to the disobedience (63v)." This statement is preceded by Leo's citation that "We find in the Scripture of God that 'Whoever inherits the

<sup>14</sup> The same expression is found in the "Triune." The author of "Triune" mentioned that God's motivation for the salvation of men is "His mercy and compassion." The use of Islamic vocabularies may be explained by Samir's suggestion that the Christians terms was substituted with their "Islamic equivalences." Cf. Samir, "Apology," 89.

<sup>15</sup> It is the same case of the "Triune," as pointed out by Samir in "Apology," 89. Samir saw Leo's preference to use Qur'ānic vocabularies indicates that this text was written primarily for Muslims or at least to be read by them. However, Leo and the author of the "Triune" might not find any problem using these words when they wrote for Christians who were familiar to the Qur'ānic and Islamic vocabularies.

inheritance shall pay the debt <first>. (63v)" This is an allusion to Romans 6:23, which figuratively describes death as the "wage" of sin. For Leo, death remained among men until Christ came and paid debt on behalf of them through his death, as Paul states in Romans 5:15-19.<sup>16</sup> Leo also cites Paul to answer Muslim accusation in Q 3:59, which claims that Adam and Christ are the same to God as human beings. The problem of co-existence of divine and human nature in Christ was one of the most commonly debated themes among Christians and Muslims from the early Islamic period, and it was also the first question posed by 'Umar (64v). Leo explains the difference between Christ and Adam, depending on Romans 5:19 and 1 Corinthians 15:22, and emphasizing their difference in "actions." Christ and Adam are not same because their "actions" and the results brought by their deeds are different. Paul says that, "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all be made alive in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)." Leo's answer is simply a variation of this verse: Leo says, "We have inherited from our ancestor, Adam death and sin due to disobedience. But this status has remained with us until a man of our nature, a man perfect in faith and who was obedient to the Creator and disobedient to the Satan, the enemy rose up. (63v)." Another point Leo asserted is that God is the only capable agent of redemption. According to Leo, "But the people have not yet understood the signs of God and what the prophets taught about Him, and could not comprehend the Scriptures (63r)." The climax and the indispensable stage of God's revelation is His sending out Christ incarnate to the world.

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<sup>16</sup> This passage is also an allusion to 1 Corinthians 15:22, and 6-7. For concept of death as wage of sin and the salvation of men from the dominion of the devil through Christ's paying debt for me reflected in the Pauline letters, see Bultmann, *Theology*, vol. I, 296-300.

The emphasis on the limit of men is also of biblical origin. For instance, the author of the letter to the Hebrews claims that the sin of men can be cleansed only by one and ultimate sacrifice which is offered by Christ (cf. Hebrews 9-10).

The use of similar expressions for original sin and the adaptation of the same soteriology in the Arabic letter of Leo and the “Triune” stand out. As a result of disobedience of Adam, God made Adam and his descendants inherit death (63r). The same phrase appears again in 63v: “We have inherited from our ancestor, Adam death (الموت) and sin (الخطية) due to the disobedience (المعصية).” In the “Triune,” three elements were transmitted by Adam to his “lineage”: disobedience (المعصية), sin (الخطية), and death (الموت).<sup>17</sup> Sin and death remained among men until Christ came and told about the world to come, and performed miracles that no one among human being could do (63v). Salvation can be attained only through Christ. The author of the “Triune” shows the same soteriology: “No human being was able, neither prophet nor other person, to save the lineage of Adam from disobedience and sin and death.”<sup>18</sup> As Samir pointed out, and as I have discussed above, the expressions on the original sin and the soteriology of both Leo and the author of the “Triune” are of biblical origin.<sup>19</sup> However, still, it is noteworthy that both the letter of Leo in Arabic and the “Triune” express the same theme with similar language. This demonstrate that both texts are somewhat related.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Samir “Apology,” 81-82.

<sup>18</sup> The translation is adapted from Samir. See Ibid., 81.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>20</sup> The relationship between the letter of Leo in Arabic and the “Triune” was already pointed out by Swanson. Cf. Swanson, “Arabic Letter.”

*2. The questions of ‘Umar*

315A-315B	64r-65r
<p>Then, among other things, you asked me about Christ, Son of Mary, why we adore him, while he himself testified about himself, saying that he was sent by God, and whoever confesses him will confess the one who sent him in his presence.” Also, when he was ascending to heaven, he said to his disciples, “I am ascending to my Creator and your Creator, and to my God and your God.”</p> <p>You also say that, since the Law of Moses has been burnt in fire, and the prophet Ezra has restored it, as his heart was able to recall, not without falsity. And there was no mention of resurrection, or paradise, or hell.</p> <p>And you also said that before God Christ is like Adam. And Christ ate, slept just as Adam did. Nevertheless, it is nothing but only your lack of knowledge about Christ that leads you to this.</p> <p>And I also know that you say, “Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses gave birth to Christ.”</p>	<p>You wrote to me asking about Christ and the Eucharist, saying, “What is the Cross and what is the Eucharist?”</p> <p>You also said, “Why do you venerate Jesus, the prophet of God and why do you regard him as God? But he testifies about himself in his gospel, ‘I am the prophet of God to men. Therefore, whoever believes in me, he believes in the one who sent me, and whoever denies me, he denies the one who sent me.’ When God lifted him up to Him, he said to the apostles, ‘I am ascending to my Lord and your Lord, and to my God and your God.’ He testifies about himself that he is the prophet of God.”</p> <p>You said, “The Torah has been altered. The prophet Ezra himself altered it and wrote it wrongly. The Torah does not mention resurrection, paradise, or hell.”</p> <p>You said, “What Jesus is to God is like what Adam is to God. Also, you say, “How could God enter into a woman through odorous mouth? And how could God eat, drink, sleep, rejoice, pray, and grieve, as you have written about him?” I know it is only because of the lack of your knowledge about Christ which makes you tell me so.</p> <p>You said that “Mary, the daughter of Imran, the sister of Aaron and Moses, is the mother of Jesus.”</p>

Following the preface, ‘Umar’s questions are presented. Leo directly cites ‘Umar’s words, saying, “You wrote me...” or “You said...” in the Arabic text, and “You asked me...” or

“I know you say...” in the Latin version. In both texts, Leo uses the second person masculine singular form of “you” as if he is quoting a statement made by one particular man.<sup>21</sup>

‘Umar’s questions in both versions and Leo’s subsequent answers hint at the provenance of the extant Arabic and Latin letters of Leo. (1) That these two texts are from the same material is shown by the following points. First of all, ‘Umar’s six questions in both letters are almost identical; not only do same themes appear, but they are arranged in the same order. Only one difference is that Leo in the Arabic version includes two short questions concerning the Cross and the Eucharist at the beginning, which are absent in the Latin text. These two short questions, however, may not have been included in the earlier material, but added later to the extant Arabic version to make ‘Umar’s questions be consistent with Leo’s answers. While Leo uses “you said” when he cites other questions, Leo uses “you wrote,” citing the first two questions about the Eucharist and the Cross. While ‘Umar answers other questions with examples that support his claim, he simply says, “What is...?” when he asks about Cross and Eucharist. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Leo’s comment on ‘Umar’s claim in section 2.4 also appears in both versions. Leo states that ‘Umar’s question on the divinity of Christ is due to his lack of knowledge on Christ (65r, 315B). Even though Christ’s human and divine nature was one of the commonly discussed topics in the Christian-Muslim polemics, it would be almost impossible to find the same comment on the same subject in the same expressions, if both texts were composed independently. (2) But both texts are not preserved in complete form nor were they transmitted

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<sup>21</sup> Throughout the Latin version, Leo uses masculine singular form when he quotes the words of ‘Umar or refers to him, while masculine plural form is used to refer to Muslims in general. For instance, when he says “in your law” or “in your Scripture” he always uses second person masculine plural form. On the other hand, Leo in the Arabic text is inconsistent in his use of singular or plural form.

without corruption. Leo's answers in both texts are not consistent with the questions of 'Umar. For instance, in both versions, 'Umar ask about the alteration of the Torah. However, the answer is only given in the Latin version (321B-321C). Likewise, Leo in the Arabic version asks how God could enter into a woman through her odorous mouth. This question is lacking in the Latin version. However, the answer is only given in the Latin text (321A). All these observations lead to the conclusion that the extant Arabic and the Latin texts are from the same material but preserved incompletely during the course of transmission and translation.

### *2.1. On the Cross and the Eucharist*

I have explained these two short questions above.

### *2.2. Jesus is not the Son of God, but His prophet*

### *2.3. The alteration of the Scriptures*

'Umar's next two questions in 2.2 and 2.3 reflect Muslim attitude toward the Bible. In 2.2, 'Umar first claims that Jesus is not the Son of God but His prophet. He draws up two verses from the Gospel, John 12:44 and 20:17. In the Arabic letter, 'Umar quotes John 12:44 and changes the word "the son of God" into "the prophet of God." As for John 20:17, 'Umar replaces "my Father and your Father" with "my Lord and your Lord."<sup>22</sup> Likewise, 'Umar in the Latin text

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<sup>22</sup> John 20:17, where Jesus calls God his "Father," draws attention of Muslim commentators. Interpretation and understanding of this passage has been in the middle of the religious polemics between Muslims and Christians.

alludes John 12:44, and also cites John 20:17 with a similar change: from “my Father and your Father” to “my Creator and your Creator.” These alterations show the way how the New Testament was read and interpreted by Muslims. Then in 2.3, he claims that the Old Testament was once destroyed and altered by Ezra when he re-wrote it later. This re-written version of the Torah by Ezra is, for Muslims, far from perfection.<sup>23</sup>

Such reading is based on the ground that the Old and the New Testament were corrupted, and the Jews and Christians misunderstood or even distorted their Scriptures’ true meaning. The term “*Tahrīf* (تحريف),” which generally means “alteration” or “falsification” is the key concept in Muslims’ anti-Christian or anti-Jewish polemics in regards with the Bible. Sometimes, the way of alternative and correct reading of the Bible passages is given by Muslim polemicists; what ‘Umar presents here are typical examples.

#### *2.4. Adam and Jesus are the same to God as human beings: he ate, drank, slept, etc. and how could God enter into Mary’s unclean body?*

In line with his claim that Jesus is only the prophet of God, ‘Umar’s focuses on human nature of Christ. He claims that Adam and Christ are the same to God (Q 3:59). Then he gives

Here ‘Umar simply replaced the word “Father” with “God” or “Lord” without further discussion. Same change is found in other Muslim exegesis. Cf. Thomas, “Bible,” 31; Griffith, “Gospel,” 138. For more extensive study on Muslim and Christian exegesis of this verse, see Accad, “Proof-Text.”

<sup>23</sup> For general discussion on this subject, see Reynolds, “Falsification.” For the study on the Christian, Samaritan and Islamic tradition about Ezra’s re-writing of the Torah, see Fried, *Ezra*, 118-137. The Samaritan accusation against Ezra on the writing of the imperfect version of the Torah out of memory goes back as early as the tenth century (See Fried, *Ezra*, 126-128). The connection between Samaritan and Muslim traditions on this issue may be interesting to pursue, but seems unclear. The Qu’ān accuses the Jews of falsifying or altering the genuine Old Testament, but never connect Ezra with it. See Fried, *Ezra*, 128ff.

examples which show Christ is one of human beings. Not a single verse is cited here, but ‘Umar alludes to the various Gospel passages where Jesus ate, drank, sleep, rejoice, prayed and grieved. Then he denies the divinity of Christ, claiming that Christ would not have needed to do so if he were God. In addition to this, the Arabic version raises another question that how Christ, as God entered into Mary through her odorous mouth. It is an allusion to Q 66:12 where God breathes into Mary.<sup>24</sup> In ‘Umar’s view, it is improper for Jesus to go into dirty part of the human body if he were God, and therefore, he is not God, but merely a man.

## *2.5. Mary the mother of Jesus is Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses*

I will discuss this theme together with Leo’s answer in section 3.1 below.

## *2.6. Was ‘Umar’s letter written by Leo himself?*

Even though Leo is citing the letter of ‘Umar that reached to him, it is very unlikely that what Leo is citing here was actually written by ‘Umar or any Muslim writer. First of all, it consists of simple questions which are lacking for strong argumentations. Leo may have summarized the letter of ‘Umar; yet, even in that case, still there is no evidence that Leo actually received the letter from his Muslim interlocutor. Likewise, Leo’s statement in the preface that he

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<sup>24</sup> Q 66:12 may need explanation. The verse says, ”وَمَرِيمَ ابْنَتْ عُمَرَ الَّتِي أَصْحَنْتَ فِرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِنَا“ Commentators interpreted this verse and suggested how God breathed into Mary to make her bear Jesus. Some mentioned that it was done by breathing into her nose or sleeves or etc. ‘Umar might have taken one of them, which explains that it was through her mouth that God breathed into His Spirit.

was asked by ‘Umar to answer his questions concerning religions is also unreliable; such alleged request is a literary device, which Christians have been using even before the flourishing of the Christian-Muslim polemics.<sup>25</sup> Rather, it is more probable that the letter of ‘Umar was also written by Leo to give pretext for his writing. Leo himself might have chosen these particular topics in order to take advantage of preoccupying agendas for discussion. This seems not impossible. The same is the case of another famous correspondence between a Christian named ‘Abd al-Masiḥ ibn Ishāq al-Kindī and a Muslim named ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ishmā’īl al-Hāshimī. As in the case of the letter of Leo, the correspondence between al-Kindī and al-Hāshimī consists of two parts: a short letter from al- Hāshimī and a long reply from al-Kindī, which were circulated altogether. From each element of their names, it seems that these names are fictitious, which were made to present al- Hāshimī and al-Kindī as representatives of their respective faiths. Al-Hāshimī’s letter is short, while Al-Kindī’s reply is relatively long. Al-Kindī’s severe refutation against Islam is striking; it seems hard to think that the reply of al-Kindī was written in order to reply to his Muslim interlocutor, as al-Kindī himself claimed, nor was it read in the court of the caliph. Thus, it seems more reasonable that both letters of al- Hāshimī and al-Kindī were written by an anonymous Christian writer.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, both letters of Leo and ‘Umar might have been written by Leo, a Christian author, and these texts comprise a single apology.

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<sup>25</sup> Syriac writers begin their work with the preface in which they clarify the “cause” of their compositions. They were asked, ordered or requested to write about certain topics. Riad says, “...the order or request may be either real or fictive.” See Riad, *Preface*, 191.

<sup>26</sup> The correspondence between al-Hāshimī and al-Kindī is one of the well-known Christian-Muslim polemical texts, whose authorship and date have been in disputes (:). Griffith regards the author of this correspondence as anonymous, and the names of Christian and Muslim writer, al-Hāshimī and al-Kindī as having been made out of elements which represent their religious identity. From the content of the letter of al-Hāshimī, it seems difficult to think that this letter was written by or read among Muslims. Most likely, this letter from the Muslim interlocutor was also written by a Christian author. (Cf. Griffith, *Shadow*, 86-87 with bibliography in n. 36). On the other hand, Muir claims that

### 3. Leo's answers

#### 3.1. On Mary

After quoting the letter of 'Umar. Leo begins with 'Umar's last question. 'Umar says, Mary, the mother of Jesus is same person to Mary, the daughter of Imran, the sister of Aaron and Moses. Leo refutes Muslims' confusion of two different women named Mary, explaining that they are not one same person.

315B-315	64r
How can this be? She died after they left Egypt and went out to the desert -And none of them could enter into the Promised Land- long before Mary, the Mother of Christ and her father, Joachim, were born. In fact, Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses was from the family of Levi, the son of Jacob. Mary, the mother of Christ, was in fact, the daughter of Joachim, the descendent of David, who was from the family of Judah, the son of Jacob.	But how can this be? Mary, Aaron, and Moses died when they left Egypt during their journey, and no one among them entered the Holy House (i.e., Jerusalem). Rather, Mary, the sister of Aaron died of a skin disease, a long time before Mary, the mother of Jesus was born and her father was born. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a descendent of David the prophet, and she was from the tribe of Judah, son of Jacob.

The sentence on the death of Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses in 65r in the Arabic letter is difficult to find its precise reference to the Old Testament. In describing Miriam's death, the Arabic reads, ماتت مريم اخت هرون بالشراة“، Mary, the sister of Aaron died ”بالشراة“ Here, the word شراة is probably from Hebrew word צָרַעַת, which is understood as a skin disease or leprosy (Cf. Exodus 4:6 and Leviticus 14). Numbers 12:10-15 accounts for Miriam's skin disease. Aaron and

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the Apology of al-Kindi was written by a Christian from the tribe of Kindi in response to the request of al-Hashimi, the cousin of the Caliph al-Mamu'un. (Cf. Newman, *Dialogue*, 355-545, where Newman cites Muir's essay on this correspondence, esp. 375).

Miriam have complaint upon Moses' marriage with an Ethiopian woman, and claims that God spoke not only through Moses but also through them (Numbers 12:1-2). God punished Miriam for her arrogance and made her leprous. Her hands became as white as snow. However, she did not die of leprosy but got healed in seven days with Moses' prayer for her. Then why did Leo in the Arabic text say that she died of a skin disease? He may have used the tradition different from the account of the Old Testament about Miriam's death; yet to the best of my knowledge, no other Christian literatures connect Miriam's death and her skin disease.

The corresponding passage in the Latin text is easy to understand. It reads, "She died after they left Egypt and went out to the desert," which might allude to Miriam's death in Kodesh when the Israelites went out to the desert of Zin (Cf. Numbers 20:1-2).

Christians' refutation against Muslim that they do not have correct knowledge of these two Mary figures, which is clearly based on Q 19:27-28, was one of the most commonly discussed topics from the early stage of the Christian-Muslim polemics. For instance, this theme was discussed earlier by John of Damascus, in his *De Haeresibus*, where John says Muhammad claimed that Jesus was born from Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses without seed.<sup>27</sup> The letter of Leo in Armenian also discusses this theme using the similar argument used in the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin: Leo in Armenian letter claims that Miriam died in the desert before she entered into Palestine, and there lies "1370 years and thirty-two generations" between Mary and

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Newman, *Dialogue*, 139.

Miriam. He also mentioned that they are women of different lineages, one of the tribe of Judah, the other of Levi.<sup>28</sup>

### *3.2. On the Divinity of Christ*

Then Leo moves to the discussion of the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity. Both versions are dealing with same themes using same analogies taken from nature and the similar verses taken from the Old and New Testament and the Qur'ān. But the structure of the each text is different: (1) The Latin text is written in more coherent way than the Arabic version. Leo in the Latin text is written in the following sequence: Introduction, first analogy of fire, second analogy of the sun, testimonies from the Old Testament, New Testament and the Qur'ān. On the other hand, Leo in the Arabic text often breaks off in the middle of the discussion and moves to another theme. For instance, When Leo argues the omnipresence of God with the analogy of the sun, the verses from the Old Testament and the Qur'ān appear in the middle of the discussion. (2) In the introduction of both texts, Leo mentions that he will demonstrate the divinity of Christ with testimonies from the Old and New Testament. However, Leo in the Arabic letter does not use the New Testament verses to prove his point. In the Arabic version, Leo's scriptural citation abruptly breaks off, after he cites the first half verse of Zechariah 9:9. On the other hand, the Latin version quotes more verses from the Old Testament and also verses

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Jeffery, "Ghevond," 309. How Leo computed a gap of 1370 years and thirty two generations between two Marys is not known. It is interesting that Leo in Arabic and Armenian texts uses the traditions of Mary and Miriam which are not found in the Old Testament and other Christian or Jewish literatures. Probably these features may shed light on the provenance of each text.

from the New Testament. Leo's use of the New Testament in the Arabic version appears later in 70v-71, where Leo merely gives an abbreviated account of the temptation of Christ by Satan and his death and resurrection. In this part, Leo did not use the New Testament *testimonia* verses to prove the divinity of Christ. Leo only emphasizes that Christ died "willingly" for the remission of the sins of the world. All these show that both texts were from the same materials but the extant Arabic text might have been corrupted during the course of transmission.

In explaining the text, I will follow the order of Arabic version. When the Latin text shows differences from the Arabic version, I will discuss them separately.

### 3.2.1. Introduction

In both versions, a short introductory passage precedes his answers. Leo briefly introduces his plan. The texts run as follows:

315C-316A	65r-65v
However, if you want to know about Christ, so that knowledge of him might come to you, without any uncertainty being in you, examine the Old Testament that God gave to the children of Israel, Moses and David, His prophets. And also search out the new law, which is the Gospel, which has been given to us by Christ's apostles. And then you shall find the truth about Christ and the right way to him, to the point that there would not be any uncertainty in you, since you will see the Scripture giving testimony concordant with itself to Christ, which is in the New and the Old Testament, and then you will truly know Christ. We will make you a knower	Therefore, if you want to know about this, then we will explain to you so that you have no doubt about this or any such thing concerning it. Examine the Old Testament which was sent by God to the children of Israel - the Torah, Psalms, and books of the Prophets. Then Examine the New Testament - the Gospel and what God has sent through the apostle of Jesus. Then you will find from the story of Christ a clear matter and a right way. Your will be pleased with it and will have no doubt, when the Holy Scriptures prove one another and the prophets prove one another, so that it comes to an agreement concerning Jesus Christ, whom God sent, in the Old and the

<p>of our faith, how we worship him, and what kind of teaching we lay, and you will understand, if God be pleased, giving you testimonies from the New and Old Testament that what we say about Christ we say truly, according what I have informed you; weigh and examine until you know.</p>	<p>New Testament. Then you will understand and come to know about the reality of Jesus. And I will explain to you about the matter of our religion, how we worship God, and our laws which we follow so that you understand, God willing. Then I will explain to you about what I am writing to you &lt;giving&gt; proof and testimony from the prophets and the Old and New Testament, that what we say about Christ is true. So understand what I have written to you and comprehend it. Ponder it carefully and reflect it repeatedly until you come to comprehend it, God willing.</p>
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In the introduction of both texts, Leo recommends ‘Umar to consult the Old and the New Testament. The self-concordance of the Scriptures is emphasized. Leo also uses the Qur’ān as a proof text but doesn’t mention it here. Leo finishes the introduction by requesting ‘Umar to reflect and examine what he has written to him until ‘Umar comes to the understanding of the divine nature of Christ.

Apparently, the Latin expression, “If God be pleased” has been translated from, ان شاء الله, meaning “God willing.” This expression appears twice in the corresponding Arabic text in 65v:9 and 65v:13.

### 3.2.2. *The oneness of God: the first analogy of the fire that appeared to Moses*

Leo explains the doctrine of the Trinity using two examples taken from nature. Firstly, he uses the analogy of fire, citing Exodus 3:1-22 where the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in

a flame of fire from the bush. Leo identifies this light with God.<sup>29</sup> Leo focused on the nature of light to explain how the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit exist in One God.

316B	65v-66r
Know that after God made heavens and earth in the beginning –Exalted be His name- and the great light of heavens and earth, which knowledge of mortal ones cannot grasp it as a whole, He appeared to Moses in fire at Mount Sinai, in the word from light: through that he said, “Do not fear, Moses. I am your Lord God, your Creator, light from light, Word of the Father, out of both of whom the Holy Spirit proceeded.” And therefore we say, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, light from light, the Word of God, for they are one, no separation between them, and for the Word of light proceeded from the light and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the light.	I shall tell to you God first created heaven and earth, which cannot encompassed Him, nor can one comprehend how He is. Moses only saw light on Mount Sinai, and that which he called light, and that light said, “Moses, fear not!” From His light, from which He was, was His ray. He called it His Word. And from the ray of His light, He lit. So He called it the Holy Spirit. Hence we say, “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” and all of them are from God, one thing. We do not make distinction between them, and <they are> one light. This very one light illuminates the whole earth. The light and the Holy Spirit from the light are one; therefore, we say, “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, god from god, light from light, God from God, one thing.” We do not make distinction between each one of them. Therefore, this is the reality of the Son and the matter in which he is.

When Leo declares that Christians believe in God as one divine being with three persons, he uses the expression directly taken from the creed. The Arabic text reads, فَكُلُّكُمْ نَقُولُ إِلَهٌ وَالْأَبُونَ “، وَرُوحُ الْقَدْسِ اللَّهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَنُورٌ مِنْ اللَّهِ وَاللهُ شَيْءٌ أَحَدٌ”، Therefore, we say, ‘The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, god from god, light from light, God from God, one thing’ Since both الله and الله شى احد

<sup>29</sup> Citing Exodus 3:1-22 about the appearance of the flaming fire to Moses, Leo uses the Arabic word نور, light, beam” instead of نار, fire.” Probably Leo used نور in order to describe the appearance of the fire (نار) in the bush to Moses with the language of the creed, where God is described as “light from light.”

appear together, I translated them God (الله) and god (الل) in this passage. However, throughout the text, Leo does not distinguish الله from الله. For instance, a similar expression appears again in 81r:10, where الله refers to “God”<sup>30</sup>; thus, in other parts, I translated both words into “God” according to the context. That Leo uses two words “الله, god” and “الله, God” to refer to God in this sentence shows that he directly cites the phrase from the creed.<sup>31</sup>

The Arabic text explains the doctrine of the Trinity through the natural characteristics of light. The relationship between each member is described as the successive emanation of light. “From His light, from which He was, was His ray. He called it His Word. And from the ray of His light, He lit. So He called it the Holy Spirit (65v).” According to Leo’s description in the Arabic text, the relationship between the Father and the Son is apparent. The Father is the light which called Moses on the Mount Sinai. The ray is his Word, which is from Him (i.e., the light). Then from the ray of His light, He lit, again. The direction of the procession of each being is (1) from Father to the Son (2) and from the Son to the Holy Spirit. The Son is the intercessor between the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Leo’s explanation about the relationship between three members of Trinity reminds us of what John of Damascus claims. In his *De Fide Orthodoxa*, John denies the idea that the Son is the “cause” of the “procession” of the Holy Spirit, along with the Father. The Father is the only cause of all procession, while the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father “through” the Son.<sup>32</sup> The

<sup>30</sup> فلم يكن المسيح الله من الله ونور من نور, If Christ were not God from God, and light from light...”

<sup>31</sup> Or this may also be translated as “...God from God, light from light, true God from true God,” as is the English version of the creed.

<sup>32</sup> For discussion of John’s theology on the relationship between the three members of the Trinity, Siecienski, *Filioque*, 90-91, with notes in 247.

same theology is reflected in Leo's letter in Arabic, which shows that Leo shares the interpretation of the "procession" of the Spirit from the Father through Son with John.

The language of the creed also appears in the Latin version in simpler and abbreviated form, combined with the doctrine of the *Filioque*. Leo uses the typical *Filioque* formula: "...the Word of God and out of both of whom (i.e., the Father and the Word) the Holy Spirit proceeded (316B)."<sup>33</sup> The appearance of the *Filioque* doctrine in the Latin version was regarded as the evidence to show the provenance of this text. Gaudeul understood that the occurrence of the *Filioque* formula is the proof which shows that the Latin text might have been written much later "in Western milieux."<sup>34</sup> Gaudeul's hypothesis on the origin of the Latin text is, however, might be reconsidered based on the analysis of the Latin text, and its comparison with the first Arabic letter of Leo in this chapter. The extant Latin text seems to be a translation from the Arabic work written in the late eighth century. Yet, it is quite unusual that a Byzantine writer in the eighth to ninth century has inserted the *Filioque* formula in the anti-Muslim tract.<sup>35</sup> Thus, it seems more likely that the *Filioque* might have been added later by the Latin translator.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In 316B, Latin reads, "...Verbum de Patre ex quibus Spiritus sanctus procedit."

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Gauduel, "Correspondence," 116.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 158-159. Gero claimed that it is "most unusual in a work supposedly written by a medieval Byzantine."

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 159-160.

### *3.2.3. Christ is not like Adam to God*

Then, the Arabic text abruptly breaks off; In this passage, Leo emphasizes differences between Christ and Adam. Leo cites Q 3:59, and rebuts to it. He says Christ and Adam are not the same to God, because Christ obeyed Him and Adam did not. The same theme appears in 62v-64r and also 70v-71v, where Leo describes the death of Christ who died willingly.

### *3.2.4. The omnipresence of God: God is everywhere. He is in Christ as His Word and His Spirit;*

### *3.2.7. The omnipresence of God (continues): The second analogy of the sun*

For the Arabic letter of Leo discusses the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity in two parts, 77v-67r and 68v-69v, I will discuss these two subsections together. In order to explain the omnipresence of God and the divinity of Christ in whom are the Word and the Spirit of God, Leo takes the sun and its rays as an example to show how God can be in heaven and dwell in the body of Christ at the same time.

316B-317A	66v-67r; 68v-69v
And for He is neither little in the small place, nor great in the multiple places but He is everywhere.	Do you not know that Christ is the Word of God and the sign of the Holy Spirit, and that the body of Christ is today in heaven? God is in Christ as His Word and His Spirit, for His Word and Spirit are from God. Where the Word of God and His Spirit are, is God. Therefore, through Christ, we worship God, the one who is in heaven and on earth, not the one who disobeyed and sinned. Do not suppose that God, the most Blessed and the Most High, dwells in small place or in many places; but he is equally everywhere. God called

Consider the sun in which are rays and light. Can you not see it is still one thing? How much more so God who made the sun and everything within the heavens and earth? Through light and Word, which is Himself, all things were made, and the Word itself is His Son. But do not fear to speak of the Word of God as the Son of God, because God the Father is His Word, and where the Word of God is, there is God. Because the Word of God is from God and the Holy Spirit is from God; and whatever the Word wills, He does, and what the Holy Spirit wills, He does, and whatever the Father wills, He does, and there are one God. We neither make division between them nor do we speak of gods, for there is nothing similar to Him, remaining in perpetuity as holy reign.

His Word, by which He created everything, ‘Son.’ Therefore, we say, ‘the Son of God’ because God is the Father of His Word. Wherever the Word of God is, is God. The Word of God is from God and the Spirit of God is from God. The Word of God creates whatever He wishes and the Spirit of God creates whatever He wishes. He is one. Do not think that we worship two gods; we worship one God. We do not associate anything with Him. He is the eternally living one.

If you say, “How could God dwell inside a man?” then we shall give you an example of this so that you can understand, God willing. Do you not know that the sun is on the surface of heaven but its first rays and light are on earth? Or do you not know that the sun is in heaven but it comes into the chamber through the window and glows the chamber with that which is from the sun but the sun is not diminished? It (i.e., the sun) is <also> on land and sea. The sun is a created thing and as same as any other creatures, and if you so desire I can give you more <examples> than this, then what do you say about the one who is the most High and Sublime? Do you not know that God is in heaven, on earth and what is between them? God is not in great or small place, but He is equally everywhere. So, God is in Christ, in heaven, on earth, and He is equally everywhere. But God dwells in Christ with glory, honor, greatness, mercy, and in kinship to him, on account of the Word of God which is in him. For the Word of God is from God and God is with His Word, and the Spirit of God is from God and God is with His Spirit, whatever is from God, is God.

The argument can be divided into two parts: (1) Leo’s claim that God is not in small place nor in large place but everywhere, including in Christ, as one God (316B; 66v, 69v); (2) his use of the analogy of the sun and its rays and light. The analogy of the sun is used to explain how God can dwell in multiple places at the same time. Like the sun is in the sky while its rays and

light are everywhere on earth, God in heaven can also be in the body of Christ at the same time.<sup>37</sup>

In these passages, Leo's line of reasoning is simple and circular; he repeats that God is in Christ as His Word and His Spirit. This, in turns, proves that Christ himself is also God, because God presents in him. Leo repeatedly says that God is "in" Christ as his Word and his Spirit. Christ is described as the place where the Word and Spirit of God dwell. The same idea appears in the passage where Leo defends the veneration of Christ in 74r-74v. The body of Christ is "metaphorically" identified with the "Ark of Covenant," where the commandment of God and His Scriptures were placed. In both 68v-69v and 74r-74v, Leo makes the same claim that Christian do not believe in "two gods" or "two lords," nor are they "polytheists." According to him, Christians venerate one God who is everywhere, and also in the body of Christ as "His Word and His Spirit."

Leo's Christology that God dwells in Christ as His Word and Spirit is based on both Christian and Muslim traditions: the metaphor of the human body of Christ as the dwelling place of God's Word and Spirit echoes Syriac tradition about the body as the garment of soul, and Islamic tradition of "God's self-veiling" attested in Q 42:51. Though Leo did not use languages reflecting clothing imagery here, such understanding seems to have been internalized for Leo. Leo's Christology is attested throughout the text and more elaborated in the letter of Leo in Latin version in 320A. I will discuss this theme in detail in section 3.6.5.2 below.

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<sup>37</sup> The analogy of the sun and its rays is commonly used by Christian polemists to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. For instance, it is found in the letter of Leo in Armenian (Jeffery, "Ghevond," 300) and in the dialogue between Timothy I and al-Mahdī (Newman, *Dialogue*, 181).

### 3.2.5. Testimonies from the Old Testament

Leo's another strategy to prove the divinity of Christ is the employment of verses taken from the Old and New Testament, and the Qur'ān. Leo draws up the verses which support his claim about the divine nature of Christ. In this part, Leo is simply utilizing these verses out of their own contexts and reading them in his own theological perspective.

317B-317C	67r-68r
<p>Moreover, it is necessary for us to provide testimonies from the prophets of God, Blessed be He, that He has called Christ the Word His Son. And through the Word that proceeded from the light He founded the heavens and earth and everything in them. Moses said, "God created everything through Word." David &lt;said&gt; in Psalm, "Through the Word of the Lord, heavens were established." And elsewhere &lt;he said&gt;, "In heaven, oh Lord, your Word remains firm for eternity," and also, "He sent &lt;His&gt; Word," and Job said about the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of the Lord made me." Moses &lt;said&gt;, "The Spirit of God was brought over the waters." Isaiah &lt;said&gt;, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, through which He anointed me." David &lt;said&gt;, "Send your spirit," and also, "Your good spirit will lead me," and "renew a right spirit within my bowels." These are the testimonies from the Old law, that the Word and the Spirit which are from God, created all creatures.</p>	<p>I will tell you about this (i.e., the divinity of Christ) with evidences and witnesses that you are not able to deny, and the prophets of God, the Just shall give the proof of my words, saying that: God called Jesus, 'Son,' and through His Word, God created everything. He (i.e., David) said in the Psalms, "Through His Word, He created everything." David also said, "By the Word of the Lord, the heaven became firm and by the Spirit of His mouth all its powers &lt;were made&gt;." And David also said, "Oh, Lord! Your Word is in heaven always." He said "God sent his word and cured them." And Job the faithful testified to the Holy Spirit and said, "The Holy Spirit has made me." And Moses the prophet said, "The Spirit of God was upon the water." Isaiah the prophet said, "The Holy Spirit has made me." And Moses the prophet said, "He who lifted up heaven without a pillar walks upon the sea as he does upon the land. And Isaiah the prophet said, "The Spirit of the Lord anointed me." And David the prophet said, "You sent Your Spirit and created me and You renewed the face of the earth. Your good Spirit leads me to the firm land." Now then what testimony is more true than this and what story is more clear than this? These are from the Old Testament and there are more beside them. The Word and the Spirit are from God, and they created creatures &lt;together&gt;.</p>

It is also necessary for us to mention the testimony which God called His word His son. Isaiah said, “A Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son,” and the rest. And also, <Isaiah said>, “A child is born for us, and a son is given to us.” Also, God the Father <said> to David, “After you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up from your body he who will sit on the throne of Israel. As for me, I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me.” David <said> in Psalms, “The Lord said to me,” and the rest. Zacharias said, “Rejoice and be glad, o daughter of Zion, cry out, o daughter of Jerusalem, because your gentle king is coming to you, sitting on a son of donkey; he will declare peace to gentiles, just for he is Christ.”

When proof and testimonies from the Old Testament also demonstrate <that Christ is the Son of God>: Isaiah the prophet said, “The virgin shall conceive and shall give birth to a son, and call him ‘Emmanuel’ which means God is with us.” David the prophet said, “You are my son and today I gave birth to you. Ask me, and I will give you nations as you inheritance, and the end of the earth your possessions.” Zechariah the prophet said, “Rejoice and delight, Oh, daughter of Zion. Sing and be happy, Oh, daughter of Jerusalem. Your king is coming, riding on a foal of a donkey.”

Leo’s strategy is neither new nor unique; rather, he simply imitates the way early Christian writers frequently used to prove their theological points and win over their audiences. The use of scriptural verses, which are called “*testimonia* collections,” has long history; it was one of the commonly used methods of Christian writers from the formative period of Christianity.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it is natural for scholars like Rendel Harris who read the early Christian-Muslim polemics with their familiarity with the ancient *testimonia* to have noticed methodological similarities. The starting point of the study of this subject is Rendel Harris’ articles on the “Triune.”<sup>39</sup> From this anti-Muslim work, he could easily recognize the deployment of the Old Testament *testimonia*. For him, the verses used in the “Triune” are so similar to those used by earlier Christian writers, who were engaged in anti-Jewish polemics.

<sup>38</sup> Rendel Harris, “Triune,” 77ff. Murray presented that early Syriac writers were also familiar with the use of *testimonia*. See Murray, *Symbols*, 288-290.

<sup>39</sup> See Rendel Harris, “Triune.”

Rendel Harris explained the appearance of the *testimonia* in the “Triune” that the author of this text used the already existing earlier anti-Jewish material in the new context, when he debates with Muslims. In the “Triune,” Muslims replaced the Jews in the context of religious polemics, and Muslims are now the “new kind of Jews.”<sup>40</sup> Following him, more extensive studies on the use of the *testimonia* in the Christian anti-Muslim polemics have been made by Swanson,<sup>41</sup> Bertania<sup>42</sup> and Keating.<sup>43</sup> While Keating’s study is focusing on the use of *testimonia* by a Jacobite writer named Abū Rā’īṭa al-Takrīṭī, Swason’s and Bertania’s works are focusing on the works written by early Melkite apologists. These Christian writers used the Scripture in the same way that the early church fathers did, by drawing up verses from the Old and the New Testament and presenting them as scriptural proofs of their theological claims. It is not unlikely that they may have been depending on the already existing *testimonia* collection.<sup>44</sup> These studies show that the Christian apologists in the early Islamic period utilized their religious heritage to cope with the difficulties emerged from the new circumstances. The context of the use of *testimonia* changed from the anti-Jewish polemics to Christian-Muslim religious debates.

The use of the verses from the Old Testament in the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin is interesting in two aspects: Not only it shows that Leo adapted the traditional strategy of early Christian writers in religious polemics, but it also reveals the close relationship between the

<sup>40</sup> Rendel Harris, “Triune,” 76, 86.

<sup>41</sup> Swanson, “Beyond Prooftexting (2),” 98-105; idem, “Audience,” 124-130.

<sup>42</sup> Bertaina, “Testimony.”

<sup>43</sup> Keating, “Abū Rā’īṭa al-Takrīṭī.”

<sup>44</sup> Swanson, “Beyond Prooftexting (2),” 105. On the other hand, Keating claims the opposite. See Keating, “Abū Rā’īṭa al-Takrīṭī,” 273: “It is possible that he draws on existing *testimonia* collections he had available previously used for anti-Jewish apologetics, but most likely that he creates his own to suit his purpose. This is something that requires more research.”

Arabic and Latin letters. One may not be able to read both texts without noticing close similarities between the verses used in them. Some passages are corrupted, conflated or not fully presented. Some of them are not clearly identified. Nevertheless, similarity between two texts is striking. Both versions cite same verses and arrange them in the same order under two topical headings: (1) God created his creatures through His Word and His Spirit; (2) He called Christ, His Word “Son.” The Arabic text breaks off where Leo cites from Zechariah 9:9. The Latin letter continues to present more verses from the Old Testament and also from the New Testament to claim that “Christ is God from God (317C-318B).” Even though Leo’s strategy was commonly used by his contemporary authors, it is still noteworthy that Leo in both texts cites the same verses in the same order in order to prove the same points. The slight differences found in both texts can be easily explained by assuming that they were corrupted in the course of transmission and translation. When the early Christian Arabic apologists use the Old Testament *testimonia* to prove the same point, the verses used by each writer are not identical. For instance, even when the “Triune” and the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin use the Old Testament verses to explain the divinity of Christ, the verses used in the “Triune” and letters of Leo are not the same, and the order in which they are arranged is different. If we compare the verses used in other apologetic writings together, the differences more stand out. Therefore, it is quite evident that the extant Arabic and Latin letters of Leo are from the same earlier material.

From 68v, the letter of Leo in Arabic begins to be elaborated in the direction different from that of the Latin text. The Latin version provides more citations from the New Testament

and from the Qur'ān to prove the divinity of Christ. The New Testament verses are taken from the Gospels and the letters of Paul. As to the Qur'ānic passages, the cited verses in the Latin version are different from those of the Arabic letter. Leo in the Latin text cited Q 3:39, which accounts for the annunciation to Zachariah about the birth of John the Baptist, and Q 3:45. John's role was regarded as the one who comes before the "Son of God, Messiah (319A)."

After that, in 319A-320A, Leo in the Latin text discusses the necessity of Incarnation and coming of Christ in the context of the sacred history. Leo in the Arabic text discusses the same theme in 83r-84r. Thus, I will deal with this theme in detail later, explaining Leo's argument in 83r-84r. Now I will move to the use of the Qur'ānic verses in the Arabic letter of Leo.

### *3.2.6. Testimony from the Qur'ān*

Leo not only depends on the Christian Scriptures but on the Scripture of his interlocutor as well. In the Arabic text, Leo alludes to Q 4:171 when he says, "Your Scripture (i.e., the Qur'ān) says that God sent His Word and His Spirit, which are from Him, to Mary and created from her a perfect man in body and spirit." The perfection in body and spirit is understood by Leo as the human and divine nature in Christ. Elsewhere, Leo calls Christ "the perfect man" in body and spirit.<sup>45</sup> For Leo, the Qur'ān is also a persuasive source which confirms the validity of

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<sup>45</sup> In 79v-80r, Leo says, "It is only Christ who was given the power of heaven and earth, in the body which became incarnate among us; therefore, he was a perfect man." It is interesting that the author of the "Triune" uses similar expressions when he describes the divine and human nature which are co-existing in Christ: "The Christ was born of Mary the pure by the Holy Ghost without any man touching her, God of God and Light of His Light, His Word and His Spirit, perfect Man in soul and body without sin." The translation is from Gibson, *Triune*, 11-12.

Christian teaching. He may have known that Muslims read and interpret these verses in the different way; however it was not his concern to read the verse in its own theological context. Leo's use of the Qur'ān here is typical proof-texting- he reads the verses in the Qur'ān through his Christian eyes and uses them to defend Christian teaching

The use of the Qur'ān as a proof-text demonstrate that Christians have been already familiarized with the Qur'ān and well versed with it in the period of early Islam. In fact, the influence of the Qur'ān upon Christian writers in this period is evident. The works from early Christian writers from all three Christian denominations show that they were not only knew about the Qur'ān well but even knew about the debates on its authenticity as well. For instance, Timothy I also cites a number of verses from the Qur'ān in his debates with al-Mahdī.<sup>46</sup> Abraham of Tiberias includes a long section on the “origin and history” of the Qur'ān in his work.<sup>47</sup> The Armenian letter of Leo also shows he knows Islamic tradition on the canonization of the Qur'ān by the direction of Hajjāj by the command of Uthman.<sup>48</sup>

Particularly, for the Melkite writers, who were the first to write in Arabic, the theology and the vocabularies of the Qur'ān may have been more influential.<sup>49</sup> Swansons's analysis on the different levels of the use of the Qur'ān in the Christian apologetics may be applied to this study to understand the way Leo uses it: Swanson explored the ways how various early Christian apologists used the Qur'ān, from simple proof-texting to reading it through Christian

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<sup>46</sup> For editions and translations of this work, see Newman, *Dialogue*, 174-267.

<sup>47</sup> See Newman, *Dialogue*, 452-462.

<sup>48</sup> See Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 298.

<sup>49</sup> For the use of the Qur'ān in the early Melkite Christian apologists, in particular, see Samir, “Apology”; Rodger, *Christian Exegesis*, 65-104; Swanson, “Beyond Prooftexting (2).”

interpretation. Swanson's categorization may be applied to both letters of Leo. Leo's way of using of the Qur'ān in both version can be categorized as (1) simple adaptation of expressions such as God's attributes and ninety-nine names of God; (2) allusions to or citations of particular verses, (3) reading verses or passages in the Christian perspectives.<sup>50</sup> As to the first and the second way, they are mostly found in the Arabic letter of Leo. For instance, Leo describes God's attributes with the Qur'ānic terms such as "mercy (see e.g. 63r and 75r)" and "right guidance (see e.g. 80r)." Also, he frequently adds the ninety-nine divine names to God when he praise Him. One of such examples is found in 78v where Leo says, "God is the rich (الغني) [and] the praiseworthy (المحمود)." These expressions are taken from the Qur'ān,<sup>51</sup> For instance, Q 35:15 and 57:24 say, God is "rich" and "praiseworthy" (...وَاللهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ وَالْحَمِيدُ). As to the second way, it is well shown in 68v in the Arabic version and also in 318D-319A in the Latin text. In this case, Leo's strategy is simple: he draws up verses from the Qur'ān and uses them to show that his argument is proved not only by his own Scriptures but by the Qur'ān as well. Usually, Leo reads the verses of the Qur'ān through Christian interpretation. The third way is also used by Leo in 83r-84r and in the Latin version in 319A-320A in particular, when Leo elaborates his Christology and soteriology. In this case, Leo's Christian theology is expressed with the Qur'ānic concepts of the sacred history, which Leo seems already to have been internalized. This third way will be discussed in detail later in this chapter in section 3.6.5.2.

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<sup>50</sup> For Swanson's categorizing, see his "Beyond Prooftexting (2)," 302ff.

<sup>51</sup> I did not discuss each of these examples in detail. I identified the Qur'ānic verses in notes of the translation.

### *3.2.8. Christians' belief on one God and the teaching of Christ<sup>52</sup>*

Leo reminds his audiences of the Muslim accusation against Christians of “polytheism.”

He cites verse from the Qur’ān which accuse Christians of being “infidels” or “polytheists.”<sup>53</sup>

Then he asserts this is not the truth about the faith of Christians. Leo borrowed the language of the creed to affirm Christian belief: “We believe in God the Father who was not begotten, and we believe in God the Son who was begotten from the Father who did not beget, and we believe in the Holy Spirit who did not beget nor was begotten.”<sup>54</sup> Here again, as in the case of the phrase in 66r, “...god from god, light from light, God from God, one thing,” the use of the expressions taken from the creed shows Leo wrote this letter for Christians.

Then Leo describes Christ as the judge of men on the Day of Judgment. Leo says, “God has chosen this man (i.e., Christ) and dwelled in him as His Word, to assemble the people on the Day of Resurrection through him, and to set him as judge between the angels and people.” Leo’s statement here reflects Christian and Islamic eschatology described in Q 20:102 and Matthew 24:29-31. There are three passages in the letter of Leo in Arabic which describes the Day of Judgement: 69v-70r, 73v, and 78r. The Leo’s eschatology and the eschatological hope of Christians will be discussed altogether later in section 3.5.6 (which is corresponding to 77v-78r).

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<sup>52</sup> For explanation of the section 3.2.7. Omnipresence of God with the analogy of the sun, see 3.2.4 above.

<sup>53</sup> For Qur’ānic term “infidels,” see e.g. Q 5:73; for “polytheists,” see e.g. Q 2:135.

<sup>54</sup> This phrase is a later correction. See note in 69v in edition in the chapter II.

### *3.2.9. Non-violent character of Christianity and Christians' eschatological hope*

In the following passage, Leo emphasizes the “non-violent” character of Christianity. He contrasts Christianity and Islam, one as the religion of peace and the other as of violence. He claimed that “Therefore, when Christ came, he did not come with an army or a sword... (70r)” He does not speak explicitly that Islam is the religion of violence. However, it is apparent he is alluding to the success of Arab military campaign and the affliction to non-Muslims when he mentions “army” and “sword.” The connection between Islam and the violence is commonly in early Christian polemics. For instance, the author of the “Triune” emphasizes the non-violent character of Christianity, as he claims that when the apostles of Christ evangelized the world, they did not fight nor force anyone to accept Christianity, but people fight against them. But they delivered their mission successfully.<sup>55</sup> Similar idea is also attested in the work of Theodore Abū Qurrah. In claiming that Christianity is the religion of God, he compared the way how Christianity and other religions were propagated. People accepted Christianity through miracles and wonders performed by the apostle of Christ with the aid of God.<sup>56</sup> Neither the author of the “Triune” and Abū Qurrah directly refute Islam as the religion of violence, but what their intention is obvious. The trace of the affliction of non-Muslims is also found in the writings of Christians. It will be well shown in the second letter of Leo when Leo describes the “reactions” of Muslims, who insult and are not fair to non-Muslims and show off their angers when they heard the words unpleasing to them (88v).

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Samir, “Apology,” 103-105.

<sup>56</sup> This theme appears repeatedly in Abū Qurrah’s work. See Lamoreaux, *Abū Qurrah*, 41-57.

Then Leo goes on to say that the peaceful character of Christianity is well reflected in the teaching of Christ himself. Christ only came to teach the way of pure and virtuous life. The passage runs as follows:

Rather, he only commanded us <to live> a pure life in this world. He also, commanded that we should live a life of virtue by fasting and prayer. He commanded us to forgive the one who does evil to us and trespasses against us. He, also, commanded us to do charity privately and with <good> intention. And he commanded us to pray without hypocrisy so that we will be worthy of what Christ has promised us in the kingdom of heaven (70r).

In this passage, the teaching of Christ is focusing on the religious life of individuals. This passage is a variation of the second part of the Lord's Prayer (Cf. Matthew 6:12) and Matthew 6:5, for which Christians need no further explanation. Leo summons Christians using familiar and authoritative expressions to persuade them to keep their Christian faith and way of life. The aim of such life is to receive the reward in heaven. Leo' statement can be understood in the eschatological context. Elsewhere in the first letter, Leo emphasizes the emptiness of worldly affairs. He asserts that "Do not let power or wealth or good health deceive you. All of these are like a dream that a person has when he is in sleep. But when he awakes from his sleep, he realizes that what he saw in his sleep is false, not of this world or anything of it (78r)." The same attitude is found in 80v-81r, when Leo cites Matthew 5:1-12 which praises the righteous and emphasizes the reward of those who suffer in this world prepared "in the next world." For Leo, what Christians should seek is not what is on the ground, but in heaven. Together with Leo's emphasis on the non-violent character of Christianity, this passage shows the socio-political circumstances in which Christians were living. This passage is not a theological discussion.

None of his claims in this passage will be convincing to Muslims. Rather, Leo's character as a pastor of the church and the nature of this text as an apology written for Christians stand out.

### *3.2.10. Christ's obedience to God and his death for God's economy*

With respect to the divinity of Christ, Leo elaborates what he already mentioned concerning the difference between Adam and Christ in 63v, and 66r-66v. In the first two parts, Leo explains that Christ is not like Adam, because of his “obedience” to God and “disobedient” to the Satan. The Satan was successful in leading Adam astray. But as to Christ, he failed to seduce him. Then the Satan entered into the Jews and the Jews crucified Christ. The death of Christ is not the proof of God’s incapability or weakness; rather it is out of His mercy that He let the Jews crucify Christ, in order to save men from sins (70v-71r). In explaining the necessity of Christ’s death, Leo must have had in mind the Muslim accusation in Q 4:157 which denies the death and crucifixion of Jesus. It is clearly shown by Leo’s statement, “Therefore, he lived, died and was buried, not being made to appear like that (71r).” Leo elaborated this theme later in 73v-74r, directly citing the same Qur’ānic verse.

### *3.3. On the Eucharist*

The letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin again deal with the same theme in 71v-72r and its corresponding Latin passage in 321C-321A, when they discuss the institution of the Eucharist. In both texts, three passages are devoted for this theme: the first passage which discusses a sacrifice

with “faithful intention,” the second passage which describes the Last Supper taken from the New Testament, and the third passage concerning “the table from heaven,” directly cited from Q 5:112-115. All these three passages are interconnected, and they together discuss the following points: the transition from the sacrifice to the Eucharist, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, and the necessity of the Eucharist for the forgiveness of the sins of all human beings. Leo’s argument is based on the Christian teaching of the necessity of the incarnation, but also made with Christian interpretation of the Sūrah Mā’idah.

These passages are arranged slightly differently in both text. While Leo in the Latin text develops his ideas from the discussion on the true sacrifice to the institution of Eucharist, and adds the passage on the table from heaven at the end, the Arabic version begins with the passage on the table from heaven and move to other two passages about the true sacrifice and the Last Supper. At the end of discussion, the Latin text adds one more passage on the Bahīrā legend, where he refutes Muslims that they have false knowledge on the Eucharist due to the heretical teaching of a Nestorians. In this part, I will discuss each paragraph following the order of subsections in the Latin version, since Leo develops his argumentation in more logical way in the Latin text. The last passage of the Bahīrā legend will be discussed separately.

In 321C-322A, the Latin text is full of phrases and sentences which are difficult to understand, which makes the reading of these passages difficult. It might be either because the *Vorlage* of the Latin text were ambiguously written or because the Latin translator misunderstood the Arabic. Or it may be due to the redactions of the text. In any case, it seems difficult to read these passages with certainty. Therefore, I will contend myself only with

understanding Leo's general ideas based on the context. Therefore, the reading and understanding of Leo's discussion on the Eucharist in the Latin version are still open to debate.

### *3.3.1. The true sacrifice (3.3.2 in the Arabic version)*

321C	72r
You wrote to me about the sacrifice –what it was, and <wrote> that you did not find anyone among the servants of God who could offer sacrifice. At the beginning, two sons of Adam offered, but what was accepted was from one of the two. The true sacrifice is beyond the human beings, and whoever offered it [with faithful] intention is acceptable to God, except for the sacrifice which offered to idols. For truly, those who offer [to idols], they were corrupted and were gone astray.	You know that anyone, who seeks <God>, offers a sacrifice and a gift, glorifying God. He (i.e., God) is pleased with him and gives grace to whoever approaches Him with faithful intention, except they who transgress against God and their deeds are only with Satan, idols, and graven images. Thus, they who have gone astray from the way of God shall perish.

The Latin text begins with Leo's citation from 'Umar's accusation that, "You wrote to me about the sacrifice –what it is and that you did not find anyone among the servants of God who offers sacrifice (321C)." It seems unclear from the Latin text, who is the subject of "you" in the second part of the first sentence. It seems that it refers to "Leo," rather than "'Umar." This reading can be supported by Q 22:33-37 about the animal sacrifice, where the piety of those who offer a sacrifice is more strongly emphasized than the sacrificial offering itself, such as flesh or blood of sacrificial animals. However, even though the faith of the one who offers sacrifice is emphasized, the Qur'ān never denies the animal sacrifice nor those who offer them. Furthermore,

Leo clearly asserts in the same paragraph, “The true sacrifice is above human beings.” Therefore, it can’t be ‘Umar who said so.

Then Leo cites verses from the Old Testament which mention God’s acceptance of Abel’s offering but not of Cain’s.<sup>57</sup> Leo asserts that God accepts whatever is offered with “aedificatio.” The Latin text reads, “...et acceptum Deo, et aedification ei quicunque obtulerit.” The appearance of this Latin word “aedificatio,” which usually means a building or construction, seems not fit to the context here. One solution to solve the occurrence of this strange word is to read it on the assumption that the *Vorlage* of the extant Latin text is in Arabic. If so, “aedificatio” seems to have been translated from Arabic بنيّة, which can be read either as binya or bunya, meaning “building”<sup>58</sup> or as a combination of an instrumental preposition ـبـ with a word نية niyya, meaning “by intention” or “by will.”<sup>59</sup> If we read it in the second way, the meaning is clear: the Latin text should be translated “...whoever offered it with intention to God.” Clearly from the context, this “intention” will be “faithful intention” with which a man should offer sacrifice. Interestingly, in its corresponding Arabic passage, the word بنيّة is modified by an adjective صادقة, preventing misreading.<sup>60</sup> The occurrence of this strange word in the Latin text seems to be due to the Latin translator’s misunderstanding of the Arabic text.

Even though he emphasizes the piety of those who sacrifice, Leo says that the true sacrifice is beyond human beings. Written with certain ambiguity, Leo’s main point in this

<sup>57</sup> Genesis 4:3-5 discuss the first murder done by Cain. The Qur’ān also describes this event shortly in 5:27.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Hans-Wehr, *Dictionary*, 4th edition, 95.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1188.

<sup>60</sup> The reading of the Latin text in the light of Arabic version and vice versa is, of course, demanding cautions.

passage seems as follows: He distinguishes the sacrifice of man from the sacrifice of Christ. He does not deny those who offer sacrifice with “faithful intention.” Leo’s intention is more clearly shown in the next sentences; he says that the sacrifice to God is acceptable but not the one to the idols. And those who offer sacrifice to idols are corrupted and led astray. Yet, it is not the “true” sacrifice. It is not stated in this passage, but from his arguments made in the following passage, this “true” sacrifice can be offered only by someone “beyond” human being, namely Christ, which is the Eucharist.

The Arabic text shows similar view on the sacrifice. Leo emphasize the “faithful intention” of the one who offers “a sacrifice and a gift” to God. It is those to whom God is pleasing and gives grace. Here Leo does not distinguish the sacrifice of Christ and sacrifice of man nor denies a sacrifice offered by man. But the place of the Eucharist for Christians that replaces the animal sacrifice in the Old Testament is clearly shown when Leo uses the words, “a sacrifice and a gift” both in the contexts of sacrifice and Eucharist (72r:8-9; 72v:8). Eucharist is the sacrifice Christ offers with his blood and flesh. Then, as in the case of Latin text, Leo finishes the passage with a warning to those who offer to idols. Leo’s warning to people is written with similar languages used in the corresponding Latin text. Even though both texts show variants in some phrases, similar expressions and shared ideas in them show that they are in close relation.

Leo’s view on the “true” sacrifice is of biblical origin. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews discusses this theme. The annual sacrifice reminds men of their sins, since the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away the sins. Daily sacrifice offered by priest cannot take away sins

(Hebrews 10:3-4). However, Christ who came to the world to fulfill God's will by offering himself as a sacrificial offering, and by that, he cleansed all the sins of the world (Cf. Hebrews 10:8-18). The fundamental difference between the sacrifice of men and sacrifice of Christ is that the sacrifice of men is imperfect, temporal, incapable of permanent remission of the sins "of this world," while that of Christ is perfect, "perpetual" and belong to heaven.<sup>61</sup> To save human beings from the dominion of devil, "Christ set aside the first to establish the second (Hebrews 10:9)."

Leo's soteriology and Christology is not unfamiliar to his contemporary Christian writers. For instance, the incapability of men to attain salvation and the necessity of the coming of Christ are also the central themes in the "Triune," which is also based on the theology of the New Testament.<sup>62</sup> Even though the author of the "Triune" emphasized the necessity of the baptism rather than the Eucharist, he shares similar theology with Leo about the way of attaining salvation: It is only through Christ, through the baptism, that men can truly be saved from the idol worshipping.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See W.E. Brooks, "Perpetuity," esp. 213-214, for the contrast between the sacrifice of men and Christ.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Samir, "Apology," 82. According to Swanson, similar soteriology is found in the works of Theodore Abū Qurrah and of St. Athanasius (Swanson, "Folly," 74-85; idem, "Audience," 124, n. 56).

<sup>63</sup> Gibson, *Triune*, 36: "... we do not know with what God sprinkled men, and cleansed them from their sins, and from the worship of idols, save the immersion of baptism, by which He cleanseth him who believeth in the Christ, and is baptized and obeys God's prophets. Men were never saved from the worship of idols save when the Christ, the light of God, appeared to us, and received us in baptism."

*3.3.2. The last supper (3.3.3 in the Arabic version)*

If the true sacrifice can be offered only through Christ, then how did it take place? Leo describe this self-sacrifice of Christ in the following passage. Both texts begin with the description of the Last Supper scene taken from the Gospel.

321C-321D	72v-73v
<p>At the night when the passion began, Christ said to his disciples about what the Jews would do to him, and about resurrection and their running away, and he announced their turning back to him. And yet, at that night, he was eating with disciples, taking bread and blessed it and said, "Take and eat! This is my body which is given up for you." Also, taking a chalice, he said, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood which is offered for the forgiveness of sins." And he ordered us to do the same, so that it might be for us the remission of sins, for whomever among us, [since] we will offer it in faith and love. It is right to believe this sacrifice, not the one you claim you have in your law.</p>	<p>Listen, O Man, when Christ was killed, the Jews came to him at night, and it was the night of the crucifixion. He told his followers who were his disciples that Jews would come. Thus, he told them about it (i.e., the crucifixion) and spoke to them about his resurrection and that they would abandon him but would return to him after his resurrection. Then at that night, Christ ate with his followers. He took bread in his hands, blessed it and prayed over it, and said to them, "Eat! This is my body which I offer to God as a sacrifice or gift for &lt;the forgiveness of&gt; sins of the world." Then he did the same with the cup which was filled with wine, and said to them, "Drink! This is my blood which I will offer through the wood of the Cross." Thus the disciples consecrated that bread and wine with the Holy Spirit and the prayer which Christ taught them and handed down to them. Then they (i.e., the disciples) handed it (i.e. the prayer) down to those who came after them so that they might offer it (i.e., as a sacrifice). Do not conclude and do not consider that the wine and the bread to be ordinary bread and wine, but consider its sublimity and its grace, and the Holy Spirit and his blessing in them. But the Jews regarded Christ as a man, like one of us. Then he resurrected the dead and showed many signs which I have written to you. Seen by eyes, &lt;he is&gt; just a man like us, but as for the deeds, &lt;he is&gt; God. Thus whoever believes in him is victorious, and whoever hardens his heart and disbelieves is wretched and shall perish. This is</p>

the reality of Eucharist and its matters. Yet, I have explained to you that which you cannot ignore or reproach. Jesus commanded concerning bread and wine that the priest should consecrate them with the Word of God and call the Holy Spirit upon them so that there will be forgiveness of sins in them for whoever receives it with faith and believes in it, just as Christ has commanded. And they are sufficient just as was the body of Christ sufficient. Therefore, we believe that in this bread and wine, after they are consecrated with what is in the body of Christ, God and His spirit abide. Thus he commanded us to do that (i.e., to celebrate the Eucharist). We must remember Christ's grace upon us and his self-sacrifice on our behalf, so that we come <to the hour of> resurrection and meet him face to face without any shame.

Though the Latin text is relatively short and abbreviated compared to the Arabic letter, Leo's point is same in both texts. The true sacrifice was performed by Christ as he was offering himself to God as "a sacrifice and a gift" for the forgiveness of sins. The bread and wine in the last supper is identified his blood and fresh. As mentioned, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is shown by Leo's use of particular expressions. As referring to sacrifice, Leo says in 72r, "You know that anyone, who seeks <God>, offers a sacrifice and a gift" قربان او زبد . And again in 72v, Christ states that he offers his body to God as 'a sacrifice and a gift' قربان وزبد . The repetitive use of the same expression in two contexts, one in the context of the sacrifice and the other of the Eucharist shows Leo's intention: the ancient practice of animal sacrifice performed by men is still not enough for human beings to receive the true reward from God. Only Christ, who is man and God, can perform true sacrifice by offering Christ himself. For Leo, this is the new and true sacrifice, the Eucharist. As God gives grace to those who offer "a sacrifice or a gift" with

“faithful intention,” those who celebrate Eucharist also receive their reward. The reward is the deliberation from death and eternal life.

As in the case of Leo’s argument on the Christology, this passage shows that he composed his writing to be read by Christians. In 73r-73v, the Arabic text provides a short account on the transubstantiation of bread and wine. After bread and wine are consecrated by priest, the Word of God and His Spirit dwell in them forever and that bread and wine is “sufficient” so is the body of Christ. That Christians should continue the celebration of the Eucharist is emphasized. The eschatological hope of Christians is also emphasized when Leo says, “We must remember Christ’s grace upon us and his self-sacrifice on our behalf, so that we come <to the hour of> resurrection and meet him face to face without any shame (73v).” Again, Leo’s argument is appealing to the Christian understanding of the Eucharist, rather than to logic.

### *3.3.3. The table from heaven (3.3.1 in the Arabic version)*

321D-322A	71v-72r
When the disciples said to the Son of God, “Ask God so that He might send us Manna from heaven,” Christ said, “Fear, God, if you are believers.” The disciples said, “We wish to eat from it and we believe you and we know that you had spoken truth to us, and we testify that you are Christ, God. Send Manna from heaven, so that it might be a solemn feast for us and a sign from you to those who will come after us. Grant us these things, for you are a giver of gifts.” And God said, “I will send it to you; after that if	As for your question about the Eucharist and what you said and asked about, I will tell to you what we know about it, God willing! I read in your Scripture, “The apostles said to Jesus, ‘Ask your Lord to send us a table from heaven.’ He said, ‘Fear God, if you are believers.’ They said, ‘We wish to eat from it, to have tranquil heart, to know that we were truthful, and to be among the witness.’ Jesus said, ‘Oh, God! Send us a table from heaven that it may be a feast and a sign from you for the first to the last among us. And provide us with the means of sustenance for you

anyone denied, he would be tortured with the torment with which no one was tortured before.”	are the best of the providers.’ He (i.e., God) said, “I will send it to you; for the one who disbelieves, I shall punish him with a punishment by which I will not punish anyone in the world.”” And this is the very table which God has sent down to the apostles through Jesus. And we adhere to it to this day.
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The passage on the “table from heaven” is quite polemical and requires a careful analysis in languages and the context. Both texts cite the passage from the Qur’ān, Sūrah al-Mā’idah (مائدۃ), which means, “a table,” but more specifically, “a meal, food, or a feast.”<sup>64</sup> The title of this Sūrah is from its verses, 112-115, where Jesus and his disciples are taking about “the table from heaven.” The verses from Q 5:112-115 is as follows:

[And remember] when the disciples said, ‘O Jesus, Son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven?’ [Jesus] said, ‘Fear, Allah, if you should be believers.’ They said, ‘We wish to eat from it, and let our hearts be reassured and know that you have been truthful to us and be among its witnesses.’ Said Jesus, the son of Mary, ‘O Allah, our Lord, send down to us a table [spread with food] from the heaven to be for us a festival for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You. And provide for us, and You are the best of providers.’ Allah said, ‘Indeed, I will send it down to you, but whoever afterwards from among you –then indeed will I punish him with a punishment by which I have not punished anyone among the worlds.’

Leo’s interpretation of Q 5:112-115 in connection with the Eucharist is not surprising. The influence of the Bible upon this Sūrah seems evident. The life of Jesus is narrated briefly in Q 5:110, where Jesus’ birth and his performing miracles are described in Islamic perspective. Jesus was born from Mary by the Spirit of God, made a bird from clay and breathed into it, spoke to people in the cradle, and cured the sick and raised the dead by God’s permission. Then

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<sup>64</sup> For meaning and etymology of this word, see Botoi, “Image,” 12-13.

the scene of the last supper is described in Q 5:112-115. This “heavenly table” has been understood within biblical contexts, being identified with the Last Supper.<sup>65</sup>

It is noteworthy that, even though two versions use the same verses taken from the Qur’ān, their attitudes toward the Qur’ān passage and the interpretation of it are different. I will first begin with the Arabic version. The Arabic text quotes the verses from Qur’ān almost correctly. Only a phrase shows the significant distinction from the original verse. Leo changed in Q 5:113 صدقنا“ you have been truthful to us” to صدقنا“ we were truthful.”<sup>66</sup> Leo reads Q 5:112-115 in the light of the Eucharist, without refuting the reliability of the Qur’ānic understanding of the Eucharist. Leo identifies the table from heaven with the Eucharist, and claims the truth of the Eucharist on the authority of the Qur’ān. This is typical Christian reading of the Qur’ān.

The Latin text shows more active Christian reading of the Qur’ān and its interpretation.<sup>67</sup> Leo not only changes key words when he quotes from the Qur’ān, but even refutes the verses he

<sup>65</sup> That the Q 5:112-115 has written in the context of the Last Supper is pointed out earlier by Pickthall, *Koran*, 95 and also by contemporary Muslim theologians of the school of “al-Kalima.” The “collective” scholars of “al-Kalima” explain that the expressions such as “table,” “feast” and “sign” are all “veiled reference to the Passover meal and the Lord’s Supper.” They further claim that the Qur’ān knew about Christ’s suffering and death, even though it does not mention them. It is modern interpretation suggested by contemporary Muslims, but it shows that in the Islamic context, Q 5:112-115 can be read clearly as in the context of the institution of Eucharist. As for this “al-Kalima” school, I couldn’t access to their writings. Here I recite from Bridger’s discussion in *Christian exegesis*, 124-125. Broader investigation of the biblical background of Sūrah Mā’ida and of Q 5:112-115 is made by Botoi, “Image,” 10-18.

<sup>66</sup> Whether Leo changed some verses according to his intention or simply misquoted those verses is not clear. However, from the fact that the earliest Christian writers such as the author of the “Triune” and Timothy I were well versed with the Qur’ān, it seems that the author intentionally altered the word in order to use this Qur’ānic verse to support his claim.

<sup>67</sup> Jeffery suggests that this “curious” citation from the Qur’ān is due to the “oral” tradition that Leo used (Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 315, n.68). However, Leo’s change of key terms such as “table” and phrases in this passage will be better explained by the assumption that Leo changed some verses to use them for his own purpose. Similar example can be found in *De Haeresibus*, where John cites Muslim teaching that God gave Christ “incorruptible table (Sahas, *John*, 141-2). Sahas claims that John knew about the Qur’ān well, and quoted this verse to show that Muslims have “heretical” knowledge about the Eucharist (Sahas, *John*, 93. His claim is a rebuttal to Merrill’s, who says this verse shows John’s insufficient knowledge of the Qur’ān. Cf. Merrill, “Tractate,” 97). That earliest Christian Arabic

is quoting as well. He changes the word “table” into “Manna.” The disciples confess that Jesus is “Christ, God,” which is not attested in the original verses. While reading these verses, one might connect the Christian understanding of the Eucharist that Jesus is identified with “heavenly Manna.”<sup>68</sup> In the passage on the true sacrifice in 321C, Leo cites Genesis 4:3-5, which is the story of two sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel. Interestingly, these two biblical references are found in the Sūrah al-Māidah: the offering of Cain and Abel in Q 5:27 and God’s favor to the people of Israel in the wilderness in Q 5:20.<sup>69</sup> Here, Leo’s connection between the sacrifice and the Eucharist is shown both in Christian and Islamic contexts. Leo understands the Sūrah al-Māidah as the accounts of the two events in the Old Testament –God’s acceptance of the Abel’s sacrifice and His rejection of Cain’s, and God’s providing Israelites Manna in the wilderness. Then Leo interprets the Eucharist as the true sacrifice which can be offered only by Christ, who is the “Manna” from heaven. For the Latin text is defective, here I can only show that Leo uses the Sūrah al-Māidāh through Christian interpretation to explain the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. Though Leo’s citation from the Qur’ān in both texts are different as well as are his attitude toward it, these passages show how Christian writers used the Qur’ān for their own purpose.

The following passage in the Latin version needs explanation. This last passage is absent in the Arabic version. After citing Q 5:112-115, Leo criticizes that it was the heretical Nestorian

apologists were well versed with the Quran would support that Leo in the Latin text and John cite the Quran with changes for their purpose.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. John 6:33, 38, 51, 58.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Botoi, “Image,” 13.

teaching that made Muslims have false knowledge about the Eucharist. Leo's refutation in 322A runs as follows:

However, these words were of someone of Nestorian heresies, without understanding about Christ well, who taught you as if you might understand all about the faith of Christ, but he did not show reason or truth to you.

Leo does not identify who this Nestorian teacher was. Yet, clearly, Leo's refutation is based on the “Bahīrā” legend. The legend of Bahīrā first emerged among Muslims to claim that Muhammad's true identity as the last among the prophets was recognized by a Christian monk named Bahīrā who met young Muhammad and his uncle Abū Ṭālib.<sup>70</sup> The legend then soon came to be known to Christians. Christian apologists interpreted the legend in the different way. While Muslim writers described Bahīrā as a monk with insight, Christian authors regarded him as one of those who were responsible for giving false knowledge about Christianity to Muhammad.<sup>71</sup> John of Damascus identified Bahīra as “an Arian monk,” but in some texts, he was often described as being in association with Nestorian heresy.<sup>72</sup> Since the Christianized version of the Bahīrā legend was prevailing among Christians, it would have been sufficient to call those who follow Bahīrā's teaching “Nestorian heretics,” than giving their very names.

Nevertheless, this passage on the teaching of Bahīrā and his followers might have been added later by the later copyist or the Latin translator. First of all, for Leo cites Q 5:112-115 and

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<sup>70</sup> The Muslim sources which describe this encounter are numerous. For exploration of these sources, see Gero's “Bahīrā,” 47-48 and notes.

<sup>71</sup> For recent study on this legend, see Roggema, *Bahīrā*.

<sup>72</sup> “From that time until now a false prophet arose for them surnamed Mamed, who having happened upon the Old and New Testament, in all likelihood through association with an Arian monk, organized his own sect.” Voorhis' translation is taken from Newman, *Dialogue*, 139. For the alleged connection between Muhammad and Arianism or Nestorian heresy in various Christian writings, see Roggema, *Bahīrā*, 166-179.

interprets these verses through Christian reading of the Qur'ānic, by changing the key word “table” into “Manna,” and adding Christian confession that “You are Christ, God,” it is strange that he denies all verses at the end of the argument. Moreover, there is another case that the refutation against Nestorian heresy was added later to the earlier text. When explaining the passage on Nestorian heresy in the Latin version of the correspondence between al-Kindī and al-Hashimī, Troupeau shows that al-Kindī’s refutation against Nestorian heretics is added by the Latin translator who “revised the text in a Catholic manner.”<sup>73</sup> Interestingly, as in the case of the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin, this passage on Nestorian heretics in al-Kindī’s correspondence in the Latin version does not appear elsewhere in its Arabic versions.

### *3.3.4. Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension are true*

For explanation of this section 73v-74r, see section 3.2.10 above and 3.5.6 below. In this passage, Leo simply repeats his claim that Christians’s account on the life of Christ, his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to heaven are true. He also briefly mentions the second coming of Christ on the Day of Judgement.

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Troupeau, “Al-Kindī,” 120.

*3.4. On the veneration of Christ (74r-74v)*

*3.4.1. The veneration of the Ark of the Covenant of ancient Israelites and the veneration of Christ of Christians*

In explaining why Christians venerate Christ and defending against Muslims' accusation that Christians are venerating both Christ and God as two separate deities, Leo takes the example from the Old Testament: the veneration of the Ark of Covenant of ancient Israelites. The passages in both texts run as follows:

320C	74r-74v
<p>And you also say why we adore Christ, the Word of God. Is it not found in the law of God that the children of Israel adored the Ark of the Covenant which God had instructed to Moses to make? Nevertheless, they neither adored nor served the Ark of the Covenant nor wood, but they adored and served the law and word of God which was in the Ark of the Covenant. For this reason, they were not going astray from God nor should they be judged to venerate two gods.</p>	<p>You have heard and do know that the children of Israel were venerating the Ark of the Covenant in which God commanded Moses to put the two tablets of the Torah. It was made out of wood. It was not the gold or wood that they venerated, but the commandment of God and His Scriptures which He sent down to Moses the prophet, and it was in the Ark of the Covenant. Afterwards, when the children of Israel left Mount Sinai, they came to the land of Shām after Moses died. And they built the Holy House &lt;there&gt;, and venerated God in the Holy House and on Mount Sinai. Yet, they were not called 'polytheists,' nor was it said to them, "you are venerating two lords" or "you are worshipping two gods," or "gold" or "wood." Therefore, that (i.e., the Ark of Covenant) is greatest, saving for the one in whom the Word and Spirit of God dwell. Thus, Christ is greater and more exalted &lt;than&gt; the Ark of Covenant. So we venerate the Word of God and His Spirit, which dwell in Jesus and through which God created heaven and earth. They are not created, but are the creator. Therefore, we must venerate them in that body.</p>

The word “polytheists” is a reminiscence of the Qur’ān. It appears in the Qur’ān many times, usually in its plural verbal form or active participle form, مشركين اشركوا من الدين which is derived from اشرك, “to make someone a partner” or “to associate.”<sup>74</sup> The Qur’ān often accuses Christians and the Jews of being polytheists that they are associating someone or something with God. For instance, Q 9:30-31 accuses the Jews of associating God with Ezra and Christians with Messiah, as the son of God.

In this passage, Leo interprets the narrative in the Old Testament typologically. Leo makes an argument in which the Ark of the Covenant is corresponding to the body of Christ and two tablets of Torah in the Ark are Word of God and His Spirit in the body of Christ, and the ancient Israelites’ veneration of the Ark of the Covenant is the type of the Christians’ veneration of Christ. According to Leo, even if the ancient Israelites made the Ark of Covenant out of wood or gold,<sup>75</sup> it was not the “gold or wood” that they venerated, but the “Commandment of God” and “His Scriptures” preserved in it. Leo goes on to say that they were not seen as “polytheists” or as “worshipping two gods (74r-74v).” Likewise, they were not refuted as being “away from God and believing in two gods (320C).

Some sentences in the Arabic version need explanation: (1) The Arabic grammar used in this passage is sometimes strange. From the context, however, it is not difficult to understand Leo’s point of argument. The Ark of Covenant in which the commandment and Scripture of God were is great, but Christ is greater than it, for in him the Word and Spirit of God dwell.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. Hans-Wehr, *Dictionay*, 547.

<sup>75</sup> The word “gold” only appears in the Arabic version twice.

<sup>76</sup> For discussion on the reading of this passage in the Arabic text, see p. 154, n. 125 above.

Therefore, if the ancient Israelites are free from the accusation of being polytheists, so are Christians. The comparison with the Ark of the Covenant and the body of Christ is absent in the Latin version. Leo concludes his argument, saying, “We must venerate them in that body (74v).”<sup>77</sup>

(2) Leo’s geographical knowledge: Leo in the Arabic text also mentions that the children of Israel venerated the Ark of the Covenant on Mount Sinai and in the temple of Jerusalem after they came to the land of Shām شام and built the temple there. Leo does not explain where this Shām شام is, and this word appears only in this part of the text. 2 Chronicles 3:1 reports that Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem in the Mount Moriah.<sup>78</sup> If the temple Israelites built after they entered into the land of Shām is the Solomon’s temple, Shām should mean where the city of Jerusalem was located. Muslim writers also mention the name of this place. According to the books of Persians, after the death of Solomon, the son of David, the children of Israel were torn apart, and two and a half of them stayed in the Holy House (بيت المقدس) and nine and a half of them went to the city called, Shāmīn (شامين), which was called Shām. It located in the land of Palestine, and the Arab merchants and their stores were there.<sup>79</sup> More detailed geographical information is given by al-Ishāq: when he was reporting the Heraclius’ returning to his territory, he says, “Syria with them meant Palestine, Jordan, Damascus, Hims, and what is below the Pass

<sup>77</sup> See p. 154, n.126 above.

<sup>78</sup> For discussion on the location of Mount Moriah and Jerusalem, see Kalimi, “Moriah.”

<sup>79</sup> Jacut, *Geographische*, 230. Jacut did not specify his sources. The account given by Jacut is interesting, but it needs careful consideration. 2 Chronicle 10 and 1 Kings 12-13 account that after the death of Solomon, ten northern tribes of Judah turned against his successor, Rehoboam. As a result, only two tribes, those of Judah and Benjamin left in Jerusalem, while the other ten came to be separated from the kingdom of Israel. They built their own temple in Bethel and Dan. If the account given by Jacut can be synthesized with biblical account, then Dan and Bethel where ten tribes went may be identified with Shām. However, unfortunately, I have not found the connection between the name Shām, and Bethel and Dan.

of the land of Syria, while what was beyond the Pass meant Sha'm.”<sup>80</sup> What Leo meant by this name Shām in the Arabic version is not clear. The occurrence of this place name, Shām, is interesting. Further investigation on the geographical knowledge prevailed in Leo's day might be needed.

While the Arabic letter breaks off here, Leo in the Latin text gives more passages. Leo adds another example. First, Leo mentions that God commanded His angels to venerate Adam (Q 2:34), and he asks rhetorically, “If it (i.e., that God commanded the angels to venerate Adam) is something to be believed, then what do you think about the Word, who is named Messiah (320C)?” Second, Leo in 320D refutes Muslims' veneration of the Black stone of Ka’ba. He claims that Muslims are following ancient practice of idol worshipping, and he asks again rhetorically, “Do you not think that it is better to adore him (i.e., Christ) than the deaf rock you adore?” The whole passage in 320D runs as follows:

Isn't it better to adore him than the deaf rock you are adoring, just as they adored Iaoh, Jaoc, Nazara, Allac, Allegory and Mena? Some of them were gods in the forms of men and others were of women. Higher ones among them were called Alcubre, and from which the word Alacuber was derived. Some among you are sacrificing sheep and camels on one day in every single year, having followed the custom of pagans over that stone in Mecca, at the corner of that house of idolatries, to which pagan ancients served and sacrifice.

Even though some names of this passage are ambiguous, the context of Leo's accusation in this passage is apparent. Leo regards the Muslim cult of black stone of Kaba in Mecca as a reminiscence of ancient pagan cult. The names of six pre-Islamic deities are presented: Iaoh,

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. Gillaumen, *Life*, 657.

Jaoc, Nazara, Allac, Allogei, and Mena. These names are from Q 53:19-20, which mentions “al-Lat, al-‘Uzza, and Manat” and Q 71:23, “Yaghuth, Ya’uq and Nasr.” The higher deity among them are Alcubre, from which Alacuiber was derived.<sup>81</sup> Even though this passage is written with uncertainty, what Leo was trying to claim and his context are clear. Early Byzantine anti-Muslim polemists, including John of Damascus, criticized the cult of the black stone of Kaba, connecting it with the ancient pagan cult of Greek goddess Aphrodite and the Morning Star. There exist several layers of “conceptions” for these Byzantine writers when they connected the idol worshipping in pre-Islamic period with the Islamic formular of “al-Takbīr.”<sup>82</sup> They thought that in the pre-Islamic era, people worshipped stone and pagan deities such as Aphrodite and the Morning Star. They misunderstood the formula ﷺ اَكْبَرٌ as “Allah wa Koubar,” and interpreted it as “Aphrodite and the Star of the Morning.”<sup>83</sup> John’s refutation of the veneration of the stone of Kaba is made in order to defend the veneration of the cross of Christ, while Leo’s is to defend the veneration of Christ.

Three passages in the Latin version (see section 320B-320C, 320D-321A, and 321A-321C in appendix I) are different from or lacking in the Arabic text. These three passages are answers to ‘Umar’ questions in 64v and 315B. It is noteworthy that some questions are only found in one version, while answers to those questions only appear in the other: (1) In 64v and

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Jeffery, “Correspondence,” 302, n. 52.

<sup>82</sup> For discussion of Byzantine Polemists who criticized Muslim as venerating the Aphrodite and Morning Star in Kaba, see Muhammad, “Al-Takbīr.”

<sup>83</sup> For linguistic analysis, see *ibid.*, 88-89. Probably this will explain Leo’s use of plural form when he says, “Higher among them (majores) were called (dicebantur)...”

315B, ‘Umar asks how God can eat, drink, sleep and does other things that men do. In 320B-320C, Leo answers to this question, saying that there are “two operations and two expressions” in Christ, one which is of the Word and the other of his fleshly body. Leo refutes ‘Umar that he is only focusing on the work of his freshly body taken from Mary, such as sleeping and eating. Yet, the expression “two operations and two expressions,” as in the case of the doctrine of *Filioque* in 316B, may have been added later by the Latin translator. (2) ‘Umar asks in 64v, “How could God enter into a woman through odorous mouth...?” Leo explains Christ’s natural birth from Mary in 320D-321A, through examples taken from nature. Leo uses the analogy of the sun, saying that the sun which moves over the dirty and smelly things is never polluted, but cleanse them all. Then, a thorn of the burning bush that Moses saw on Mount Sinai is compared with the body of Mary. Leo asks rhetorically, “Is it not that the body of the Virgin is better than that fiery thorn-bush?” (3) In 64v and 315B, ‘Umar asserts that the Old Testament has been lost and the extant Old Testament was altered by Ezra. Leo attempts to respond to it by appealing to the perfection of God’s revelation. Leo claims that the books of Old Testament is God’s prophecy given to His prophet and therefore, Ezra must have recorded it fully. Leo asserts, “There is neither falsehood nor oblivion in the prophecy of God, since God is the revelation to them (321C).” As briefly stated above in section 2, It is noteworthy that, Leo’s answer to ‘Umar’s question about the alteration of the Old Testament only appears in the Latin version. Leo in the Arabic text is silent on this theme, even though ‘Umar’s refutation is found also in the Arabic version. Likewise, Leo’s answer to ‘Umar’s question that how God can enter into a body of a woman in the Arabic text is given only in the Latin version. These examples prove the hypothesis that the extant Latin and Arabic text are from the earlier materials, but the both are

now preserved in incomplete forms, having been corrupted in the course of transmission and translation.

### *3.5. On the veneration of the Cross*

Then Leo moves to another theme. He explains to ‘Umar why Christians should venerate the Cross of Christ. For Muslims, Christians’ veneration of the crosses, relics of the saints, and images or icons was regarded as “idol worshipping.”<sup>84</sup> Thus, the veneration of such sacred Christian items was one of the most commonly discussed topics by Muslims and Christians from the very early stage of Christian-Muslim polemics. In the Arabic and Latin letters, Leo focus only on defending the practice of veneration of crosses. Both texts begin with the account of the crucifixion of Christ.

#### *3.5.1. Christ’s crucifixion*

322A-322B	74v
Since you have asked me about Christ, <sup>85</sup> now I shall give you knowledge of him. On the day when Christ was crucified, there were two robbers with him (one on the right side and the other on the left), and soon he sent out the spirit. Immediately, the earth trembled, the sun was obscured...	As for the reality of Cross: When the Jews came to Christ, they searched for him and crucified him with two robbers, one on his right side and the other on his left, in order to falsify his word. On that day, the earth shook, the sun disappeared and the rocks were split. And the curtain of the Jewish

<sup>84</sup> Such practices functioned as public “markers” of religious identity of Christians. See Griffith, *Shadow*, 142-147.

<sup>85</sup> PG: Quod de Christo [f. de cruce] a me quaeſisti... The editor of the PG version inserted “de cruce.”

	temple was torn from bottom to top. Many among the Jews trusted him and believed in him.
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The scene of Christ's crucifixion needs no explanation, saving for one point: both texts simply took up the narrative on Christ's death from the synoptic Gospels, and abbreviated it. Leo mentions two robbers who were crucified with Christ and some natural signs that happened at the moment of Christ's death, which proved the divinity of Christ. Interestingly, Leo inserts his own interpretation here. He adds the reason why the two robbers were crucified with Christ: it was according to the plan of the Jewish authorities, who wanted to "falsify his word (74v)." Leo does not mention what the word of Christ is, but probably he means Christ's own statement about his death and resurrection (72v).<sup>86</sup> Two different reactions of robbers, one insulting Christ and the other asking Christ for remembering him when he enters into the paradise, do not appear.<sup>87</sup> The same account is given in the Latin version in abbreviation.

### 3.5.2. *Hiding of the Cross*

322B	75r-75v
... and some Jewish leaders who were present there felt great fear on account of those crosses. And in order to hide the truth from people, they hid them (i.e., crosses) under the ground. Therefore, no one knew <where these crosses	When Christ was resurrected, the Jews were afraid of it. So they <gathered in> a house of one of them in haste. Since they had commanded that matter (i.e., the crucifixion of Christ), a great fear came upon them as they saw and realized the

<sup>86</sup> Leo alludes to Christ's foretelling about his death and crucifixion in Matthew 16:21-23; 17:22-23; 20:17-19, Mark 8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-35, and Luke 9:22; 43-45; 18:31-34.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Luke 23: 39-43.

were hidden> except for one man. And during his lifetime, he did not tell about this to anyone. But when he was about to die, he revealed <the truth> to someone who was close to him, saying, "When you will be inquired about the cross, look at the place and you shall be sure."

reality of Christ. Then they took that wooden Cross and said, "We will be asked about this wooden Cross, and we ourselves, not anyone else, will answer for it." Then, they buried them (i.e., crosses). And there was no one at the place they (i.e., the crosses) were buried, except the family of that house. And the man, the head of that house did not tell about them to his son or to his brother, but did tell only at the moment of his last will and testament. When he was dying, at the time of his last will and testament, he said to him (i.e., to his son or to his brother), "You will answer for the wooden Cross. One day, you will be asked about it."

But when Christ wanted to bring about his resurrection and his power, and to punish the Jews, and to show his mercy and grace to the people and the blessing for them through the Cross, the Christianity spread out throughout the sea and the land for three hundred years. And the Cross was still hidden under the ground, and no one knew about it except the man from the family of that house.

Now Leo moves from the biblical narratives to the legends of the Cross. He explains what had happened during three hundred years between the death of Christ and the time of Constantine, and why the Cross of Christ was hidden under the ground. The true identity of Christ was revealed when he died and was resurrected. That made the Jewish leaders feel great fear that someday they would pay the price for what they did to Christ. So, they gathered and decided to bury the Cross of Christ under the ground along with other two crosses of the robbers, to hide the truth about Christ forever. Even while Christianity spread out throughout the whole world, the secret of this place of the Cross was passed down only through generations of the family of one house.

It is noticeable that Leo in the Latin version translated the Semitic expressions into Latin directly. Leo's translation in the Latin text is word for word, rather than written in good Latin rendition. For instance, when describing that the Jewish authorities felt great fear, the translator translated Semitic expression almost word for word. It is shown when Leo says, "...validus timor invasit propter ipsas cruces," which is to be translated as, "... a great feat came into <them> on account of those crosses." When he accounts for the moment of death of the one who knows the secret of the truth about the Cross of Christ, Leo in the Latin version says, "Cum autem mors accederet" which means "when the death was approaching ..." The personification of fear or death is commonly used expression in Semitic languages. Together with the use of Islamic eulogies found elsewhere in the Latin text (Cf. 317A: Blessed be He, that He has called...), these are good examples which indicate that the Latin version reflects the language of its Arabic *Vorlage*.

### *3.5.3. The vision of the Cross appeared to Constantine*

Then both texts begin with the legend of the apparition of the Cross to the Emperor Constantine. This legend has been known to Christians through various versions, as early as the fourth century, and would have been familiar to Leo's audiences. The earliest account on the vision of the Cross of Constantine is reported by Eusebius in his *Vita Constantini*, and also by Lactantius in his Latin translation of Eusebius' Greek work. Apart from Eusebius's and Lactantius's versions, there are number of other recensions. Each account shows variants. As the

legend was spreading out, some versions were conflated together.<sup>88</sup> Leo might have used the one of these versions known to him.

In the *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius says that he heard of the story from Constantine himself. The account of Eusebius is as follows: When Constantine was out for battle against his enemy Mexentius, he felt a need of divine aid. Then he reflected the “unwelcome” end of those who worshipped Pagan gods, and remembered that it was only his father who believed in God and had different end. So he decided to pray to the God of his father. So Constantine prayed to God to show him who He was and ask for His help. And as a response to his prayer, Constantine and all his soldiers saw a sign, which is in the shape of the Cross in the sky above the sun in the midday, with the word, saying, “By this, conquer.” Then at the night of the same day, Christ appeared to Constantine in his dream with the same sign that appeared in the sky, and commanded him to make a copy of it as a protection for his armies. Then Eusebius gives a detailed account on the shape of this sign. After Constantine established the sign he saw as the sign of his armies as Christ commanded, he gained victory against his enemies by divine support.<sup>89</sup>

Even though Leo uses the legend of the apparition of the Cross to Constantine, the story included in the Arabic and the Latin texts are different from Eusebius’ version. Compared to Eusebius’s account, the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin contains several new features which

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. Cameron & Hall, *Constantine*, 209.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 80-86. Here I summarized Cameron and Hall’s translation of the Greek text, in order to compare how Leo has modified this legend to use it in the context of Christian-Muslim polemics.

are absent in the Eusebius's account. The Arabic text is more elaborated than the Latin version.

Yet, they share these common features.

322B-322C	75v-76v
<p>Yet, when Christ wanted to expose the error of the Jews to people, he opened the finding of the Cross to Emperor Constantine, who was not Christian at that time. While he was waging war, he was raising his eyes up to heaven in the middle of the night, he saw it were two pillars, one intersecting the other, in the likeness of a cross, and in which were text, shining fiery red and written in Greek, "Since you asked your God to show you the right faith, make to yourself a royal sign in the shape of the this cross according to what you saw, which shall precedes you against your enemies. By doing so, he rushed to the enemies and he conquered them by virtue of the holy Cross.</p>	<p>Then Christ wanted &lt;to reveal the place of his Cross&gt;. He showed his Cross to one of the Byzantine emperors, named Constantine, who was not a Christian at that time. When he was out to do battle against his enemies, he began to call upon God, asking for His help and saying, "Oh, God, the Creator of heaven and earth! If You wish, give me kingship and grant me power if You want by Your mercy and grace. I ask You to show me and guide me to the truest religion, which is the most beloved to You." While he was calling God and petitioning Him, he was with his army confronting his enemies. But he lifted up his eyes to heaven and saw two great illuminating pillars, one across the other, in the shape of the cross. And there was a writing in Greek written in them, which was more luminous than them (i.e., the pillars): "You have called upon God to show you the best of religions and what is the most beloved to Him. This is the sign of the best of religions and the most beloved and the dearest to God. Therefore, mark your banners with which you are aiming at your enemies as what you have seen." Then he commanded &lt;his armies to do as God commanded&gt;. Then the banners were changed and attached with a cross. Then God, the most Blessed and Exalted, made him victorious against his enemies he was engaging with, and He made him triumphant without any difficulty.</p> <p>When he returned, he could not find tranquility of heart until he asked about the Cross of Christ. Then they said to him, "When Christ was resurrected from the grave they (i.e., the Jews) hid the wood, which is the Cross." But there was no one who knew the place the crosses were buried, except for the man from the family of that house.</p>

The legend of the vision of the Cross is modified in the new context of Christian-Muslim polemics and the prayer of Constantine is glossed with polemical languages. In Eusebius's account, Constantine prayed to God to reveal to him who He is, and asked for His help. In Eusebius's version, the purpose of Constantine's prayer is asking for God's aid. Before Constantine began to pray, he had already reflected gods whom previous emperors worshipped and decided to worship God of his father.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, in the letters of Leo, Leo emphasizes the question on the "true religion of God." In the Latin text, the Emperor asked God to show him the "right faith," as shown in God's response to Constantine, "...since you asked your God to show you the right faith... (322C)." As for the Arabic letter, this theme of "true faith" appears with stronger statements: first in Leo's prayer that "I ask You to show me and guide me to the truest religion, which is the most beloved to You (75v)," and then in God's response, "You have called God to show you the truest religion and what is the most beloved to Him. This is the sign of the best of religions and the most beloved and the dearest to God (76r)" This true religion is Christianity and its sign is the Cross. Leo's intention is more clearly shown when God's key message written in the Cross in Eusebius's account, "By this, conquer," is substituted with God's answer which assures that Christianity is the religion of God. It is Leo's own rendition of the already existing legend in the new context, which is, to the best of my knowledge, not attested in any other versions of this tradition.

At the end of the account, Leo in the Arabic text adds a short passage: Constantine was questioning about the sign of the Cross that appeared to him. When he asked, he was told that it

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<sup>90</sup> Cameron and Hall, *Constantine*, 79-80.

was Cross of Christ. Then Leo again reminds his readers of the crosses placed hidden under the ground. This short passage is lacking in the Latin version.

### 3.5.4. *The Finding of the true Cross*

322C-322D	76v-77r
<p>As he returned, he directed his mother Helena to go to Jerusalem with army in order to find out what the truth about the Cross of Christ was. She examined the Jews. Many were crucified. That man from his own tribe, to whom the matter (i.e., the matter of the Cross of Christ) had been notified at first, was inquired. This one, who was refusing to reveal the truth of the matter, she put him open in the well without water and food. However, when he thought about death, he showed the place. And while they (i.e., the soldiers of the queen) were digging up, fragrant smoke came up from the pit, revealing three crosses after 300 years since Christ has come. Then they (i.e., crosses) were carried before the queen, who did not know which one was the Cross of Christ. Then at once, she put one of the crosses upon the dead, but he did not rise. The second one was applied, but nothing good came out of it. Truly, when the third one was placed, the dead one rose up immediately.</p>	<p>Then the emperor sent his mother, whose name was Helena, from Byzantium with a large group. She arrived in Jerusalem, which is the Holy House. Then she inquired about the nobles and the prominent figures among the Jews, and those who are descendants of their forefathers, until she reached the family of that house which knew about the Cross. At that time, she severely tortured whom she was able to find, and said to them, “If you love your lives and want to live, bring out the Cross of Christ to me!” When the turn of the man from the family of that evil house came around, he denied &lt;that he knew about it&gt; and blasphemed, so the queen commanded that he be tortured. He was put in a cistern for three days, without having any food. Thus, when he believed bad things &lt;would happen to him&gt; and &lt;felt&gt; fear of death, the soldiers who were guarding him reported the noble queen, “If she lets me out of here, then I will show her what she is asking for.” When they brought him out, he showed them the place and said to them, “Dig up and you shall find what you want.” Then the queen commanded that they (i.e., the soldiers) do so, and they began to dig up the place. While they were digging up, thick smoke with good smell came to them. When they dug up deep, three pieces of wood appeared to them. They were taken out. But they looked similar to one another to the queen; and she did not know which one among them was the wooden Cross of Christ. At that moment, there were people</p>

	coming out of the city carrying a coffin. Then the queen ordered <to put pieces of wood upon the dead>. One of the three pieces of wood be placed upon the dead, but he did not move. Then the second piece of wood was also placed upon the dead, but he did not move. When the third piece of wood was placed upon him, he rose up.
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Then another legend comes in. When Constantine came back, he was told about the Cross and Christianity. Then he sent his mother Helena to Jerusalem to search out the reality of the Christian religion. From now on, Helena and a Jewish man who secretly knew about the place where crosses were buried come out to the front. The account of the Latin version is shorter and abbreviated. Yet, both texts have the same storyline: The finding of the Cross of Christ was done with the aid of a Jewish man who only knew the place where the crosses have been buried for three hundred years. The man first refused to reveal the truth, but because of the fear for death, he told her the place. When the three crosses were found, the true Cross of Christ was identified by its miraculous power: Each piece of the three crosses was put on the dead one. When the one of the Cross of Christ was placed, the dead one rose up.

Concerning this story, one can see that this is a particular version of the tradition on the finding of the Cross, which is usually called “Judas Kyriakos version,” named according to the main character of the story. The Jewish man who revealed the place of the crosses and later became a bishop of Jerusalem is not identified in both Arabic and Latin texts. Yet, he is

unmistakably “Judas.” Judas Kyriakos version was more popular than other two, and widely circulated.<sup>91</sup> The legend must have been familiar to Leo and his audiences as well.

As is the case of the legend of the vision of Constantine, Leo modifies the legend of the finding of the true Cross for his own purpose. What stands out is that traditional anti-Jewish characteristics of the “Judas-Kyriakos version” still remains,<sup>92</sup> but is much weakened. The Jews were described as being responsible for the crucifixion of Christ and were depicted to have attempted to hide the truth of the Cross. But a long inquiry between Helena and the Jews on the Jew’s responsibility for the death of Christ has been omitted. It is noticeable because such anti-Jewish dialogue is the key part of the Judas Kyriakos version, which distinguishes it from other two versions of the same tradition. The queen did not accuse the Jews of killing Christ. Instead, she simply inquired them to find out the place of the Cross. For Leo, Jews’ responsibility for the death of Christ or their claim that Jesus is not Son of God is no longer his primary concern. Rather, the debates on the true religion was Leo’s first interest. Thus, he might not need to include the long section of the discussion between Helena and the Jewish notables on their responsibility of the death of Christ.

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<sup>91</sup> Like the legend of the vision of the Cross of Constantine, the legend of the finding of the Cross drew attention of scholars from the end of the 19th century, producing a number of articles and books dedicated to the study of its origin. J. Drijver's classification of the three different versions of this legend seems to have been generally accepted. These three versions are, according to Drijvers, Helena version, Protonike version, and Judas Kyriacos version. The name of each version was made after the name of the main character of each story, which are Helena, Protonike, and Judas Kyriakos. The comprehensive studies on the legend of finding of the Cross were done recently by J. Drijvers, *Helena*; idem, “Judas”; idem, “Protonike..”

<sup>92</sup> J. Drijvers, *Helena*, 165; idem, “Judas,” 28-29.

*3.5.5. Building of churches in Jerusalem and sending the Cross to Constantine*

322D	77v
<p>After she built a church upon the sepulcher of Christ, the queen left a piece of the Cross there, and sent the remaining piece to her son. This is the reason why we venerate the Cross of Christ.</p>	<p>There is no mistake or [ . . . ] about it. Many among the rest of the Jews, who were present at that time, when they saw it, they believed in Christ and trusted him. As for the man who showed the wooden Cross, he believed in him and became a bishop of Jerusalem until his death. Then the queen built at the place of the grave and Golgotha, where Christ was crucified, a great, beautiful building, along with other churches; she paid for one third of the cost. And she left a small part of the Cross in Jerusalem, and carried the wooden Cross to her son in Constantinople. This is the story concerning the Cross and its interpretation, matter, and reality. Therefore, we venerate Christ through the Cross in order that we remember the grace of Christ upon us and his death for us.</p>

Leo finishes the story with a short epilogue. The Arabic letter accounts for what happened after the Cross of Christ was found and identified. Helena built churches in several places in Jerusalem including the tomb of Christ and Golgotha. She left a piece of Cross in Jerusalem, and sent the Cross to her son. The man who knew the place of the Cross became a bishop of Jerusalem and served in that position until his death. The Latin text gives a similar account, but in abbreviation. Some manuscripts of the Judas Kyriakos version on the finding of the Cross extend the story to describe how Helena also found the nails used to nail Christ on the Cross.<sup>93</sup> But it is not attested in the letters of Leo. At the end Leo makes a conclusive remark,

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. J. Drijvers, *Helena*, 170-171.

saying that Christians venerate the Cross of Christ in order to remember his “grace” and “death” for Christians (77v).

### *3.5.6. Christ’s Cross as the sign of Christianity*

The Arabic text adds one more paragraph to conclude the discussion on the veneration of the Cross. Leo claims that the Cross of Christ is the sign of Christianity and the symbol of religion for Christians, through which the Satan and his followers were defeated, and Christians are given the grace of Christ. He mentions that Christ cures people through his Cross now and forever (78r).

Leo’s statement that the archangel Gabriel will march preceding Christ on the Day of Judgment (78r) is apparently referring to the future apparition of the Cross. Leo’s argument that the Cross is the “sign” of religion here is written in the eschatological context. It is an allusion to Matthew 24:30 that Christ foretold his disciples about the second coming of Christ himself. At that hour, there will be signs such as natural phenomena. And the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. The Son of Man will send his angels with the sound of triumph, and they will gather people who are chosen (Cf. Matthew 24:29-31).<sup>94</sup> Even though Matthew did not specify what this “sign of the Son of Man” would be, Christians understood it as “Cross” from earlier period. This interpretation is found in the Patristic writings, New Testament Pseudepigrapha, and

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<sup>94</sup> Matthew 24:31 is also a reference to the day of gathering, which Leo describes in 69v-70r.

most of all, the catechetical writings of Cyril of Jerusalem.<sup>95</sup> In his *Catechetical Lectures*, Cyril account what will happen on the day of the Christ's second coming:

But what is the sign of His coming? Lest a hostile power dare to counterfeit it. And that shall appear, He says, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. Now Christ's own true sign is the Cross; a sign of a luminous Cross shall go before the King, plainly declaring Him who was formerly crucified: that the Jews who before pierced Him and plotted against Him, when they see it, may mourn tribe by tribe, saying, 'This is He who was buffeted, this is He whose face they spat on, this is He whom they bound with chains, this is He whom of old they crucified, and set at nought. Whither, they will say, shall we flee from the face of Your wrath?' But the Angel hosts shall encompass them, so that they shall not be able to flee anywhere. The sign of the Cross shall be a terror to His foes.<sup>96</sup>

Briefly expressed, what Leo describes in this passage is similar to what Cyril had described in his *Catechetical Lectures XV*. In this letter, Cyril connects the apparition of the Cross in the sky of Jerusalem above Golgotha and Christ's second coming. The manifestation of the Cross of Christ in heaven is a prelude of his second coming on the Day of Judgement.<sup>97</sup> The figure of Christ as the judge of men on the Day of Judgment also appears in 69v-70r and 73v. Leo's interpretation of the legends of the Cross of Christ in the light of Christian eschatology would never be unfamiliar to his Christian audiences. Leo appeals to the eschatological belief of his Christian audiences in order to persuade them to keep their faith: Christians should believe in Christ and venerate his Cross as his sign, not only because he died for men, but because he will come again at the end of hour as the judge of all mankind.

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<sup>95</sup> Nicholson explored various Christian literatures which interpret the scene of the second coming of Christ described in Matthew 24:30. See Nicholson, "Cross," 312-314.

<sup>96</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures XV*. The translation is adapted from Gifford, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, vol. 7. The revised online edition is now available at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/310115.htm>

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Nicholson, "Cross," 316; Telfer, *Cyril*, 197. The letter of Cyril to Constantinus edited and translated by Telfer in his *Cyril*, 193-199.

Like the prologue, Leo's argument is based on the New Testament theology. But it is articulated in the Islamic context as well. Leo's eschatological imagery is also based on the Qur'ān. When describing Jesus as the judge of men on the Day of Judgement and the importance of the Cross to Christians, Leo borrows the words from the Qur'ān. The Cross is considered to be the "consolation" for Christians. The expression, قرء العين which is literally means "coldness of eyes" in Q 25:74, is understood as consolation. In 70r:2, Leo uses the word حشر taken from Q 20:102, which means "to gather," when he describes the gathering of men at the Christ's second coming. Probably, these word and expression might have been familiar to Christians living in the world of dominant Islam and Leo did not hesitate to use them in his apology for Christian audience.

Leo's use of the two traditions of the Cross of Christ is unique; it distinguishes Leo from other early Christian polemicists. Most of all, Leo's connection of the veneration of the crosses with the traditions on the apparitions and the finding of the Cross of Christ is not attested elsewhere in the Christian apologies. From the fourth century, the Cross has been accepted as the symbol of divine aids, and the military success of Constantine was understood as the clear proof that he was the rightful ruler set by God. However, such interpretation became less convincing in Leo's days. During the seventh century, Arab military campaign gained a significant success, and the regions Christians were living, such as Syria-Palestine and Egypt came to be under Muslim dominion, which lasted since then. Therefore, for Christian apologists in the early Islamic period, an assurance of victory at war would have been no longer a proof for the true religion as was before. Apart from Leo, Theodore Abū Qurrah is the only writer who used the

legend of the Cross in apologies; however, he mentioned it only in passing.<sup>98</sup> Thus, Leo's use of the traditions of the Cross is not only unique but even strange as well.

This rare occasion might hint at the place of origin of the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin, and the audience of the texts. From the fourth century, many traditions connected Jerusalem with the Cross of Christ. It was where Christ was crucified and his Cross was found. The Cross appeared again in the sky above Jerusalem and all inhabitants of the city saw it.<sup>99</sup> That Leo adapted the traditions on the Cross suggests that he might have been from Jerusalem or at least had a close connection with the city. As to the Judas Kyriakos legend of the finding of the Cross of Christ, the place of its origin is now thought to be Jerusalem.<sup>100</sup> Of course, it is true that this version gained popularity and was circulated among Christians beyond Syria-Palestine. However, that Leo uses these traditions may show the fact that he composed his letters where the influence of the legends of the Cross of Christ was still strong. Moreover, the use of these traditions indicates that Leo is not trying to rebut Muslims who criticize the veneration of crosses, but talking to his Christian audiences. He simply reminds his Christian audiences what are familiar to them and attempts to persuade them to keep their faith by retelling the already known stories with modification in the new context of Christian-Muslim polemics.

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. Swanson, "Cross," 136-137. Here, Swanson points out that in the early Christian apologies, the Cross was described as having "miraculous power" for those who believe in it, mostly as "a sign of victory over Satan." Such ideas are also reflected in the letter of Leo in 77v-78r: "Through the Cross, Satan and those who believed in him, and those who were infidels on earth were defeated."

<sup>99</sup> In his letter to Emperor Constantinus, Cyril says, "For in these very days of the holy feast of Pentecost, on the Nones of Mary, about the third hour, a gigantic cross formed of light appeared in the sky above holy Golgotha stretching out as far as the holy Mount of Olives. It was not seen by just one or two, but was most clearly displayed before the whole population of the city." The translation of Cyril's letter is adapted from Telfer, *Cyril*, 195-196.

<sup>100</sup> J. Drijvers, "Judas," 20, 25.

One may raise the question about the connection between Leo's use of the traditions of the Cross of Christ and the possibility of his Byzantine origin. I will not discuss this question in detail here, but be contend myself with mentioning several relevant points briefly. Maybe the author of the letter of Leo wrote his work under the name of the Emperor Leo III, because he had a strong attachment to the Byzantine Empire or probably was of Byzantine origin. That he used the famous legend on the vision of the Cross to Constantine may show that his emphasizes the role of Constantine as the protector of Christians. For instance, according to Eusebius, the establishment of his Christian kingdom was regarded as part of God's economic plan in this world.<sup>101</sup> However, there is no passage which shows clearly the author's Byzantine connection. The reason for Leo's use of these two traditions is, as did Cyril in his letters, only to interpret them in the light of the Christian eschatology and breathe into his Christian audiences the hope of the advent of Christ, so that they can keep their Christian faith.

### *3.6. Divinity of Christ and the Veracity of Christianity*

After the discussion on the veneration of the crosses, Leo then moves to the new topic. From 78v-84r, Leo deals with the themes concerning the divinity of Christ and the truth of Christianity. He attempts to prove his claim saying that the commandment of Christ in the New Testament is now fulfilled in reality and anyone who lives in the world can now see it. For Leo,

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<sup>101</sup> Thielman, "Eusebius," 227.

that the statement of Christ was fulfilled is the proof for his divinity and the veracity of Christianity.

### *3.6.1. Introduction*

Leo first presents a short introduction in 78v. He claims that there are “three sections” or “three ways” to prove the divinity of Christ. Although it is not clearly outlined, these three sections or ways that Leo suggests are (1) Christ’s words and testimonies; (2) Miracles and wonders he performed (3) Creation, forgiveness of sinners and cure of the sick. Then Leo elaborate each section or way in the following subsections.

However, when presenting his argument in the following passages, Leo does not seem to distinguish each section clearly. In other words, even though he had those “three sections” or “three ways” in his mind, it seems that they are all interconnected and interrelated with each other to Leo.

### *3.6.2. Christ spoke about himself*

Leo attempts to prove the truth of the verses from the New Testament by what he sees in the world in real. Leo argues that the permanence of Christ’s word in Luke 21:33 was proved to be true, and Christ’s commandment toward his apostles to go out and evangelize the world in Matthew 28:18-20 has been fulfilled in reality by the fact that every nation in the world has accepted Christianity, people were baptized, and believed in him. He asks rhetorically in 79r:

O men, behold. Do you see what Christ has spoken about baptism in every nation and on the whole earth, from East to West, and throughout the passage of time, or not? In all nations, it is just as he (i.e., Christ) said when they (i.e., people) accept the religion of Christ and are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, from East to West, at all times.

Then Leo cites Matthew 28:18 where Christ says he has authority in heaven and earth.

Then Leo explains how Christ's word could have been realized. People in the all nations accepted Christianity, and it could have been done because Christ himself is God and has power over the world. He claims that "If Christ were not God from God, he would not have dared to say about himself like this (79v)" This statement appears repeatedly in the following passages as a key phrase when Leo emphasizes the divinity of Christ.<sup>102</sup>

### *3.6.3. God takes an oath by himself and his promise to Abraham and his descendants the land was fulfilled through Christ*

From 79v to 80r, Leo discusses the truth of Christianity with typological interpretation of the verses from the Old Testament. However, for Leo also did not clearly elaborate his ideas, it seems only possible to understand from the context what he had in mind. When he connects Genesis 17:8 and Psalm 2:7-8 and interprets them together to demonstrate the truth of Christianity.

When interpreting Genesis 17:8 and Psalm 2:7-8, Leo appears to owe Paul and the author of the letter to the Hebrews. First, Leo cites Genesis 17:8 where God promised Abraham and his

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<sup>102</sup> This phrase also appears in the "Triune." As Samir points out, this is the expression taken from the creed. See Samir, "Apology," 105, n. 216.

descendants land. Then he asserts that God takes and oath by nothing but only by himself. Leo's emphasis on the assurance of God's oath is an allusion to the letter to the Hebrews 6:13-17.<sup>103</sup> The author of the letter to the Hebrews emphasized that when God promised Abraham, God swears by nothing but Himself, because He is the greatest. According to him, the certainty of a promise is assured by what the one who promises will swear. Then Leo adds his own interpretation: that God swear by himself means that God swear by His Word and His Spirit, because they are one (80r). Then he moves to Psalm 2:7-8. In 68r, Leo uses this verse to demonstrate the divinity of Christ as the "Son" of God. Leo interprets this verse to say that as the Son of God, Christ is also the rightful "heir" of God, to whom God promised to give nations as "inheritance." Even though Leo did not use terms such as "offspring" or heir" as did Paul, it seems evident that Leo follows the theology of Paul that "the offspring of Abraham" is not Isaac or Abraham's Jewish descendants, but Christ himself. Christ is the Son, "the Offspring" of God, the true Seed of Abraham and His sole heir (Cf. Galatians 3:16).<sup>104</sup> Nations are the inheritance of Christ as the heir of God (80r). For Leo, that Christ was given nations as his inheritance means that the Gospel would reach to the whole world: God's promise in Genesis 17:8 and Psalm 2:7-8 has been fulfilled by Christ's incarnation and proliferation of Christianity in the whole world.

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<sup>103</sup> The influence of the author of the letter to Hebrews has also shown in the passages where Leo discusses the transition of sacrifice to the Eucharist by Christ. See discussion on the Eucharist in section 3.3 above.

<sup>104</sup> For interpretation of Galatians 3:16, see Hester, *Inheritance*, 47-51.

### *3.6.4. Christ's testimonies to the righteousness and their rewards in heaven*

From the end of 80r-82r, Leo connects sufferings of the righteous and their reward in heaven. As he did in the previous passage, he cites verses from the New Testament and the Qur'ān, and interpret them together. He directly draws up passages from Matthew 5:1-12, which is also called "Beatitude," and alludes to 5:13-14, which Christ called his followers "salt of the earth" and "light of the world." In addition to these verses, Leo also alludes to Q 11:115, where God assures the reward of those do good deeds.

Leo's use of these verses can be understood in the socio-religious and political contexts. Leo's argument in this passage is pastoral and polemical. Leo's main purpose is to encourage Christians to keep their faith against socio-political and religious threats in their lives. Leo identifies the difficult situation of Christians with the sufferings of the righteous, and the prophets and messengers of God. He also reminds his audiences of Christ's parables of salt and light of the world which admonishes Christians to testify God by their good deeds. With these verses, he tries to persuade them to not giving their Christian faith and way of life. Leo's use of Q 11:115 is understood in the same way. Christians are like those who cry out to God in suffering from their enemies. Then Leo emphasizes the reward in heaven for those who are suffering in this world. Leo's claim is well shown at the end of this passage in 82r:

Thus we are, God willing and there is no power save that of God, those who are rebuked and blamed on account of Christ, but believe in him and hope for the reward from God for us in the kingdom of heaven, together with his angels, Praised be He, who gave us the faith in Christ and made us His friends and a people in obedience to Him.

That Leo's letter is not written for his Muslim interlocutor, but for Christians is clearly shown here. It is a Scripture based apology written to be read by Christian audiences. This passage which cites from Matthew 5:1-14 will not be convincing to Muslims. On the other hand, the allusion to Q 11:115 would not be unfamiliar to Christians who had familiarity with the Qur'ān. Similar argument is also found in another Melkite apology written in ninth century, "Summa Theologiae Arabica (hereafter Summa)." <sup>105</sup> The author of the "Summa" cites Matthew 5:10-12 in order to address to Christians living in the Muslim society. The author's intention is clear: he attempts to persuade his readers to keep Christian faith, by identifying themselves with those who are persecuted on account of Christ. Also as mentioned by Leo, the author of the "Summa" emphasizes "the reward in heaven" prepared for faithful Christians.<sup>106</sup>

### *3.6.5. Proliferation of Christianity as proof of the veracity of Christianity*

#### *3.6.5.1. Christian churches in the whole world*

From 82v to 84v, Leo concludes his discussion on the truth of Christianity. The passage from 82v-83r is simply a reprise of 79r-79v. Leo uses similar expressions to make the same argument in 79r-79v. Thus, this passage does not require any further explanation.

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<sup>105</sup> The critical edition of entire "Summa" is yet to be prepared. For recent bibliographical information and discussion on its content, see Griffith, "Summa."

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 140-141.

### *3.6.5.2. Miracles as the proof of the divinity of Christ and the necessity of incarnation*

From 83r-84r, miracles and wonders are considered to be the sign the true religion. Leo already mentioned in the introduction that “...through many miracles and great wonders he performed which neither man among people nor anyone among the prophets of God performed except God alone by His Word and the Holy Spirit (78v).” For Leo, the ability to perform miracles and wonders is one of the essential elements which distinguish Christ from the rest of the God’s prophets and prove the divine nature of Christ.

Leo’s emphasis on the ability of performing miracles is not unusual. Rather, it was one of the common strategies for his contemporary and later Christian writers who were involved in the discussion on the true religion. Christian writers repeatedly claimed that miracles are the clear proof which shows the truth of Christianity.<sup>107</sup> For instance, according to the author of “Triune,” it was “miracles” that made the apostles’ mission to proclaim Christianity successful, when he says, “...But Christ supported the Apostles by the Holy Spirit, and they did all miracles. Thus, by this, they guided the nations to the light of God and His worship. Their cause was established in all the world although they were strangers and poor.”<sup>108</sup> In his works, Theodore Abū Qurrah also emphasized the role of the miracles in spreading out of Christianity. Abū Qurrah took three factors any true religion has to contain: (1) that God had to send is messengers to all people to judge them fairly at the end of time; (2) that the messengers of God must perform “wonders and

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<sup>107</sup> Griffith, *Shadow*, 97.

<sup>108</sup> Samir, “Apology,” 105 (trans), 106 (Arabic).

sign”; (3) that the messenger’s teaching has to be done in the original language of those to whom he was sent.<sup>109</sup> Abū Qurrah’s emphasis on the performance of miracles and wonders is also well shown in his *On the Existence of God and the True Religion*. Christianity is different from other religions, for when Christianity spread to the world and was accepted by people, it was not by power, wealth or other worldly reasons, but through miracles shown by the apostles with the aid of God.<sup>110</sup>

This passage shows the cultural and religious circumstances in which Leo was composing his letter. Leo’s primary audiences might have been Christians based on the Christian theology. But Leo also wrote his work on the Islamic background. It is well reflected in Leo’s Christology and his view of the history. Even though Leo emphasizes the divinity of Christ as the redeemer of men and his ability to perform miracles, it is also noticeable that Leo’s argument is made in the context of the sacred history in the Qur’ān which is called “oft-repeated” verses, or “punishment stories.”<sup>111</sup> For Leo, the history of mankind is regarded as God’s recurrent attempt to save men from the dominion of the devil and his failures. In the Arabic text, Leo begins with taking Abraham as the first among the prophets: Abraham was a prominent figure who was even called “the friend of God.” Yet, he was merely a human being and “no one believed in him at his time nor was he called the Word of God (83r).” Moses was even believed by “the head of the

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<sup>109</sup> Lamoreaux, *Abū Qurrah*, 55-57.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 41-47, esp. 44. Lamoreaux’s translation is from the third part of Dick’s Arabic edition. Abū Qurrah repeatedly used the legend of the apostle Thomas who raised the dead in India in order that people might accept Christianity. Cf. Ibid., 46-47, 52.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Bell, *Introduction*, 134-135 with n.6 in 198.

angels, the sons of God,” but was not called the Son of God nor believed by people (83r).<sup>112</sup>

Then he continues to David and others, all of whom were the same to Abraham and Moses as human being (83v). They were the prophets of God, but they could not lead people to God. Here comes the necessity of Christ’s incarnation. It was only through the miracle Christ and his apostles performed that people accepted Christianity: “They never saw him nor did know who he was. But though his signs, which the apostles performed in the name of Christ, they came to know that he was God. No one could perform such signs except God, who empowered the apostles through the Holy Spirit (83v).”

The same theme is presented in the Latin text in 319A-320A. While the Arabic text mentions the sacred history in passing, the Latin version described the history of mankind as a series of God’s sending his prophets to people, and His punishment to them and forgiveness of their sins. Leo begins with the fall of the angles. Some arrogant angels rebelled against God. God punished them and they fell from heaven and became the enemy of God and men. Then Leo depicts the history of men as the spiritual war between these fallen angels and God. This war begins with the fall of Adam. Satan plotted him, and Adam disobeyed God and became mortal. To save men from the hand of the Satan, God sent Noah, Moses and other prophets to the world. But the prophets were all rejected by people and convicted as liars, and even killed. Men constantly disobeyed God, committed evil and worshipped the idols. God’s reactions are always the same: he punished those who did evil acts and worshipped idols. Then He had pity on them

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<sup>112</sup> The sentences that the archangel venerated Moses is difficult to understand. For discussion on Leo’s source for this sentence, see 166, n. 165.

and forgave them. Even though Leo did not mention all “seven times repeated verses” as attested in the Qur’ān, Leo’s interpretation of human history is Qur’ānic.<sup>113</sup> The epithet “friend of God” attributed to Abraham can find its reference to the Q 4:125.<sup>114</sup> The figures in the Old Testament are described as the “prophets of God” whom God sent to save men. One difference from the Qur’ān and the letters of Leo is the final stage of recurrent revelations: while the Qur’ān used the story of the Old Testament to claim that Muhammad is the last among the prophets, Leo uses the same narrative to prove the necessity of the incarnation. In sum, while Leo wrote “a Christian apology,” he does not hesitate to use the theological concept of his interlocutor. He freely uses it. As in the case of Qur’ānic citations used throughout Leo’s letters, the punishment stories of the Qur’ān might have also familiar to his Christian audiences.

With regards to the Qur’ānic influence upon the understanding Christ’s incarnation and his divine and human natures, the passage in the Latin version is worth mentioning. As the final and ultimate attempt to save men, God sent “His Word, who was from God, inhibited in his own body, without separation from it in perpetuity (320A)” The divine and human nature of Christ is described as follows in 320A:

If it was not that body which he put on, no one could see the Word of God, just as Moses had not been able to see the Word of God. The Word of God came, putting on the body from Mary, and saved his people from the dominion of devil. Without any doubt, the Word which Mary had begotten; this is the one whose name is

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<sup>113</sup>, in both letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin, Leo’s account of human history is, an abbreviated version of the story of the Qur’ān. For discussion on the Qur’ānic account on the “punishment stories” or “oft-repeated” verses and its sources, see Bell, *Introduction*, 127-135. The author of the “Triune” also adapts the same narrative from the Qur’ān. The author’s strategy and intention of utilizing the Islamic tradition to write his Christian apology is the same to Leo’s. He does so to claim the necessity of the incarnation of Christ. For punishment stories in the “Triune” see Gibson, 7-15 (translation).

<sup>114</sup> Of course, the several verses in the Old and the New Testament also called Abraham God’s friend. See e.g., 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

Messiah and God, who was before the annunciation came to Mary, and took body from Mary. This is God, and it is [due to] dullness in you that you will not understand.

Leo's Christology in this passage connotes many layers on the nature of Christ from Christian and Muslim perspectives. The expression that Christ has "put on" the human body has been used repeatedly in Christian orthodox and non-orthodox literatures. For instance, as Swanson has shown, it was earlier used by Gregory of Nyssa.<sup>115</sup> The clothing imagery of the body as the "garment" of soul was also prevailing among Syriac writers. For instance, Ephrem frequently described the fall of Adam and Christ's incarnation using "clothing expressions." When Adam fell, he "stripped off" the garment of glory and to restore Adam's primordial status, God sent His Son "who put on a human body."<sup>116</sup> Even early gnostic writers used the same metaphor to explain the divine nature of Jesus, saying that God "put on" the body of Jesus when he revealed himself to men.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, for Christians living in the world of Islam, this "clothing" imagery of the body of Christ also may have been a reminiscence of the Qur'ān. This passage seems echoing Q 42:51 which says, God speaks men through revelation حجّ, or from behind the veil حجاب, من وراء رسول رسولا to men to reveal what He wants.

Such Qur'ānic echoing appears more clearly in the "Trine." When describing incarnation, the author of the "Triune" says, "He put on this weak, defeated Man [taking it] from Mary the

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Swanson, "Beyond prooftexting," 297-298 with n.4.

<sup>116</sup> Brock, "Robe," 251. For exploration of this theme in the New Testament and Syriac literatures, see Brock, "Clothing Imagery."

<sup>117</sup> The early gnostic writers used this expression in Docetic sense to explain that Christ is God who put on the human body. Yet, this example shows that clothing imagery was widely used among writers who belonged to orthodox and non-Orthodox churches, and never new to Christians from the formative period of Christianity.

Good, whom God elected over [all] women of the world, and He veiled Himself through her.”<sup>118</sup>

The reason that Christ put on the body of man and “veiled himself with it” is shown later in the “Triune” when the author says:

Mankind was not able to look towards God and to live. So God willed mercy to His creatures and honour to them. Thus Christ was between us and God, God from God and a Man, the Judge of Mankind by their deeds. For that reason God veiled Himself through a Man without sin. So He showed us mercy in Christ and brought us near to Him.<sup>119</sup>

Then, what is the purpose of God’s speaking behind the veil? Samir explained that Christ veiled himself in order to make men be able to see God.<sup>120</sup> The same interpretation on the incarnation is shown in the Latin text when Leo claims that it was only through the body of Christ that men can see God whom man is not able to see.<sup>121</sup> For Leo in the Latin text does not use the expression of “veiling” but, only says that Christ “put on” the human body to explain the incarnation, it cannot be said with certainty whether Leo had Q 42:51 in mind when he was writing this passage or was he following Christian interpretation of Christ’s incarnation as putting on human body on divine soul. It may be both. In conclusion, Leo and his audiences might have been familiar to all the elements reflected in this passage: the interpretation of human history as spiritual war between God and the Satan, and the interpretation of Christ’s incarnation with the description that Christ was “putting on” human body. These themes remind the

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<sup>118</sup> Samir, “Apology,” 91.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 96-97.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. 320A. The body of Christ as a medium for men to see God is also found in 69v.

audiences of both Christian and Islamic thinking, which makes Leo's argument more acceptable to his audiences, who were most likely, Christians familiarized with the Qur'ān.

#### *4. Leo's refutation against Muslims*

From 84v to the end of the first letter of Leo in Arabic, Leo engages in discussion on the validity of Christianity and Islam more aggressively. Now he not only limits himself to the defense of Christian doctrines and practices but tries to refute Islamic teachings and Muslim law as well. The topics Leo chooses to debate can be categorized into following headings:

##### Refutation against Muslims

- Muslims' four errors and Leo's use of the Qur'ān as a proof text
- On the truth of Christ's crucifixion and his divinity
- Muslim rules for greeting, marriage, burial and prayer for the dead
- Islamic fatalism

##### *4.1. Refutation against Muslims: Muslims' four errors and Leo's use of the Qur'ān as a proof text*

In 83v-85r, Leo refutes Muslims in following four reasons: (1) Muslims do not follow Muhammad's teachings who favored Christians (Q 5:82-3); (2) Christians are different from

other People of the Book (Q 2:62, 3:113); (3) The Qur’ān approves that the Christian teachings about Mary and Christ are true (Q 39:4, 3:42); (4) Muhammad forbade dispute over religions (Q 29:46, 2:256). The way Leo deals with these topics is simple and intuitive, and therefore, it will not need further explanation. He draws up the verses from the Qur’ān and interpreted them out of their own context. Sometimes these verses show slight differences from the original Qur’ānic verses in word, but there is no significant change in meaning. Leo’s purpose of using these verses is to reproach Muslims by reading their Scripture in Christian perspectives. This is typical Christian proof-texting of the Qur’ān. His use of the Qur’ān in this part, as well as other parts of his letters in Arabic, shows that Leo is well versed with it and does not hesitate to use it as an authoritative source.

When Leo refers to Muhammad, he calls him “صاحبكم” or صاحبک, your lord.” It appears three times in 84r:12, 84v:6 and 85r:8. This word is, however, from the hand of the later copyist, who scratched out the undertext, and wrote صاحبک or صاحبكم over it with different ink. The pretext cannot be identified here. However, it can be conjectured from 90v:10, where Leo calls Muhammad “your prophet.”<sup>122</sup> This later correction adds polemical character to the text, by calling Muhammad you “lord,” rather than calling him your “prophet,” as Muslims confess in their creed that Muhammad is the prophet of God.

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<sup>122</sup> For discussion on this word, see 168, n. 167 above.

*4.2. On the validity of Christ's crucifixion and his divinity*

*4.2.1. Christ's crucifixion is true*

Already in 71r-71v and 73v-74r, Leo discussed Q 4:157-158 which denies the crucifixion of Christ. In earlier passages, Leo has emphasized the credibility of the death and resurrection of Christ. In 71r-71v, Leo focused on the necessity of Christ's death for God's economy of men. In 73v-74r, he simply repeats his claim that what Christians say about Christ is true. He says in 73v: "there is no illusion, likeness or falsehood with him."

In 85v, Leo again deals with the theme of Christ's death and crucifixion. In this part, Leo appeals to emotional and religious aspects: Leo alludes to Q 4:157-158 again, and then claims that even when Christ did not die truly on the Cross as was believed by Christians, it is not Christians' fault. Christ believe in his crucifixion because of their love of Christ and faith in him. Then, he cites Matthew 26:53-54 to emphasize that Christ died willingly, to have the statement about Christ in the Scripture be fulfilled. As for Muslims who do not accept Christian soteriology that Christ died for the remission of the sins of the world, the Gospel passage above would not be convincing to them. As all these passages concerning the crucifixion of Christ suggest, Leo does not seem to attempt to persuade Muslims to accept his explanation. Leo's audiences were Christians, and thus, the lack of the logical, persuasive argument against Muslim accusation on this theme might not problematic for him.

#### *4.2.2. Adam and Christ are not same to God*

As for the Muslim claim that Adam and Christ are the same to God, Leo first reminds ‘Umar that he already explained about the crucifixion, the Eucharist and the birth of Christ and story about him in his “first letter.” Leo says, “I have demonstrated in my first letter to you in the circumstance of the crucifixion, the matter of Eucharist, the story of Nativity of Christ and his story (85v).” The themes the first letter Leo mentioned well corresponds to the content in 64r-84r. Leo’s statement on his first letter shows that the extant first Arabic letter of Leo was compiled from the two earlier letters, which were probably written in sequence.<sup>123</sup>

The difference between Adam and Christ, and the divinity of Christ have been discussed in 63v, 66r-66v and 70v-71v, where Leo focuses on the difference between Adam and Christ in their actions: Christ obeyed God and Adam disobeyed Him. Satan tempted Adam and led him astray. He also tempted Christ, but he was not able to do anything with Christ. In this passage, Leo suggests different explanation. Leo cites two verses in the Qur’ān to claim that the Qur’ān itself shows how Adam and Christ are different from each other. He first cites Q 3:59 which describes the creation of Adam out of dust without a father or a mother, and God’s blowing breath unto him. Then he cites Q 32:9, in which the breath of God was infused unto Mary. God made Adam move by breathing unto him; as for Christ, he is the Word and Spirit of God which God breathed unto Mary. Leo does not make a complicated argument here. He cites the verses here and there to show his argument is supported even by the Qur’ān.

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<sup>123</sup> See discussion in 74-76 above.

#### *4.3. Leo's accusation of the Muslim laws and fatalism*

##### *4.3.1. Accusation of Muslim laws*

322D-323A	86r-86v
I have been told that you do not greet to anyone of another law, and you have it in your law that you are allowed to marry women of another <law>. Then how could it be that God would have commanded a man to take her his wife, to whom he could deign worthy to greet or to bury. Likewise, if she would be of another faith, it is not proper to stand at her grave or pray for her. But when you find something written in your law that many of these <women> are faithful in some law, and that are with God, then why would you not pray for her?	He (i.e., your lord, Muhammad) says in you Scripture, “Do not ask forgiveness for anyone among them who died ever, nor stand at his grave.” It is not permitted for you to greet anyone among the People of the Book. I read that if a man among you had Christian mother, and she died, it is not permitted for him to bury her or to ask forgiveness for her or to great her during her lifetime. But God truly glorified the mother. Furthermore, <even when> a man among you marries a woman from the People of the Book, and has intercourse with her since God permits her to him, it is not permitted for him to greet her, bury her or to pray at her grave, though he has intercourse with her. Praised be God, how great <a wrong> this is! A man can neither ask forgiveness for his wife or mother, nor pray at their grave, nor walk in their funeral procession.

From 86r, Leo deals with the Muslim laws, such as greeting, marriage and divorce, and burial and prayer for the dead. Both texts show that Leo has some knowledge about the sayings of Hadith. The Latin text begins with the expression, “Ditum est mihi, it was told to me,” which might have been translated from Arabic قيل لى. This phrase shows that Leo did not know about Muslim law in detail nor did he read Hadith himself, but he is depending on hearsay. Leo’s information about Muslim laws is neither perfect nor correct. For instance, he simply says that Muslims are not allowed to greet the People of the Book. However, the Qur’ān never prohibits Muslims from greeting non-Muslims (cf. Q 4:86). Muslim commentators elaborated their

interpretation of Q 4:86 and give detailed instructions on when and how Muslims should greet non-Muslim. For instance, according to Sahīh Muslim, Muslims are told not to greet Christians and the Jews before they greet them first.<sup>124</sup> When the People of the Book greet Muslims first with appropriate words, Muslims are allowed to reply with it or with a better one.<sup>125</sup> However, Leo in the Arabic and Latin texts does not mention all greeting rules in detail.

Leo's strategy in discussing Muslim law is simple: He does not deal with each law separately. Rather, he makes a convincing argument by postulating a hypothetical case of a Muslim man who has Christian mother or Christian wife. According to Leo, it is unreasonable for God to prohibit him from greeting them during her lifetime and or walking in their funeral procession and praying for them after their death. He says rhetorically, "Praised be God, how great <a wrong> this is! A man can neither ask forgiveness for his wife or mother, nor pray at their grave, nor walk in their funeral procession (86v)."

Additionally, the Latin letter briefly discusses the law of divorce in 322D-324A. This passage clearly has a pastoral character. Leo cites Q 2:230, which is about the law of divorce and the reunify of wife with former husband after divorce. Leo's strategy of refuting this law is simply to appeal to the Old and New Testament. He first cites Deuteronomy 24:1-4, saying that it is not proper for a wife to return to her former husband after she has married another man and divorce her new husband. Then he further claims that the divorce is allowed for man in case of wife's fornication. He also cites Matthew 5:31-32, saying that taking a woman after her divorce

<sup>124</sup> Sahīh Muslim, 2167a. It is available online at <https://sunnah.com/muslim/39>

<sup>125</sup> Al-'Adab al-Mufrad, 1107. See <https://sunnah.com/adab/44/7>

is fornication and adultery. Considering that Muslims regard the Bible as having been corrupted by Jews and Christians, this simple Scripture based argument again indicates that the audiences of this text is Christians.

#### *4.3.2. Refutation against Islamic fatalism*

The last topic Leo discusses is Islamic fatalism. The account in the Arabic text is much longer and more elaborated than that of the Latin version. The texts runs as follows:

324A-324B	86v-87v
Also, I have been told that it was written in your law that whatever man does, either good or evil, it would have been prescribed and predestined by God before he was born. If it is so, there is no grace if he does good nor would be sin if he does evil: because he is not the one performing the action, but it has been already written and predestined for him before he was born. Thus, if it is true that everything had been written for him before he was born, then God is seen to have acted impiously. But, far be this for God that this would be done to people. Therefore, if it were so just as you say, whatever a man would do, either good or opposite to it, then God would not have sent prophets to demonstrate Hell to men and make them frighten (i.e., fear for Hell); for sufficient for them would have been prescribed and predestined to them. But such an understanding is far [from the truth]; were a man to perish, he would perish only by his will.	And he (i.e. your lord, Muhammad) says in your Scripture, “God leaves straying those whom He pleases, and guides whom he pleases.” And He created some with misfortune and some with good fortune. Whatever good or evil deed a man does, God has already decreed it and decided it for him. If it is so, then he neither deserves praise nor is he responsible for <his> fault. If God punishes him because of something that He created for him, leads him astray, and imprints on his heart, and He has decreed that for him, then God does injustice to him. God forbid that He, the Mighty and Exalted, leads one stray or predestines misfortune for him and then punishes him <according to what He made for him>. He sent down the Scriptures to the prophets in order to warn the people about the evil deeds and to show them good deeds. Hence, he who does a deed which merits hell, then God has a cause against him as the prophets have spoken about Him. If it were so as you say, that all good deeds and evil deeds that anyone does, God already predestined them for him before He created him, then God would not have sent his prophets to people as mercy; then what was written and the

predestination would be sufficient. Therefore, do not think that God, the Greatest and the most Gracious, determines misfortune for man and punishes him <according to it>. But, the Lord, the most Just, Wise, and Glorious among all, because of His glory, He does not do injustice to anyone. Rather <His> mercy fills heaven and earth. Praised be He for His clemency.

Yet we say that God created man able to see and hear, and He taught him about the good and evil; He taught him, warned him, helped him, admonished him, and made him be satisfied with what he has <received>. And He says that if your deed is good, your reward will be according to it. And if your deed is evil, your punishment will be according to it. Therefore, man will not have a plea to his Lord on the Day of Resurrection; rather, He prescribed for them the religious teaching. Hence, no one will be punished save according to a proof and Scripture that God sent down to him and <with which> showed him what will come and what will pass away. There is neither power nor strength except with God.

Leo criticizes Islamic fatalism in the following way: First, he points out the danger of fatalism. He cited Q 14:4 (only in the Arabic text) and also alludes to other verses such as Q 9:51, 22:4, and 57:22. According to these verses, the fate of a man is already prescribed before his birth, and God leads only those he wants, but not others. Then, he refutes that such verses may bring misunderstanding of the attribute of God and the cause of evil that men have no responsibility for his actions because no one has free will, but it is God who does injustice to them by punishing them according to what God himself made for them and leading them astray. Then he strongly denies it. The negative acclamation in the Latin version, “far be this for God that...” might have been translated from ﷺ, “God forbid!” Similar expression is attested in

the corresponding Arabic passage in 87r:5-6. Second, Leo emphasizes that a man is responsible for his evil deeds. Man already learned how to distinguish good and evil from the Scriptures and the prophets of God. Therefore, a man is responsible for his own actions. Leo in the Arabic text elaborates this theme by emphasizing the human ability to perceive what he sees and listens, and claims that God's judgement will fall upon him according to what he himself did in life.

Both for Christians and Muslims, the tension between divine predestination and human free will was not unfamiliar. The discussion on the predestination and free will is one of the commonly debated themes among Christians and Muslims. Christian writers, including Ephrem, have been discussed this theme from earlier period. The debate concerning predestination and free will has flourished from the formative period of Islam among Muslims as well. The most valuable starting point for discussion on Islamic fatalism is the study of Watt, who explored various Muslim sources dealing with this topic. The sources Watt studied have a wide range, from the Qur'ān, traditions, and works of several Muslim sects and schools, some of which date back to the very time of Muhammad and his contemporaries. As Watt pointed out, there have been consistently "two opposing trends" among Muslims concerning this issue from the very early period of Islam. For instance, even the Qur'ān itself contains verses which emphasize either "divine omnipotence" or "human responsibility," and other conceptions relevant to these two views. Moreover, even though the Qur'ān is the foremost sources for overall Islamic thought, other traditions may have been circulated among Muslims.<sup>126</sup> Then in the time of the rise of

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<sup>126</sup> One good example is the tradition of the "divine pen" and "heavenly tablet," with and upon which the fate of the world and all therein were written from the beginning to the end. For Watt's thorough study on the sources discussing Islamic fatalism, see Watt, *Predestination*.

Islam, it became a subject of debate between Christians and Muslims. Leo does not discuss this theme in detail. He simply mentions that Muslims follow fatalism. Whether Leo knew about the existence of two different views on the predestination and free will among Muslim theologians is not known from his letter.

### *5. Closing section or lost ending?*

Islamic fatalism is the last theme both texts discuss. Both letters finish abruptly. The Arabic letter ends with the statement that, “Accordingly, I have explained and written to you concerning what you asked about. And it is written... (87v)” However, it is not clear whether this statement indicates the end of the letter or the end of the section on refutation against Muslims. The similar expression appears so frequently in the Arabic version as Leo finishes discussion of one topic and moves to another. Moreover, the final word كتب, which can be read either as “it was written” or “he wrote or he has written...,” may signal the continuation. From 87r begins the new work, the second letter of Leo. This concluding statement is also missing in the Latin version; it ends in 324B abruptly.

### *6. Additional remarks*

In this chapter, I have tried to analyze and explain the text as much as possible. Yet, there remain some passages which are difficult to understand. I will address the relevant issues here, hoping to identify their references and sources in the future:

Firstly, Leo uses specific numbers, which are sometimes different from the Bible or never attested elsewhere in the Christian literatures. The first example is the lifespan of Adam in the preface. When Leo mentioned about the death of Adam, he said, “God made him return to Him after nine hundred and thirty six years.” The lifespan of Adam is clearly mentioned in Genesis 5:5 that he lived up to nine hundred and thirty years. Therefore, it is apparent that Leo is following the tradition other than the Old Testament. One possible example may be found from the report given by al-Ṭabarī. He presented several different traditions on the lifespan of Adam in his History. He wrote that the Jews insisted on 930 year, some scholars 936 years and he himself accepted 940 as authoritative.<sup>127</sup> To the best of my knowledge, the lifespan of Adam of 936 years is only attested by some Muslim writers mentioned by al-Ṭabarī. As reporting Adam’s age, Leo may have been from Islamic tradition rather than from Christians.<sup>128</sup> However, as a Christian writer, it seems still strange that Leo follows the Islamic tradition on the matter which was clearly mentioned in the Old Testament. Another example is found in 83v and 84r when Leo says that there is a gap of “three thousand years between Adam and Christ.” He does not show how to compute this “three thousand years.” Also, to the best of my knowledge, it is not known elsewhere in the Bible or Christian literatures. As for the strange years of the letter of Leo, I would add a case of the “Triune” which also contains different year-gap between generations of Genesis. The author of the “Triune” says, “There were ten father between Adam and Noah, and this was two thousand two hundred and seventy years.”<sup>128</sup> And again, he says, there were ten

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<sup>127</sup> Rosenthal, *Al-Ṭabarī*, vol 1, 331. Al-Ṭabarī presents different views on the age of Adam given by different Muslim scholars, and says, “God knows the best!”

<sup>128</sup> Gibson, *Triune*, 7.

fathers between Noah and Abraham in “a thousand and two hundred years,” and between Abraham and Moses were “four hundred and [thirty] years.<sup>129</sup> Yet, the computation of years between Adam and Christ suggested in the “Triune” neither find its reference in the Old Testament nor solve the problem of the strange “three thousand years” appeared in the first letter of Leo. Yet, the example of the “Triune” may suggest that Leo and the author of the “Triune” might have followed the traditions which does not agree with the Old Testament.

Secondly, sometimes Leo also uses the tradition which I cannot identify their sources. For instance, when explaining the difference between Mary and Miriam in 65r, Leo said Miriam died of a skin disease. This does not correspond to the account of the Old Testament. According to the Numbers 12:10-15, Miriam once suffered by skin disease because of her complain about Moses’ marriage. God punished her, and she had a skin disease on hands. But she did not die of it, but cured with Moses’ prayer. Likewise, the occurrence of Shām (شام) in 74r as the name of specific place and Leo’s geographical knowledge still remain unanswered. In context, Shām refers to Jerusalem or where the city of Jerusalem is located. However, Shām also has been used to refer to other places than Jerusalem by Christian and Muslim writers. I already discussed the issue concerning the interpretation of Shām as a specific place name in section 3.4 above. Another example is related to Moses. When emphasizing the divinity of Christ as God, Leo distinguishes him from the rest of the prophets of God. Leo states that Moses was not called the Word of God but was believed by the head of the angels, the sons of God. That Moses was believed by the archangel is not attested in Christian literatures. This may be alluding to the

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<sup>129</sup> Gibson, *Triune*, 7-8.

dispute between Michael and the Satan over Moses' body in Jude 1:9, which is thought to have been based on the account of the Old Testament pseudoepigrapha, which is the titled the *Assumption of Moses*. However, both Jude 1:9 and the *Assumption of Moses* account only the conflict between Satan and Archangel Michael over Moses corpus, but never mentioned that the archangel believed in him. There is another tradition ascribed to Moses. In 67v, Leo says, "And Moses the prophet said, 'He who lifted up heaven without a pillar walks upon the sea as he does upon the land.'" I cannot find the reference of this phrase, except the Qur'ān 13:2.

In addition to the examples from the Arabic text, a strange citation from the letter of Paul in the Latin version also needs to be mentioned. In 318D, Leo cites Paul's words: Paul <said>, "The world will be enlightened from Judah." And again, "God shall ascend over heaven, over His holy seat, looking down on earth in order that he might see those who are bound by obligation, whom Satan have obliged in transgression. The source of these verses is unknown.

Thirdly, the use of the word "حواريون" When referring to the apostle of Christ, Leo prefers to the using the word "حواريون" (fourteen times: thirteen times as plural and once as singular form)" rather than "رسول" (once)" or "تلاميذ" (four times)." As to the appearance of this word, Samir's observation may be of help to conjecture of the relationship between the letters of Leo with the "Trine." As reading the "Triune," Samir also discovered that the author uses the word "حواريون" more frequently than "رسول." This word is from the Qur'ān and of Ethiopic origin,<sup>130</sup> and may have been familiar to Christian writers and audiences in the early Islamic period. From the fact that early Christian writers to write in Arabic were well versed in the

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<sup>130</sup> Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary*, 115.

Qur'ān, it would not surprising to find that both the author of the “Triune” and Leo use this Qur'ānic term frequently. But it is noteworthy that they are only those two among the Melkite writers to prefer to use this word.<sup>131</sup> This shows that the letters of Leo and the “Trine” might have been produced in the same milieu, probably the late eighth century Melkite circles centered in Jerusalem.

### *7. Conclusion*

So far, I have discussed the content of both letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin. Before I make a conclusion on the character of these texts and their provenance, I shall first summarize what I have observed from the texts:

Firstly, the extant letter of Leo in Latin is now considered to be translated from Arabic. Regardless of what the “Chaldean” language in the editorial note refers to, the existence of the Arabic *Vorlage* is proved from the languages and expressions of the texts: typical Islamic eulogies, strange expressions that remind of readers typical Semitic thoughts and the occurrence of the word which can only be understood only through retro-translation of the Latin word into Arabic. A passage which contains western *Filioque* theology, which may lead to the conclusion that the extant Latin text was composed in the West in the later period, seems to have been added later by the Latin translator in the course of transmission.

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. Samir, “Apology,” 107. According to Samir, such use was common only in Nestorian tradition. And he adds, “But I do not remember having come across this word in the Melkite tradition.”

Secondly, as I have stated in the introduction, the extant Latin and the Arabic letter of Leo are from the same earlier materials. More specifically, the Arabic *Vorlage* of the extant Latin text is another recension of the first letter of Leo. This is shown by the fact that not only the Arabic and Latin text discussed the same themes, but their expressions and approaches on each theme are almost identical as well. In debating over the divinity of Christ, both texts letters use same analogies of fire and the sun. Both letters also use the verses taken from the Old Testament to prove the divine nature of Christ. The similarities of the verses of the Old Testament cited by Leo in the Arabic and Latin letters is striking. Both texts not only cite the same verses, but these verses are even presented in the same order. Moreover, both versions use the same Christian traditions: they adapted the legend of the apparition of the Cross to Constantin and Helena's finding of the Cross of Christ to defend the veneration of the crosses. Leo's dependency on these traditions is noteworthy, for they are attested only in the Latin and Arabic letters of Leo, but not elsewhere in the Christian Arabic anti-Muslim polemics. Apart from Leo, only Theodore Abū Qurrah mentions it in passing, but the worldly power of the Cross that brought victory at war to Constantine is less emphasized by Abū Qurrah.

Third, as shown in the introduction of the new Arabic sources in chapter II, the extant first Arabic letter of Leo is a compilation of at least two earlier materials. These two materials are the tracts which might have been written by the same author in sequence. From the handwriting of the Arabic text, it seems that it was a copy of late eighth to the early ninth century. Thus, the composition date of the first Arabic letter of Leo might have been earlier than

that, which may go back to the mid to late eighth century. Likewise, the date of the composition of the extant Latin letter should be also dated back to the second half of the eighth century.

Fourth, the letters of Leo show how Islamic culture have been intermingled and accepted by Christians of his day. Throughout the text, Leo uses the expressions which remind his audiences not only of the Bible but of the Qur'ān. For instance, he never hesitates to use the names of God that appear in the Qur'ān. He also frequently describes God's attributes using Qur'ānic terms such as "mercy," "guidance," and "compassionate." However, even though Leo uses the Qur'ānic vocabularies, his theology is always based on the Bible. Particularly, Leo's adaptation of the theology of Paul and the author of the letter to Hebrews stand out.

Fifth, in both texts, when Leo uses the old Christian traditions, he uses them in the new context, which is Christian-Muslim polemics. He depended on the Old Testament *testimonia* collections and the legends of the Cross of Christ, both of which had used by his ancestors to refute the opponents of Christians, especially the Jews. However, the traditional anti-Jewish polemic is no longer of his concern. For Leo, Muslims replace the Jews in the new political and socio-religious context. Leo not only adapted his religious heritages, but modified them for his own purpose. The *testimonia* collection was used by Leo as scriptural proofs of the truth of Christian teachings. It is well attested in his use of the legends of the Cross of Christ. Anti-Jewish character of the legend of the finding of the true Cross was weakened.

Sixth, the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin were not produced out of actual correspondence between Leo and 'Umar, or between a Christian and a Muslim. These letters are apologies written to be read by Christians. Pastoral character of both texts stands out. Leo's

dependency on the Christian traditions and the Scriptures, and his use of the language of the creed and of the Lord's Prayer might have been convincing to Christians, but never to Muslims. Moreover, throughout the text, Leo appeals to the eschatological hope of Christians, reminding of them the reward of the kingdom of heaven and the judgment on the Last Day. Leo cites Beatitude from the gospel, and identifies Christians with the righteous suffering in this world, with salt and light, and with the prophets persecuted by people on account of propagating God's message. Still, one may raise the possibility that Leo wrote his letters to be read by Muslims as well as Christians. This is not impossible. However, even in the case that the letters of Leo may have been read by Muslims, it seems clear that Leo's primary audiences were Christians. Leo's primary purpose of the composition of these letters is to provide proper answers for Christians facing theological attacks of Muslims, and to aspire Christian faith and prevent them from converting to Islam.

Finally, the letters of Leo might have been composed in the same milieu in which the "Triune" was composed. The more I read the letters of Leo in Latin and Arabic, the more I recognize the similarities between the letters of Leo and the "Triune." I have shown some of their shared characters in chapter II and III, but there are more examples than them. The date of composition of the letters of Leo and the "Triune", the circumstances in which they were written, and the primary audience of these texts may be the same. The letters of Leo and the "Triune" seem to have been composed in the second half of the eighth century in the Melkite monastery of Jerusalem. And at some time later, their copies arrived at the monastery of St. Catherine's, where both NF 14 and Sinai Arabic MS 154 are now preserved. The primary purpose of the

composition these texts is to provide answers for Christians to cope with the theological accusations raised by Muslims.<sup>132</sup> Unfortunately, the lack of documentary materials prevent from answering the question that by whom, where and when transmission of the texts has made.

Based on these observations, the relationship between the first Arabic and the Latin letters of Leo with other previously known letters of Leo and ‘Umar will be discussed in the following chapter. In doing so, I hope to explain the provenance of all extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar: where, when and by whom they were written, and how and when they were transmitted and translated, and the textual relationship between them.

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<sup>132</sup> See also Swanson’s discussion on the potential audience of the “Triune” in his “Audience,” 130-133 and his citation from Gallo’s Italian translation of Gibson’s *Triune* in 132 and no. 80.

*Part 2: The Second Letter of Leo*

Unlike the first letter of Leo, the second letter does not identify the name of its author and recipient. From its content, it can only be said that it is an anti-Muslim tract written by an anonymous Christian writer. However, it seems that the copyist had regarded it to be another letter written by Leo; he copied it and arranged it following the letter of Leo. Meimāres also considered it to be in connection with the letter of Leo to ‘Umar in 62v-87v, and treated them together as the second part of NF 14.<sup>133</sup> In this study, I will follow the suggestion given by Meimāres in the catalogue.

The six surviving pages of the second letter of Leo concentrate on the refutations against Muslims. Leo’s strategy is quite simple and does not call for further explanation. Here I will only contend myself with presenting how Leo draws up several verses in the Qur’ān and uses them to make his arguments.

*1. Opening section (88r-88v)*

The structure of the opening section of the second letter is similar to that of the first letter. It begins with a typical Muslim opening phrase, “In the name of God, the most Merciful and Compassionate,” which is directly taken from Q 1:1. Then a short doxology, which also echoes

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<sup>133</sup> Cf. Meimāres, *Catalogos*, 41 (in Greek), 43 (in Arabic).

the expressions of the Qur'ān follows. Then the author explains his purpose of writing of this letter; he was requested by his Muslim interlocutor to answer the questions given to him concerning his religion (i.e., Christianity) and the religion of other (i.e., Islam). He finishes opening section with the statement that God is only capable of such work.

## *2. Refutations against Muslims (89r-90v)*

The rest of the work consists of three thematic subsections: Leo's refutation against the arrogance of Muslims, the prohibition of the Qur'ān of disputing over religions, and Leo's quotations of the Qur'ān verses which show that Christianity is religion of God but Islam is not. The third subsection consists of three topics concerning the validity of Islam and Christianity. The use of the Qur'ānic passages by Leo in this second letter shows Christian reading of the Qur'ān, which is to read the verses out of its Islamic context and interpret them in the context of Christian teachings. He first gives his claim and then presents the Qur'ānic passages which are, in his perspective, supporting his claim.<sup>134</sup> In section 2.2 and 2.3, Leo's argument is simple, and thus might not need further explanation.

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<sup>134</sup> Another example of such reading is Christian use of Q 4:171. This verse is commonly used by Christian writers as a scriptural proof of the divinity of Christ. Probably the earliest example of the Christian reading of Q 4:171 is found in *De Haeresibus* of John of Damascus and the debate between Timothy I and the Caliph al-Mahdi. Cf. Newman, *Dialogue*, 139, 239.

### *2.1. The arrogance of Muslims and their unfair attitude toward non-Muslims*

Leo refutes Muslims that they are acting unfairly in their attitude toward non-Muslims and do not follow the teachings of the Qur'ān. As for the Muslim's unfair attitude toward non-Muslims, such as their showing off their power, vexation and bursting of anger, Leo mentions that it is their higher social rank that makes Muslims do so. Then he warns that the arrogance prevent accepting the truth. Leo does not criticize social inequality between Christians and Muslims. His criticism is only concerned with personal actions not with any legal and political ones.

### *2.2. The Qur'ān forbade dispute over religions*

Leo claims that the Qur'ān forbids the dispute over religions. He cites Q 29:46, which says that God of Christians and God of Muslims are one and commands Muslims not to dispute over different faiths. Then Leo finishes his argument claiming that what Muslims actually do toward Christians such as public refutation against Christians by calling them polytheists and infidels is not what they were commanded to do.

### *2.3. The truth of Christianity and falsity of Islam*

The following passages discuss the validity of religions and those who follows them. Leo claims that Islam is not the true religion, but Christianity is the religion from God. To assert that Christianity is from God, Leo quotes verses from the first Sūrah, which discusses the “straight

path” of the true religion. And he interprets this verse, saying that this “straight path” is the path of Christians. Leo also claims that Muslims follow and believe in Jesus “only by tongue” but actually do not accept him nor agree with his teaching. Here Leo seems to allude to Q 21:91, according to which were Jesus and Mary regarded as being made by God as a sign for the world. Leo also insists that Islam is not superior to any other religions including Christianity. To prove his point, Leo cites two verses from the Qur’ān, 3:83 and 3:85 together, to show that these verses are not in agreement with each other: Leo first reads Q 3:85 which demands acceptance of Islam, not of any other faiths. Then he says this verse is invalidated by another verse from the same Sūrah, Q 3:83 that all creatures including men, animals, birds and Satan have accepted Islam. He interprets this verse as demonstrating the equity of all creatures in the teachings of Islam; any Muslim who reads A 3:83 would know that Muslims are not superior to any creatures in the world which accepted Islam. Finally, Leo asserts that, according to the Qur’ān itself, Islam is not the true religion from God. Leo presents Q 33:35, which says, “Indeed, Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women...” Leo interprets this verse as distinguishing the believers from Muslims. He also uses Q 49:14 and 2:6-7 where the Qur’ān says that these Arabs do not really believe, though they claim they do.

For the rest of the text is lost, what follows after 90v can be only inferred from what Leo might have written. Leo mentions at the beginning of this letter that he was requested to answer his interlocutor’s questions concerning Christianity and Islam. He may have continued

discussion of Christian and Islamic teachings. As in the case of the first letter of Leo, this Christian author might have written an apology in the framework of a letter. At any rate, nothing can be more said about content of the letter, its authorship or authenticity until the rest part of the text will have been discovered in the future.

*Chapter IV: The letters of Leo and ‘Umar: their origin and relationship*

This chapter is the conclusion of what I have discussed in the preceding three chapters. In chapter I, I have introduced the conclusion from earlier studies on the origin and authorship of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar and their textual relationship. In chapter II and III, I have introduced the new Arabic letters of Leo and discussed its content, origin and authorship together with the previously known Latin letter of Leo. Thorough analysis of these texts shows that the extant Latin letter and the first Arabic letter of Leo are from the same material, which might have been written in the second half of the eighth century. Following this, in this chapter I will suggest the origin and textual history of all extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar. The relationship between the letters of Leo in Arabic, Armenian and Latin will be discussed based on the observations made in the chapter III. Second, I will locate the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin in the socio-religious and literary context of early Christian-Muslim interreligious polemics.

### *1. The letter of Leo in Armenian vs. the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin*

Earlier studies by Jeffery, Hoyland, Khoury, Palombo and others claim that the letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin are from the common material based on their similarities.<sup>1</sup> Both texts discuss similar themes, and use the Old and New Testament *testimonia* collection and natural analogies to prove the divine nature of Christ. The order in which both texts present themes are also the same. However, following points also should be considered:

Firstly, even though the letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin are discussing similar themes, still these themes are also found in other Christian apologetic writings. The doctrine of Trinity and divinity of Christ are the two core themes in Christian Muslim polemics. The defense of Christian practices such as the veneration of the cross and Christians' refutation against Muslims of their confusion of Mary and Miriam are also frequently discussed by Christian apologists.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the use of Old Testament *testimonia* has been one of the commonly used strategies for Christians from the formative period of Christianity. The *testimonia* collection, which was first used in anti-Jewish polemics came to be used in the new context of anti-Muslim polemics. Apart from the letters of Leo, the use of Old Testament verses to prove the Christian teaching on the nature of Christ and the Trinity are found in other Christian writings, such as the “Triune,” and the *Book of the Proof*, the work of Theodore Abū Qurrah and the treatise of Abū

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<sup>1</sup> See discussion in chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> Newman presents the example of the shared themes found in various Christian anti-Muslim tracts. See Newman, *Dialogue*, 731-735.

Ra'itah.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, even though both texts quoted from or alluded to the Old and New Testament, the biblical verses taken by Leo in two texts are different. When the citations in the Armenian and Latin texts are compared, the distinctiveness in cited verses between two texts outnumbers the similarities. It was already pointed out by Gaudeul, who compared the biblical citations in two texts and said, "...the Old Testament is quoted 23 times in the Armenian version, 25 times in the Latin one, but only 6 quotations are common to both. The New Testament is quoted 21 times in the Armenian letter, 20 times in the Latin text, only 3 passages are common to both."<sup>4</sup> The difference stands out when the *testimonia* collection used in all three texts are compared. The Old Testament quotations or allusions in three texts are as follows:<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See section 3.2.5 in the chapter III.

<sup>4</sup> Gauduel, "Correspondence," 115.

<sup>5</sup> The citations/allusions are presented in the order they appear in the texts. As for the references for the Old and the New Testament in all versions of the letters of Leo, it is difficult to present them altogether to compare, for each text uses different versions of the Bible. Leo in the Armenian letter is using the Armenian vulgate, which has variations from the Septuagint or Greek New Testament (See Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 164-168). Regardless of the possibility that Leo translated it either from Arabic into Armenian or Arabic into Armenian via Greek, it seems evitable that the phrases were changed. The Latin version is a translation from its Arabic *Vorlage*, but the translator used the Latin vulgate when he translated biblical quotations (Gero, *Iconoclasm*, 159, "[A] simple check of the Scriptural citations shows that they are made mostly according to the Latin Vulgate"). As for the Arabic letter, the references to the Bible I identified are based on the modern English edition (*New Revised Standard Version*, included in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuteronomical Book*). It is because the "complete version of the late eighth century Arabic Bible" to compare the Bible text with the citations of Leo in his first Arabic letter seems not exist. Moreover, it is also possible that the author used his own translation from Greek to Arabic, or recurred to the "*testimonia*" collection that came down to him (see discussion on the Old Testament *testimonia* in the chapter III). Another difficulty is that the texts we have now are defective or may be "a translation from another translation." I have discussed the defectiveness of the Arabic and the Latin texts in the chapter III. When the passage is severely defected, it is difficult to identify the reference.

Yet, despite all these, the chart will be sufficient to show the similarities and differences in scriptural citations in all three versions of the letters of Leo. To avoid confusion, I treated the citations of each text in following way: As to the Armenian version, I simply followed what Jeffery presented in his "Ghevond," 303-310. For the Latin text, the Latin *vulgate* was used. The citations in the Arabic version follows the *New Revised Standard Version*.

[Chart 3: Old Testament testimonia in the letters of Leo in Armenian, Latin and Arabic]

The Armenian letter of Leo	The Latin letter of Leo	The first letter of Leo in Arabic
Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19	Genesis 1	Genesis 1
Psalm 22:6-8; 2:7; 110:1-2; 32:5-6	Psalm 32:6; 118:89; 106:20	Psalm 33:6; 119:89; 107:20
Isaiah 48:16	Job 33:4	Job 33:4
Baruch 3:35-37; 4:2-3	Genesis 1:2	Genesis 1:2
Numbers 24:5, 7, 17		Isaiah 61:1?
		Exodus 14:20-21?
	Isaiah 61:1	Isaiah 61:1
Psalm 72:1, 5, 8, 11, 15, 17	Psalm 103:30; 142:10; 50:12	Psalm 104:30; 143:10
Micah 5:2	Isaiah 7:14; 9:6	Isaiah 7:14
Jeremiah 17:9-13	2 Samuel 7:12-14	
Isaiah 9:5-6	Psalm 109:1?	
Psalm 89:29	Zachariah 9:9	Zechariah 9:9
Isaiah 9:7; 7:14; 50:5-6	Genesis 49:9-10	
Zechariah 11:12	Baruch 3:36-38	
Psalm 41:9	Habakkuk 2:3	
Isaiah 53:1-9	Isaiah 45:14-16	
	Psalm 13:2-3; 109:1	
	Deuteronomy 28:66	
	Psalm 21:17-18	
	Isaiah 53:3-4	

The comparison of the verses taken in each version shows the relationship between the texts. As seen in the chart above, the citations used in the Armenian letter are much different from those of the Arabic and Latin texts: the verses from Micah and Numbers are only attested in the Armenian version. When three versions cite verses from the Psalm or Deuteronomy, the verses used in each text are different. It is striking that the only common verse used in all three texts is Psalm 33(32):6. On the other hand, the verses used in the Arabic and Latin texts are almost identical, and they appear in the same order. The slight differences between two texts can be explained out easily: the first citation of Isaiah 61:1 in the Arabic letter seems to be a mistake. Isaiah 61:1 reads, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me.” That Leo cited as “The Spirit of the Lord has made me” seems to have been a mistake by an author or a copyist, who was writing the same again. The same verse is cited later correctly. The following citation, “And Moses the prophet said, ‘He who lifted up heaven without pillars walks upon the sea as he does upon the land,’ which is only attested in the Arabic text. However, this verse is not from the Old Testament. The first half sentence that ‘He who lifted up without a pillar’ is directly taken from the Qur’ān. The second half of the sentence is not identified. Thus, it is not surprising that this verse is not found in the Latin version. The Arabic letter ends citation from the Old Testament with Zechariah 9:9, while the Latin version continues. This may be due to the corruption of the Arabic text. In sum, while the Arabic and Latin texts utilize almost similar verses from the Old Testament in the same order, the Armenian letter uses different ones. It strongly supports the conclusion that the Arabic and Latin text are from the same materials, which is not related with the Armenian version.

Following Old Testament testimonia, only the Armenian and Latin version use the quotations from or allusions to the New Testament. The Arabic text described the scene of Christ's passion and death, but did not present the list of New Testament citations or allusions. The citations from the New Testament in the Armenian<sup>6</sup> and Latin letters are not identical:

[Chart 4: New Testament testimonia in the letters of Leo in Armenian and Latin]

The Armenian letter of Leo	The Latin letter of Leo
Luke 22:42	John 1:1
	Luke 1:35
	1 Corinthians 2:10
	Romans 8:15, 9
	Luke 1:31
	Matthew 1:21
	Galatians 4:4-5
	John 3:36
	Colossians 1:16
	Matthew 16:16
John 5:19; 14:10; 10:18; 14:28-31; 12:44-45, 48; 14:28; 10:30; 17:3; 3:36; 1:29; 1:1-3; 14:9; 10:15; 16:32; 20:17; 1:12; 20:21	John 1:28, 35; 8:12; 16:28; 20:17; 11:25, 12:45; 10:30

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Jeffery "Ghevond," 311-314.

The verses of the New Testament used by Leo in the Armenian and Latin texts more clearly show that they are two independent works: It is noteworthy that Leo in the Armenian letter cites mostly from the gospel of John. The only exception is Luke 22:42. Leo in the Latin text cites verses from all four gospels and the letters of Paul. I did not include the two last verses in the Latin letter, “The world will be enlightened from Judah,” and “God shall ascend over heaven over His holy seat, looking down on earth in order that he might see those who are bound by obligation, whom Satan obliged in transgression” in the chart above, for they are not identified. Leo attributes to Paul, but I can’t find their reference in Pauline letters. As in the case of the Old Testament *testimonia*, the shared New Testament citations in the Armenian and the Latin texts are small in number: John 20:17, 12:44-45 and 10:30.

Thirdly, some themes and traditions are only attested in the Armenian letter but not in the Arabic and the Latin texts, or vice versa. For the Armenian letter is longer than the other two, the Armenian version contains more themes which are lacking in the Arabic and Latin texts. Here are several examples: Leo in the Armenian letter rebuts to ‘Umar’s refutation against Christians for regarding Satan as God’s treasure,<sup>7</sup> while Leo in the other two versions does not discuss this strange expression. In the Armenian version, Leo refutes Muslims’ moral corruption, citing the story of David and Zeda’s wife in Old Testament, and refutes some Muslim marital practices such as concubinage and killing of wife at her husband’s death, etc.<sup>8</sup> Leo in the Arabic and Latin text also reproach Muslims’ marriage law along with other Muslim practices, but the particular

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<sup>7</sup> Jeffery, “Ghevond,” 326.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 324-326.

rules discussed by Leo in these two versions are different from those of the Armenian letter. The discussion on the veneration of the relics of the saints,<sup>9</sup> the direction of prayer,<sup>10</sup> and Leo's denial of or backed off attitude toward the veneration of the icons or images<sup>11</sup> discussed in the Armenian version is not found in the Arabic and Latin texts. Leo in the Arabic and Latin letters attempts to defend the veneration of the crosses by using the tradition of the apparition of the Cross to Constantine and the discovery of the true Cross of Christ by his mother Helena in Jerusalem with the aid of a Jewish man, which are lacking in the Armenian text.

Finally, even though the first letter of Leo in Arabic and the Latin text show some differences, their close relations are proved by their similarities not only in themes they discuss, but also by expressions and cited verses they share. It is important to note this point, since, the use of same verses in the same order, author's same argument concerning the same themes, and appearance of author's comment in the same place in the same expression on the same point can be explained only by assuming that they are from the same earlier material. It is true that sometimes, the letter of Leo in Armenian shares themes with the Arabic or Latin version. But their similarities are found scattered throughout the texts, expressed in different language with different verses cited from the Old and New Testament.

Based on the observations above, it seems more reasonable to think that the letters of Leo in all three versions are not originated from the same material, but the Armenian text is an independent work from other two letters. Likewise, the letter of 'Umar, whose textual

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<sup>9</sup> Jeffery, "Ghevond," 320-321.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 322.

relationship with the letter of Leo in Armenian was consented, has no relationship with the Arabic and Latin letters. I have not included the letter of ‘Umar in Armenian in discussion, but as in the case of the letter of ‘Umar in Arabic and Aljamiado, this Armenian version also seem unrelated to the Arabic and Latin letter of Leo.

## *2. The origin, date, language and authorship of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar*

If all three letters of Leo are not from the same material, then the authorship, date, language, and the place of composition of these texts should be regarded separately. I divided the extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar into following groups:

[Chart 5: Two indepenet group of writings of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar]

Hims group	Jerusalem Group
The letter of Leo in Armenian	The letter of Leo in Latin
	The first letter of Leo in Arabic
The letter of ‘Umar in Arabic	
The letter of ‘Umar in Aljamiado	The second letter of Leo in Arabic

The name of each group is given to the possible provenance of the texts. The “Hims” group was named after the city of “Hims,” which is also known as “Emesa.” All three transmitters in the Isnād which appears at the beginning of the Aljamido letter of ‘Umar are from this city. As for the Hims group, there are three texts: the Armenian letter of Leo, and the letter

of ‘Umar in Arabic and Aljamiado. The extant texts might have been compiled from the letters written by Christians and Muslims who lived in this city.<sup>12</sup> It is hard to know whether the authors of the letters of Leo and ‘Umar knew each other and corresponded directly, or did they only read the work of the others and wrote their own.<sup>13</sup> The denomination of the Christian who was involved in the composition of this correspondence is not revealed in the texts.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, no information of the Muslim author is given.

The Arabic and Latin texts belong to the Jerusalem group. It is named after the holy city, where I think to have been a cradle of these two texts. The close similarities between the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin, and other Melkites polemical writings such as the “Triune” and the works of Theodore Abū Qurrah, the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin might have been produced in one of the Melkite monasteries in Judean desert around Jerusalem. I also have included the second letter of Leo in this group. The origin and authorship of this second letter remains in dispute. However, for it was contained in the NF 14 together with the first letter of Leo, being copied immediately after the first letter, it seems that both texts were written and circulated in the same milieu.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 496. Cf. Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 127. Gaudeul did not say that the Christian writer of the letter of Leo in Armenian might have been from the same city. However, if any Christian read ‘Umar’s letter and responded to it, it is still Hims that this Christian author was most likely to have lived.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, Ibn Taimīyyah wrote a reply to Paul’s letter to a *Muslim friend*, but he only read Paul through secondary revision. Cf. Griffith, “Paul.” 217.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Umar cites Leo’s claim that “Yas” and “Nast̄-hūr” have taught Muhammad (Gaudeul, “Correspondence,” 154). This may lead to the conclusion that the Armenian text might have been composed by, or at least went through the final touch of Melkites or Miaphysites. However, this passage may have been added later. The letter of Leo in Latin also claims that Muslims learned heretical Nestorian teaching in 322A, which seems to be a later insertion.

Even though the texts that belong to two groups have no direct relationship, all these letters of Leo and ‘Umar seem to have been composed in Arabic in the Syria-Palestine in the late eighth century. If we accept Hoyland’s claim that “a number of Leo-‘Umar/’Umar-Leo letters were composed in the course of the late eighth century, and that what has come down to us is a compilation from or rehashing of such works,”<sup>15</sup> then it is highly likely that the Armenian letter of Leo might have been composed in “Arabic,” a language both Christians and Muslims could read and reply. The traces of Greek *Vorlage* in the Armenian letter of Leo may be explained by the assumption that the extant Armenian letter is translated from Arabic via Greek.<sup>16</sup> As to the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin, it seems obvious from external and internal evidences that these texts were written by Melkites in the second half of the eighth century. On the paleographical ground, the extant Arabic letters of Leo seem to have been written in the late eighth to early ninth century. However, the extant texts seem to be a copy, which was compiled from the earlier two materials, written by the same author.<sup>17</sup> Thus the time of the composition may date earlier.

Did Leo and ‘Umar exchange letters in order to debate with each other on their respective faith? As many scholars have shown from the Muslim sources, the diplomatic contact between Leo and ‘Umar might have existed. As stated in chapter I, some Muslim sources account for ‘Umar’s sending envoys to Leo for the negotiation of exchange captives. However, it has to be considered that such diplomatic contact is not attested in any of Christian sources. The

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<sup>15</sup> See p. 64, n. 186 above.

<sup>16</sup> Palombo, “Correspondence,” 259.

<sup>17</sup> See section 4.5 in chapter II, 74-76.

connection between the release of Armenian captives with the negotiation between Leo and ‘Umar is unclear. Moreover, even if this contact is historical, that does not prove the historicity of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar concerning “religions.” It is true that there are Christian and Muslim writers who mentioned ‘Umar’s call to Leo to Islam and Leo’s reply to him. However, the Christian and Muslim writers who accounted for this event are limited in numbers, and as seen in the case of the Armenian and Muslim writers, some of them are depending on each other. Sometimes, the sources of these writers are not identified. There are similarities between sources but also exist discrepancies. Therefore, at this point, what I can say is that it is possible to say that Leo and ‘Umar may have exchanged letters for the purpose of discussing religions. If so, it must have been taken place sometime during 717-720, while ‘Umar reigned. The detailed content of their debates is unknown. As shown in the previous chapters, it is evident that the author of the extant letters of Leo and ‘Umar are not the emperor and the caliph, but anonymous Christian and Muslim writers.

If Leo and ‘Umar are not the authors of the texts ascribed to them, then who wrote these letters? This question remains unanswered, but here I will briefly present some relevant points. One may raise the possibility that the author of the letter of Leo in Armenian had some connection with the Byzantine Empire. Leo’s attitude toward the veneration of the icons or images in the Armenian text is noteworthy. Similar question can be asked in regard to the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin, both of which do not discuss the veneration of images or icons at all. However, Leo’s denial of or his backed-off attitude toward the veneration of icons or his silence on that topic may be due to more practical reasons. It is true that Theodore Abū Qurrah wrote a

long tract defending icon worshipping.<sup>18</sup> Yet in the eighth century, Christians began to avoid the veneration of icons in fear for their neighbor Muslims, who came to the church to pray.<sup>19</sup> The use of the legend of the Cross, which has been traditionally related to the Byzantine emperor Constantine and his mother, also may raise the question of the author's Byzantine connection. However, these legends are also widely known to Christians from the fourth century onwards. Moreover, there is no trace of Byzantine influence upon these texts. Even when Leo is presented as a defender of Christianity, the iconoclastic stance is never reflected in the Arabic and the Latin letters of Leo.<sup>20</sup>

Palombo suggests that the letter of 'Umar might have been composed by a Christian who wrote Leo's reply in Armenian and the Christian letter and the Muslim letter were circulated together as a pair. Her hypothesis is based on the observation of the language of the Arabic and Aljamiado letter of 'Umar, which shows the characteristics of Christian Arabic and the influence of Greek.<sup>21</sup> The use of Christian Arabic by a Muslim author may be explained by assuming that the author of the letter of 'Umar may have been a Muslim who converted from Christianity to Islam. This author, as did al-Tabarī at his age of seventy, may have converted late in his age, and therefore may not have sufficient knowledge of classical Arabic. Moreover, even though some of 'Umar's claim does not fit to Islamic doctrine,<sup>22</sup> the letter of 'Umar is well written, enough to be

<sup>18</sup> Griffith, *Holy Icons*.

<sup>19</sup> See Griffith, "Byzantine Orthodoxy," 189-90.

<sup>20</sup> Of course, not all Byzantines in the late eighth to early ninth century were followers of iconoclasm. For instance, Theophanes died in exile because of his iconophile stance. In the Arabic and Latin texts, Leo only defends the veneration of crosses, but does not discuss the veneration of icons or image, and relics of the saints. The motivation of this silence may vary: Leo might not have been interested in this topic or simply did not deal with it in his letters due to the limited length or it was not of his interests.

<sup>21</sup> Palombo, "Correspondence," 255-257. See also section 5.10 in chapter I.

<sup>22</sup> Palombo, "Correspondence," 253-254.

accepted by Muslims as the letter of the famous Caliph, and circulated among them and even translated and transmitted to Moriscos. If the author of the letter of ‘Umar was a Christian, then he might not have written the letter from the Muslim side so long and well. If the order of the themes in the Armenian letter of Leo and the letter of ‘Umar is same, it can be explained by assuming that a Christian writer answered ‘Umar point by point, having the letter of ‘Umar at hand. Yet, her observation is not to easily ignored on a linguistic ground and still shedding some light upon the authorship of the letter of ‘Umar. Therefore, the question on the identity of the author of the letter of ‘Umar would remain unanswered until more sources are discovered.

### *3. The letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin in the context of earliest Melkite anti-Muslim polemics*

After the death of Muhammad, the Islamic ‘Umma’ came to expand outside the borders of the Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean world. As a result of the success of Arab military campaign, already in the seventh century, most regions where Christians were the religious majority and co-existing with the Jews fell under Arab dominion. Christian reactions against the Arab expansion were well reflected in various sources including chronicles, histories, hagiographies, apocalyptic literatures and sermons. At the first stage of reactions, each Christian denomination showed different or somewhat opposite attitudes toward Arab invasions, describing Muhammad and Islam differently. Christians belong to the churches of the East and Miaphysite Christians regarded Arab conquest as God’s liberation for them from the persecution of Byzantine Empire, while Melkite Christians accepted it to be punitive. Muhammad was

described as the prophet of Arabs, or a “precursor of Antichrist”<sup>23</sup> and the new form of heresy.<sup>24</sup> Yet, regardless of their views, they considered it as “temporal,” and were confident that Christians would regain their power with aids of God.<sup>25</sup> However, as Muslim rule came to be recognized as solid reality, it brought about great changes in the lives of Christians in all aspects. Arabic replaced Greek, Coptic and Aramaic and came to be used as a new “lingua franca.”<sup>26</sup> The Muslim caliphate promoted Islam to non-Muslims by exempting religious taxation.<sup>27</sup> The pact of ‘Umar is probably one of the best examples to show the lower social status of non-Muslims.<sup>28</sup> As a result, rapid Arabization and Islamization have taken place. This came to be a great threat to Christians, especially church leaders, who had to cope against theological attacks of Muslims and the promotion of Islam by Muslim caliphate, and maintain their own religious communities.

In this circumstances, Christian writers felt necessity to confront with this new socio-religious and cultural challenges. It was Melkite writers living in the monasteries of Syria-Palestine who first took actions: while Aramaic and Coptic speaking Christians retained their language as late as tenth century, these Greek speaking Christians began to produce their literatures in Arabic from the eighth century.<sup>29</sup> Yet, most of the texts produced in the monasteries

<sup>23</sup> For different pictures of Muhammad in Christian sources, see Shoemaker, *Prophet*; Hoyland, “Muhammad”

<sup>24</sup> Tolan, “Reactions,” 197-199.

<sup>25</sup> Numerous researches have been done concerning this early “respond” of Christians against Arab expansion. For discussions and detailed bibliographies, see e.g. Griffith, *Shadow*, 23-44 and Tolan, “Reactions.”

<sup>26</sup> Circa 700, Arabic took place of Greek as the official language. See also n. 28 below.

<sup>27</sup> For instance, Theophanes, Michael the Syrian and the author of the *Syriac Chronicle of 1234* mention that ‘Umar II promoted Islam by exempting taxes from those who convert to Islam. Cf. Hoyland, *Theophilus*, 215-217.

<sup>28</sup> Pact of ‘Umar contains obligations and restrictions given to the *Dhimmis*, non-Muslims living under the protection of Muslims. For discussion on the date and authenticity of the Pact, see Cohen, “Pact”; Levy-Rubin, “Pact.”

<sup>29</sup> For the discussions on the language shift from Greek and Aramaic into Arabic, see Griffith, “Monks”; idem, “Greek into Arabic”; idem, “Aramaic.” For transition from Coptic into Arabic, see MacCoull, “Death”; Rubenson, “Translation.”

are translations from Greek and Syriac.<sup>30</sup> What is of importance relevant to this study is the apologetic works produced in the early Islamic period in Arabic, which reveal when and how Melkites began to respond to Islamization and Arabicization of the outside society. Of course it has to be noted that the earliest Melkite writer to refute against Islam, John of Damascus (d.c.750) composed in Greek<sup>31</sup>; but from the mid to the late eighth onward, the Melkite writers have developed their theology in Arabic with terminologies used in the Qur’ān. The earliest among the Christian apologetic works were written in Arabic during the eighth to tenth century, whose modern titles are: “On the Triune Nature of God,”<sup>32</sup> “Disputation between a Christian and a Muslim,”<sup>33</sup> the works of Theodore Abū Qurrah,<sup>34</sup> “Disputation of the Monk Abraham of

<sup>30</sup> Blau, “Melkite,” 14, “Most of the texts are translation from Greek and Syriac. Therefore, all the greater importance is to be attached to the few original works found among them, although some, if not all, give the impression of being, in the main, adaptations and compilation.”

<sup>31</sup> John’s two anti-Muslim apologies were written in Greek. However, he also might have known Arabic (See Sahas, *John*, 45-46). For his life and work, see also Janosik, “John.” John’s anti-Muslim tracts are chapter 101 of *De Haeresibus* and “A Disputation between a Christian and Muslim.” See Sahas, *John*; Newman, *Dialogue*, 137-162

<sup>32</sup> The “Triune” is the so far the oldest Christian Arabic apology which is now thought to have been written in the mid or late eighth century (For discussion on the date of composition, see Samir, “Apologie,” 91; Griffith, *Shadow*, 89, n.47). Gibson and Samir provide with the Arabic edition of this text with English translation, but none of these is complete (Gibson, *Triune*; Samir, “Apology.” Both Gibson’s and Samir’s editions are based on the single manuscript included in Sinai Ar. MS 154, this work is also preserved in BnF MS. Ar. 6725 in fragmentary form (see Vollandt, *Pentateuch*, 27). For more information of this work, see Swanson’s entry on this work in CMR vol. 1, 330-333.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Swanson, “Disputation”; Graf, “Disputationen.”

<sup>34</sup> Theodore Abū Qurrah is the first Christian writer to write in Arabic, whose name is known. He is a prominent figure in Christian Arabic literature in the early Islamic period, who also served as a bishop of Haran. For life and career of Abū Qurrah, see Lamoreaux, “Biography.” The literature attributed to him is wide: he composed large number of theological treatise and letters not only in Arabic but in Greek and Syriac as well. His works were translated into other languages including Georgian. Due to the limited length, I cannot list all of his works and modern studies dedicated on them. Probably the entry on “Theodore Abū Qurrah” by Lamoreaux in CMR vol.1 and “Theodore Abū Qurrah” in Orthodox Church, 60-89, 297-300 will be the best starting point.

Tiberius,”<sup>35</sup> “The Book of the Demonstration,”<sup>36</sup> “Summa Theologiae Arabica,”<sup>37</sup> and “Answers for the Shaykh.”<sup>38</sup>

It is out of the scope of this study to compare these texts with the letters of Leo in Arabic in detail, for the following reasons: First of all, we do not have critical edition of all of these works. For instance, the extant editions of the “Triune” are incomplete and the new critical edition is called for. Some works of Abū Qurrah are published only as a dissertation. Likewise, there exist manuscripts scattered in various libraries in the world, which were identified as a part of these treatise but remain unedited and unstudied. Therefore, more thorough studies of these texts will be made only after editions of works above will have been prepared.

Yet, despite of these problems, it seems still possible to observe similarities among these texts. The style and content of these texts show what the major theological issues were in the early Islamic period, and how the Christian-Muslim polemics have been shaped and developed in interactions with Muslims. Interestingly, these early apologetic writings share literary, linguistic and theological characteristics with the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin. Some of the shared aspects between several early Melkite apologies and the letters of Leo in Arabic and Latin have been already discussed in the chapter III.

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<sup>35</sup> For discussion of the content of this work and full bibliographical information on editions and studies, see two studies by Szilágyi, “Christian learning,” and “Abraham,” in *Orthodox Church*, 90-92, 300-301.

<sup>36</sup> See Cachia, *Eutychius* for Arabic edition, and Watt, *Eutychius* for English translation. The attribution to Eutychius, however, seems mistakeable. See Griffith, “Answers,” 282, n.18.

<sup>37</sup> For manuscript information and discussion on the authorship and date, see Griffith, “Summa.”

<sup>38</sup> For study of this work, see Griffith “Answers.”

(1) The authors of these texts do not make complicated arguments. In other words, their strategies were easy to understand for and acceptable to the audience without high level of intelligence. The author of the “Triune” and Leo use natural analogies to explain how the doctrine of Trinity can be compatible with Monotheism. Their argument is scripture based and their interpretations of the scripture were acceptable to those who are familiar to it. The Old Testament *testimonia*, which was earlier used to refute the Jews concerning the divinity of Christ, came to be used by the author of the “Triune” and the “Book of the Demonstration,” Leo and Theodore Abū Qurrah to defend Christian doctrine against Muslims.<sup>39</sup> It is noteworthy that these writers did not pay much attention to Muslim accusation of “falsification” or “alteration” against Christians and Jews. The Christian writers simply drew up verses out of their context and used them to make their arguments.

(2) There was strong Qur’ānic influence upon the Christian authors, and they used it through Christian reading of the Islamic scripture. They were well versed with the Qur’ān and used it in their own arguments to defend the validity of Christianity teachings. I have discussed this point in chapter III; thus only a few examples will be sufficient. The “Triune” opens with the eulogies written in expressions that remind its readers of the Qur’ān.<sup>40</sup> As for the case of Abū Qurrah, he used the Qur’ān “indirectly,” but what lie behind Abū Qurrah’s might have been quite noticeable for his readers who already have familiarity with the Qur’ān.<sup>41</sup> Leo’s use of Qur’ānic terminologies also stands out in his first letter; for instance, when he praises God, he frequently

<sup>39</sup> See discussion in 3.2.5 in chapter III.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Samir, “Apology,” 66-70.

<sup>41</sup> For the discussion on the influence of the Qur’ān upon the author of the “Triune” and Theodore Abū Qurrah, see Swanson, “Apologetics,” 117-123 and Griffith, “Qur’ān.”

uses the holy names of God of the Qur'ān. Leo also uses a number of Qur'ānic vocabularies and expressions.<sup>42</sup> The place of the Qur'ān in the “Answers for the Shaykh” is also firmly established, and the Qur'ān has the “primary authority” for its author.<sup>43</sup> From the fact that the Qur'ān is the foundation of Islamic teachings, no Christian writers would have been free from its influence. Yet, when these writers use the Qur'ān, they read the verses through their Christian eyes. For instance, Q 4:171 was always used as a Qur'ānic proof of the divinity of Christ. Christ is identified as the Word of God and His Spirit. The author of the “Triune” says, “And He propelled us towards Heaven, through Christ, His Word and His Spirit.”<sup>44</sup> He also said, “We do not separate God from his Word and his Spirit. God showed his power and his light in the Law and the Prophets, and the Psalms and the Gospel, that God and his Word and his Spirit are one God and one Lord.”<sup>45</sup> In his first Arabic letter and the Latin letter, Leo repeatedly says that the Word of God and His Spirit is in Christ, and therefore Christ is God. (e.g. 66v, 67r, 69r, 74v; 317A). The Islamic sacred history is also interpreted in Christian perspective, as a repetitive battle between God and the Satan over the descendants of Adam, which ended up with Christ’s incarnation.<sup>46</sup>

(3) There is a strong emphasis on the ability to perform miracles and wonders. When the authors of these works attempt to prove the truth of Christian teachings, they claim that

<sup>42</sup> See appendix II.

<sup>43</sup> Griffith, “Answers,” 303.

<sup>44</sup> Samir, “Apology,” 95. Samir points out that this expression is not “Christian,” for they never call Christ as “Spirit of God.” He regards this expression as “Qur'ānic.” See Samir, “Apology,” 95, n. 164.

<sup>45</sup> Gibson, *Triune*, 3 (English), 75 (Arabic). For this part is not included in Samir’s edition, I use Gibson’s version here.

<sup>46</sup> See discussion 3.6.5.2 in chapter III.

Christianity was accepted “peacefully” and “willingly,” only through the miracle and wonders performed by Christ and his disciples. Abū Qurrah repeatedly emphasizes this point in his tracts. He claims that the validity of Christianity is confirmed by the fact that the Gentiles accepted Christianity through the “signs and wonders” the disciples of Jesus performed with the aid of God.<sup>47</sup> In his other work, Abū Qurrah also claims that Christianity is only one true religion of God, because unlike other religions, Christianity was accepted by only through wonders, which can be performed with the divine aid.<sup>48</sup> When he discusses the “markers of the true religion,” he says that one of three characteristics of the true religion is that “the messengers God sends must be able to perform wonders and signs.”<sup>49</sup> The author of the “Triune” also mentions Christ’s aid for his disciples by Holy Spirit when they performed the miracles.<sup>50</sup> It is also mentioned by Leo in 82r-84r in the Arabic text.

Behind the emphasis on “miracles and wonders” lie two motivations. First, they praised Christianity as the religion of peace and refuted other religions as religions of violence and worldly affairs, either directly or indirectly. The non-violent and unworldliness character of Christianity is well shown when Abū Qurrah describes the preaching of Christ’s disciples, saying, “Rather, quite to contrary, they taught that the things of the world must be wholly abandoned.”<sup>51</sup> In his “On the Confirmation of the Gospel,” Abū Qurrah took four reasons why people accept faiths: “permissiveness, might, tribal zeal and the persuasion of vulgar mind.”

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<sup>47</sup> Lamoreaux, *Abū Qurrah*, 41-47, esp. 44.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 49-53.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., esp. 56.

<sup>50</sup> Samir, “Apology,” 105.

<sup>51</sup> Lamoreaux, *Abū Qurrah*, 43.

Then he says Christianity is the religion that is free of those four elements.<sup>52</sup> The same point is also emphasized in the “Triune,” saying that the disciples did not “fight” or “force” the people to accept their teachings, but it was the Jews and Pagans who fight against them.<sup>53</sup> Leo emphasizes the same point with clear language, when he says, “Therefore, when Christ came, he did not bring an army or a sword; rather he only commanded us <to live> a pure life in this world (70r)” and “Do not let power, wealth, or good health deceive you. All of these are like a dream that a person has when he is in sleep. But when he awakens from his sleep, he realizes that what he saw in his sleep is false, not belonging to this world and anything of it (78r).”

Second, by emphasizing the ability to perform miracles and wonders as a divine element, Christian authors denies the fundamental Islamic teaching that Jesus is not the Son of God, but the prophet of God who precedes the last of the prophet, Muhammad, the “seal” of the prophets. Christ is distinguished from the rest of the prophets, for he not only performed miracles for himself, but also gave his disciples authority and aid so that they might perform miracles. The following passages from the “Triune” and Leo’s Arabic letter show this. The same idea is expressed with similar expressions.

And likewise, the words of the disciples and the Good News about Christ reached the whole world and all nations, from east to west, from north to south. If Christ were not God from God, he would not have been able to do it, just as no one from the prophets could. The pronouncement about him and the worshipping of him reached out to all the nations (83r).

They never saw him nor did know who he was. But through his signs, which the apostles performed in the name of Christ, they came to know that he was God, and that no one could perform such signs except God, who empowered the apostles through the Holy Spirit (83v)... They (i.e., the apostles) spread out the word about him and led them (i.e., people) to the word about him and the worshipping of him (84r).

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<sup>52</sup> Lamoreaux, *Abū Qurrah*, 49.

<sup>53</sup> Samir, “Apology,” 103-104.

If the cause of Christ were not true, and if He were not God from God, the cause of the Apostles would not have been established, nor their teaching, and they would not have been able to guide the nations who had never worshipped God at all. But Christ supported the Apostles by the Holy Spirit, and they did all miracles. Thus, by this, they guided the nations to the light of God and His worship.<sup>54</sup>

(4) These works also show the socio-political circumstance in which Christians were living and the danger they faced when showing off their faith or arguing against Islam publicly. Probably such dangerous circumstance is the major reason of the anonymity of these texts or the ascription to historical figures. The monk Abraham decides to engage in debates with Muslims only when the Emir assures his safety from the potential threat caused by what he would say in the debates with Muslim theologians.<sup>55</sup> Such tension between Christians and Muslims is also well shown in the second letter of Leo in 88v:

And because of your rank and place in the law of Islam in which all people belong to, you have insulted <non-Muslims>. Also, because of your rank in the law of Islam, there is no justice in your speech about him (i.e., non-Muslim?), but only vexation and insolent act <with the power> which was given to you. No one can perceive the knowledge except with a humble heart and no one can receive the teaching save the forbearing one, who is willing to accept what he hears. As for the one who is in equal rank to yours in the Islamic law, the one who speaks <to him> cannot lead him from the morose look on his face, <when> he makes him feel offended with it (i.e., his words). Furthermore, <the teaching of> the religious schools of his cannot save him from the evil of his vexation and sudden burst of anger.

Based on the observations above, it will be reasonable and convincing to locate the Arabic and Latin letters of Leo as earliest Christian Arabic apologetics produced in Melkites. These texts may have been read by Muslims, but their primary audiences were, clearly Christians. As discussed in chapter III, Leo's arguments on various themes are not convincing to Muslims. As in the case of the "Triune," Leo's letters might have been produced by Melkite

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<sup>54</sup> The translation is from Samir, "Apology," 105.

<sup>55</sup> Newman, *Dialogue*, 284.

monks in the monastery of Mar Sabas or Mar Khariton and would have been transferred to the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai and preserved there up until today.

#### *4. Works remain unavailable*

Deeper understanding of the early stages of Melkite apologetics in Arabic will be possible when more complete edition of the works above will be available and new manuscripts are found and shed new light on current studies. As another portion of the “Triune” was found recently in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France,<sup>56</sup> and the manuscripts of other works are found scattered in the libraries in the world, there may be other manuscripts of the letters of Leo or of other early apologies which are still unknown to us. Additionally, there might be another early Melkite Arabic apology, whose existence is known but has not been studied. For instance, the first work of the NF 14, “Questions and answers on Orthodox faith,” which I have not included in this study, is also an early Melkite apology which might have been written in the early ‘Abbasid period. Based on the examination of the manuscript and the paleographical consideration, it seems that this work was copied together with the letters of Leo in the late eighth century. The argument the author makes and the vocabularies and expressions he uses are almost identical to those of Leo. In explaining the divinity of Christ, the author of the “Questions and answers on Orthodox faith” claims that the miracle and wonders that Christ performed is a sign of his divinity which distinguishes him from the rest of the prophets. Not only he performed the miracles, but he also gave his disciples authority and power to do the same and even more

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<sup>56</sup> See 309, n. 32 above.

than that (Cf. 58v-60r). Likewise, the way he cites the Qur'ān is similar to Leo and other early Melkite apologists. As Leo cites passages from the Qur'ān frequently, the author of the first work also uses Qur'ān in various passages. This author not only quotes verses from the Qur'ān, but also gives the name of the Sūrah. For instance, in 22r, the author cites the Qur'ān as follows:

والقرآن يشهد لي بذلك حيث يقول في سورة البقر واد قال ربك للملائكة اسجدوا لام فجسدوا الا ايليس ابا واستكير وكان من العاصبين فقال الله ما منعك ان تسجد لما خلعت وعصيت ام كنت من المستكبرين قال انا اخير منه خلقتني من نور وخلقه من الطين قال له ربها اخرج منها انك رجيم وعليك لعنتي الى يوم الدين

...and the Qur'ān testifies to me about that when it says, "When God said to His angels, 'Venerate Adam,' they venerated <him> but Iblīs. He refused <to do so>. He was arrogant and was of those who disobey. Then God said, "What prevents you from venerating <Adam>? Why do you refuse <to obey my command> and disobey, or <why> are you among the arrogant ones?" He (i.e., Iblīs) said, "I am greater than him (i.e., Adam). You created me from fire, but created him from clay." His Lord said to him, "Get out of it (i.e., paradise? heaven?). You are debased and my curse is upon you until the Day of Judgment."

The author says he is citing from the Sūrah Baqara, but the passage above is a conflation of Q 7:11-14 and Q 2:34. In fact, the dialogue between God and Iblīs, and Iblīs' claim of his superiority to Adam is taken from Q 7:11-14. Yet, this shows that the Christian writer freely used the Qur'ān to prove the validity of his claim. So far, no thorough work on this particular tract has been made to decide its close relationship with the letters of Leo in Arabic and other early Melkites polemical works. The more manuscripts become available, the more we will be able to understand why and how the earliest Christian apologists composed their works.

*Chapter V: The Questions yet to be answered and some preliminary remarks*

From chapter I to IV, I have discussed the emergence and development of the tradition of the correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar, and the origin and authorship of the letters ascribed to them. Yet, with regards to the transmission and translation of these texts, there are several questions that await answers. The extant letters of Leo and Umar were originally composed in Arabic, but they are now preserved also in translation. We have three versions of translations: the letter of Leo in Armenian and Latin, and the letter of ‘Umar in Aljamiado. Who made these translation and when were they translated? By whom were these texts moved from their place of origin, Syria-Palestine to Armenia and the West? Why were they read by Christians and Muslims in the West and what were the reactions of those who read them? In order to answer these questions, extensive studies concerning the cultural, political and religious interchanges between the East and the West will be needed.

It is out of the scope of this study to attempt to answer those questions. Yet, some literary evidences may shed light on the future study:

(1) Given the fact that Theodore Abū Qurrah traveled to Armenia for missionary activity,<sup>1</sup> it would not be unreasonable to think that there were interactions –be it theological controversies or mutual cooperation- between Christians in Syria-Palestine and Armenia. Probably, the letter of Leo may have been translated into Armenian, sometime around the late eighth to early ninth century, and then incorporated into the extant *Armenian History* by Ghevond himself or his later reviser. Yet, as for the further study on the transmission and translation history of the Armenian letter of Leo, I have to leave it to scholars of the field of Armenian history and literatures.

(2) Christians in the West were aware of the Qur’ān through the Latin translation done by Robert Ketton and Mark of Toledo in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> Not only the Qur’ān but various astrological, astronomical and medical works were also translated in Spain from the twelfth century. Toledo was well-known for this translation movement, but the translation works were done in other cities in Spain and Italy.<sup>3</sup> The translators in this period seem to have been interested in anti-Muslim works written in Arabic in the East. Several famous apologies were translated into Latin. The most widely known was the correspondence between al-Hāshimī and al-Kindī, which was translated in Toledo in the twelfth century, under the commission of Peter the Venerable. The extant Latin version of this correspondence is translated into Latin in Toledo

<sup>1</sup> That Abū Qurrah traveled to Armenia is reported by the tradition which goes back to Abū Raitah and Nonnus of Nisibis. See Keating, “Abū Raitah,” 568.

<sup>2</sup> For discussion on different translating methodologies adopted by Robert Ketton and Mark of Toledo and the results of such different approaches, see Burnan, “Exclusion,” Burman also gives more specific bibliographical information about the translating movement in the twelfth century Spain in 182, n.2.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Burnett, “Translators,” 62-63; Griffith, *Shadow*, 127-128. Peter the Venerable of Toledo was an important figure in this translation movement in Toledo. See Kritzeck, *Peter*.

in 1142 from Arabic and included in the anti-Islamic theological collection called *Corpus Cluniacense*.<sup>4</sup> Though it is a translation which contains several problems, the Latin version is the oldest recension of this correspondence. The extant Arabic or Garshūnī version of this works are from later period, mostly preserved in the manuscript copies in the nineteenth century or even later.<sup>5</sup> The account of the famous debate between Timothy I and the caliph al-Mahdi was also known and accessible for Europeans in the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century. And although no literary evidence is found, another famous anti-Muslim tract, “Debate of Abraham of Tiberias” was also circulated in Spain.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these texts, other anti-Muslim apologetics written in the East, having been moved from the East to Spain by “oriental Christians,” seem to have influenced the development of interreligious polemics of Mozarab Christians of Spain.<sup>7</sup>

If the letter of al-Kindī and al-Hashimī was read in its Latin version in the twelfth century Spain, and the debates of Timothy with al-Mahdi and other early Christian polemics against Muslims were already known to Christians in the Latin West, then it would never be surprising that the letters of Leo also drew their interests. Considering that Leo III was a famous figure for Christians in the West, his anti-Muslim letter written to another famous figure, the Muslim Caliph ‘Umar II would have gained much attention. Although nothing can be said with certainty, the extant Latin version of the letter of Leo might have been translated into Latin by an unknown

<sup>4</sup> For the Latin edition of *Corpus Cluniacense* with brief introduction, see Di Cesare, *Pseudo-historical*, 83-140.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Koningsveld, “Al-Kindī.”

<sup>6</sup> Burnan, *Mozarabs*, 96-97. Burnan gives detailed discussion on the Mozarab manuscript of the “Debate of Abraham of Tiberias,” in 96, n. 7.

<sup>7</sup> See ibid., 97-124, and esp. 97-98.

translator, sometime in the twelfth to fourteenth century in Toledo or Lyon, where it was first published. Once translated into Latin, it was published by Champier, included in his *De Triplici*. As said in chapter I, Champier's alleged credential as a translator of the extant Latin text is in dispute. After Champier published his book, this tract was taken separately from the book and included in various patristic collections, and probably widely read by Christians in the West.

(3) The fate of Muslims living in Spain during and after the Reconquista may be compared to that of Christians living in the East after the rise of Islam. Albeit that there are also some differences, by and large, the religious and socio-political status of these Muslims living in the Christian Spain and their reactions to the situation are similar in many ways to those of Christians in the East in the first three Islamic centuries.<sup>8</sup> What is most relevant to this study is that, like Christians in the East, these Muslims were also involved in religious polemics. Like Christians living in the *Dar al-Islam*, Muslims who were co-existing with dominant Christians and the Jews in Spain might have felt a necessity to defend theological attacks from the Christians and keep their religious identity. The language shift also occurred. As Arabic became a new lingua franca and took the place of Syriac and Greek among Christians living in the East in the early Islamic period as they began to write in Arabic, the decline of the use of Arabic and Latinization also took place among Muslims living in Christian Spain.<sup>9</sup> That the Aljamiado manuscript, *BNM 4944* contains anti-Jewish and anti-Christian tracts together with the letter of

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<sup>8</sup> For general discussion on the circumstances of the Muslims in the Christian Spain and their reaction to the situation, see Chejne, *Islam*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 19, 181 (notes), and 47-50, 186-187 (notes). When Aljamiado has first emerged and came to be used is still controversial. The important figure in the history of Aljamiado is Yça Gidelli, also known as Yça of Segovia, the translator of the Arabic Quran into Aljamiado. Cf. Wiegers, *Yça*, 16-28. The motivation of the production of the Aljamiado texts, see Barletta, *Convert*, 133-155, 176-77 (notes).

‘Umar shows such Muslim interests in inter-religious polemics.<sup>10</sup> Yet this does not explain how, when and by whom the letter of ‘Umar was moved to Spain and translated into Aljamiado. What we know is that there were connections in literary culture between Muslims in Christian Spain and the Muslims living in the Muslim ruled Spain and the East, and that many Arabic works were translated into Aljamiado.<sup>11</sup> Like the letter of Leo in Latin, the alleged authorship of ‘Umar may have drawn attention of Moriscos, mostly because of ‘Umar’s reputation as a pious Muslim caliph. As did the Christians in the West, the Moriscos translated the original Arabic work into Aljamiado, and then included it with other religious polemics.

### *3. The place of the Leo-‘Umar religious correspondence in the Christian-Muslim interreligious dialogue*

So far, I have been focusing on the study of the Leo-‘Umar religious correspondence from the historical and literary perspectives. Now I would like to add a few words about the place of this correspondence between Leo and ‘Umar in the modern interreligious dialogue.

Does the study of medieval Christian “apologetic texts” contribute to the interreligious dialogue between Christians and Muslims of the modern age? As discussed in the previous chapters, the letters of Leo and ‘Umar are basically “apologetics,” written to be read by those of their own religious people and to make them sufficiently be equipped with the knowledge of their own faith in order to be ready to answer the refutations against others. Yet, even though

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<sup>10</sup> The letter of Leo is the last of the anti-Chrsitian works included in BNM 4944. For the content of the other works in BNM 4944, see Chejne, *Islam*, 85-95, 194-197 (notes); Aparicio, “Dusputa.”

<sup>11</sup> Wiegers, *Yçā*, 12; Chejne, *Islam*, 47, 186-187 (notes).

apologetics they are, they still can contribute to interreligious dialogues. As pointed out by scholars of modern interreligious dialogues, the polemics are not different from dialogues, but there is correlation between them. While apologetics are written in one's own position, interreligious dialogue is made in the perspective of the other. In order to defend oneself, one also has to know about the other.<sup>12</sup> If we apply this logic to the authors of the letters of Leo and 'Umar, the authors of both sides needed to have some knowledge about the teachings and practices of their counterparts to teach their audiences how to defend themselves from the refutation from their religious counterpart. Such is well reflected in the letters of Leo and 'Umar, which defend their faith not only in their own religious traditions but also through the eyes of their respective interlocutors. In sum, Leo and 'Umar composed "apologetic texts" but they were still participating Christian-Muslim interreligious dialogue by composing apologetic texts to be in conversation with each other.

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<sup>12</sup> For discussion on the role of apologetics and polemics in the interreligious dialogue, see Valkenberg, "Aquinas"; idem, "Polemics."

## *Appendix I: English translation of the Latin letter of Leo*

### *Preliminary remarks:*

The English translation in this study is based on the version included in *PG* 108. As mentioned in the chapter I, the *PG* version has several textual problems, such as misunderstanding of abbreviations, misinformation about the history of the text, and wrong ascription to Leo VI. All these errors were corrected based on the original text of Champier's included in his *De Triplici Disciplina*, which was reproduced later in the series of Kessinger Publishing's Legacy Reprints.<sup>1</sup> Both texts are almost identical, saving for several passages. In such case, I used the *PG* version as a base text and indicated Champer's version in notes. The version used in this study is not paginated. The letter of Leo begins in the middle of the book.

The division of sections and subsections, and the titles given to each section and subsection are from me. As in the case of the Arabic letters of Leo, some titles may be changed and substituted with better ones in the future. The indication of sections, e.g. 315A, 315B, etc. is taken from the *PG* version. The numbering of the sections in the translation corresponds to the section numbers used in the chapter III.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, visit [www.kessinger.net](http://www.kessinger.net)

## *The Latin letter of Leo to ‘Umar*

### *1. Opening*

#### *1.1. Authorship and note*

The letter of Emperor Leo directed to ‘Umar, the king of Saracens.<sup>2</sup> Here, the letter was translated from Greek into Chaldean language. Now, in favor of God, we translate it from Chaldean language into Latin, according to the character of discussion.<sup>3</sup>

#### *1.2. Doxology*

(315A) Glory to God, and manifold action of whose graces surpasses heavens, reaching to those things pleasing to Him, and penetrating His hidden things;<sup>4</sup> He is bountifulness and mercy on His servants. There is no one besides him. He is the height, the greatness, the power and the reign, embracing all. We believe in one God, to whom none is similar, nor is there any other beside Him.

### *2. The questions of ‘Umar*

#### *2.1. Jesus is not the Son of God, but His prophet*

Then, among other things, you asked me about Christ, Son of Mary, why we adore him, while he himself testified about himself, saying that he was sent by God, and whoever confesses

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<sup>2</sup> PG provides a different title: “From August Emperor Leo called the Philosopher to ‘Umar, the commander of the Saracens. The wrong ascription to Emperor Leo VI is from the editor of the PG. Then the subtitle follows: “On the truth of Christian faith, and mysteries, various heresies and blasphemies of the Saracens.” This subtitle is found only in the PG, and was not included in the original work of Champier.

<sup>3</sup> For English translation of this particular passage, also see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 497.

<sup>4</sup> Probably an allusion to Q 2:33.

him will confess the one who sent him in his presence.” Also, when he was ascending to heaven, he said to his disciples, “I am ascending to my Creator and your Creator, and to my God and your God.”<sup>5</sup>

### *2.2. The alteration of the scriptures by Ezra*

(315B) You also say that, since the Law of Moses has been burnt in fire, and the prophet Ezra has restored it, as his heart was able to recall, not without falsity. And there was no mention of resurrection, or paradise, or hell.

### *2.3. Adam and Jesus are same to God as human beings: he ate and slept*

And you also said that before God Christ is like Adam. And Christ ate, slept just as Adam did. Nevertheless, it is nothing but only your lack of knowledge about Christ that leads you to this.

### *2.4. Mary, the mother of Jesus is Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses*

And I also know that you say, “Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses gave birth to Christ.”

## *3. Leo’s answers*

### *3.1. On Mary*

How can this be? She died after they left Egypt and went out to the desert -And none of them could enter into the Promised Land- long before Mary, the Mother of Christ and her father,

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. John 20:17, “I am ascending to my Father and to you Father, to my God and to your God.”

(315C) Joachim, were born. In fact, Mary, the sister of Aaron and Moses was from the family of Levi, the son of Jacob. Mary, the mother of Christ, was in fact, the daughter of Joachim, the descendent of David, who was from the family of Judah, the son of Jacob.

### *3.2. On the Divinity of Christ*

#### *3.2.1. Introduction*

However, if you want to know about Christ, so that knowledge of him might come to you, without any uncertainty being in you, (316A) examine the Old Testament that God gave to the children of Israel, Moses and David, His prophets. And also search out the new law, which is the Gospel, which has been given to us by Christ's apostles. And then you shall find the truth about Christ and the right way to him, to the point that there would not be any uncertainty in you, since you will see the scripture giving testimony concordant with itself to Christ, which is in the New and the Old Testament, and then you will truly know Christ. We will make you a knower of our faith, how we worship him, and what kind of teaching we lay, and you will understand, if God be pleased, giving you testimonies from the New and Old Testament that what we say about Christ we say truly, according what I have informed you; weigh and examine until you know.

#### *3.2.2. The oneness of God: the first analogy of the fire that appeared to Moses*

(316B) Know that after God made heavens and earth in the beginning –Exalted be His name- and the great light of heavens and earth, which knowledge of mortal ones cannot grasp it as a whole, He appeared to Moses in fire at Mount Sinai, in the word from light: through that he said, “Do not fear, Moses. I am your Lord God, your Creator, light from light, Word of the

Father, out of both of whom the Holy Spirit proceeded.” And therefore we say, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, light from light, the Word of God, for they are one, no separate between them, and for the Word of light proceeded from the light and the Holy Spirit proceeded from the light.

### *3.2.3. The omnipresence of God: God is everywhere; the second analogy of the Sun*

And for He is neither little in the small place, nor great in the multiple places, but He is everywhere. (316C) Consider the Sun in which are rays and light. Can you not see it is still one thing?<sup>6</sup> How much more so God who made the Sun and everything within the heavens and earth? Through light and Word, which is Himself, all things were made, and the Word itself is His Son. But do not fear to speak of the Word of God as the Son of God, because (317A) God the Father is His Word, and where the Word of God is, there is God. Because the Word of God is from God and the Holy Spirit is from God; and whatever the Word wills, He does, and what the Holy Spirit wills, He does, and whatever the Father wills, He does, and there are one God. We neither make division between them nor do we speak of gods, for there is nothing similar to Him, remaining in perpetuity as holy reign. Father is not generated, the Son is generated, and the Holy Spirit is neither negated nor ingenerated.

### *3.2.4. Testimonies from the Old Testament*

Moreover, it is necessary for us to provide testimonies from the prophets of God, Blessed be He, that He has called Christ the Word His Son. And through the Word that proceeded from

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Latin: aequalis est?

the light He founded the heavens and earth and everything in them. Moses said, “God created everything through Word.”<sup>7</sup> (317B) David <said> in Psalm, “Through the Word of the Lord, heavens were established.”<sup>8</sup> And elsewhere <he said>, “In heaven, oh Lord, your Word remains firm for eternity,”<sup>9</sup> and also, “He sent <His> Word,”<sup>10</sup> and so forth.<sup>11</sup> Job said about the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of the Lord made me.”<sup>12</sup> Moses <said>, “The Spirit of God was brought over the waters.”<sup>13</sup> Isaiah <said>, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, through which He anointed me.”<sup>14</sup> David <said>, “Send your spirit,”<sup>15</sup> and so forth.<sup>16</sup> Also, “Your good spirit will lead me,”<sup>17</sup> and so forth,<sup>18</sup> and “renew a right spirit within my bowels.”<sup>19</sup> These are the testimonies from the Old law, that the Word and the Spirit which are from God, created all creatures. It is also necessary for us to mention the testimony which God called His word His son. (317C) Isaiah said, “A Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son,”<sup>20</sup> and so forth.<sup>21</sup> And also, <Isaiah said>, “A child is born for us, and a son is given to us.”<sup>22</sup> Also, God the Father <said> to David, “After you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up from your body he who will sit on the throne of Israel. As for me, I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me.”<sup>23</sup> David <said> in

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Genesis 1.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 32:6.

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 118:89.

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 106:20.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Latin: et coetera. This Latin phrase has been written in abbreviated form in *De Triplici Disciplina*, and PG understood it as “et contra,” which does not fit to the context.

<sup>12</sup> Job 33:4.

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 1:2.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 61:1.

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 103, 30.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Latin: et coetera.

<sup>17</sup> Psalm 142:10.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Latin: et coetera.

<sup>19</sup> Psalm 50:12.

<sup>20</sup> Isaiah 7:14.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Latin: et coetera.

<sup>22</sup> Isaiah 9:6.

<sup>23</sup> 2 Samuel, 7:12-14.

Psalms, “The Lord said to me,”<sup>24</sup> and so forth.<sup>25</sup> Zacharias said, “Rejoice and be glad, o daughter of Zion, cry out, o daughter of Jerusalem, because your gentle king is coming to you, sitting on a son of donkey; he will declare peace to gentiles, just for he is Christ.”<sup>26</sup>

Also, it is necessary for us to cite testimony from the law of God, because Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary is God from God. When he was at the end of his life, Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, blessed his sons and prophesied about them, (317D) saying to his son, Judah, “You are a lion’s whelp. There will not be lacking from your body neither leader nor prince until he will come, who would be the hope of the nations, who is Christ himself.”<sup>27</sup> Jeremiah the prophet <said>, “Behold! Our God, to whom there is no one similar, is the one who finds all the way of knowledge. And after these things, He will be seen upon the earth, will converse with men.”<sup>28</sup> Also, “God will certainly come; He will come and He will not delay.”<sup>29</sup> (318A) Isaiah <said>, “They will walk behind you, they will travel bound in irons, and they will adore you and petition you, for you are God and there is no other besides you, God of Israel, the Savior; confounding your enemies, they depart in confusion.”<sup>30</sup> Also, David <said>, “God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there was anyone who is considering or seeking God. They have all gone astray; together they have become useless. There is no one who does good deeds; there is not even one.”<sup>31</sup> And also <David said>, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.”<sup>32</sup> Moses said about the passion

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<sup>24</sup> Psalm 109:1, “Dixit Dominus Domino meo.”

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Latin: et coetera.

<sup>26</sup> Zechariah 9:9.

<sup>27</sup> Genesis 49:9-10.

<sup>28</sup> Baruch 3:36-38.

<sup>29</sup> Habakkuk 2:3.

<sup>30</sup> Isaiah 45:14-16.

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 13:2-3.

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 109:1.

of Christ, “You will see your life hanging before your eyes, and you will not believe.”<sup>33</sup> David <said>, “They have pierced by hands and feet. They have numbered all my bones. They divided (318B) my garments among them, and over my vestment, they cast lots.”<sup>34</sup> Isaiah <said>, “A man can bear a blow, because his face is hidden, and because of this, we will not esteem him [sic]. Truly, he had taken away our weakness, and he himself has bore our sorrows.”<sup>35</sup>

### *3.2.5. Testimonies from the New Testament*

These are the testimonies that he is God from God. John <said>, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word.”<sup>36</sup> Gabriel <said to Mary>, “The Holy Spirit will come down upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”<sup>37</sup> Paul <said>, “The Holy Spirit searches all, and knows the hidden things of God.”<sup>38</sup> John <said>, “We do not receive the spirit of slavery, but spirit which is from God”<sup>39</sup>; also, “If anyone does not have Spirit of Christ, he is not his (i.e. Christ’s).”<sup>40</sup>

These are testimonies from the New Testament that Christ is Son of God. (318C) Gabriel <said> to Mary, “Behold! You shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.<sup>41</sup> He will save his people from their sins.”<sup>42</sup> Paul <said>, “God sent His Son, born of a woman, formed under the law so that he might save those who have gone astray under the law.”<sup>43</sup> John

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<sup>33</sup> Deuteronomy, 28:66.

<sup>34</sup> Psalm 21:17-19.

<sup>35</sup> Isaiah, 53, 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>37</sup> Luke 1:35.

<sup>38</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:10.

<sup>39</sup> Romans 8:15.

<sup>40</sup> Romans 8:9.

<sup>41</sup> Luke 1:31.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew 1:21.

<sup>43</sup> Galatians 4:4-5.

<said>, “He who believes in the Son of God will have eternal life. But he who does not believe in him, shall not see eternal life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.”<sup>44</sup> Paul <said>, “One God, Son of God through whom all things were made.”<sup>45</sup> Peter <said>, “You are Christ, the Son of the living God.”<sup>46</sup> Gabriel <said to Mary>, “Hail, Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you. The Holy Spirit will come down upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And the one who will be born from you will be called Holy, the Son of God.”<sup>47</sup> Also, Christ <said> in the Gospel, “I am the light of the world, I came from the Father, and to Him I will be returning. I am the resurrection and the life. (318D) Whoever sees me sees the Father. I and the Father are one.”<sup>48</sup> Paul <said>, “The world will be enlightened from Judah.” And again, “God shall ascend over heaven, over His holy seat, looking down on earth in order that he might see those who are bound by obligation, whom Satan have obliged in transgression.”<sup>49</sup>

### *3.2.6. Testimony from the Qur’ān*

Moreover, you have it in your law that the angel (319A) said to Zachariah, “Behold! I announce to you that a son will be born to you, who will go before the Word of God. And that Word himself will be called by his name, Messiah.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> John 3:36.

<sup>45</sup> Colossians 1:16.

<sup>46</sup> Matthew 16:16. The same testimony on the divinity of Christ is also given in John 11:27, in the conversation between Jesus and Martha.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. John 1:28, 35.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. John, 8:12, 16:28, 20:17, 11:25, 12:45, 10:30.

<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, there is no reference of these two verses in the letters of Paul. See also Khoury’s explanation in “Leon,” 215.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Q 3:39, 45.

### *3.3. The sacred history and the necessity of Incarnation*

#### *3.3.1. The corruption of angels*

You might ask (lit. it may be inquired by you) that why God wished to send the Son in the womb of Virgin: since God, Blessed be He and Holy be His name, created heavens and earth and everything in them, and created His angels. In their primal condition, they were around the throne. And suddenly, a swelling up of pride entered into one of the regions of angels, and they were making themselves like God, saying: “Let us set up for us a seat as it is God’s seat, and enclose (take over?) heaven and earth, just like God.” When God had recognized their thought, He casted down Satan and all of his regions from heavens to earth; and they became demons and the enemies of the children of Adam.<sup>51</sup>

#### *3.3.2. Disobedience of Adam and his fall*

And when God had made Adam, (319B) He put him in paradise, saying to him, “Eat everything you want. But from this tree which I forbid you, do not eat! On the day when you eat from it, you will die.”<sup>52</sup> <But> tempted by devil, Adam ate from it; and he was expelled from paradise, and became a heir to death, contradiction and transgression in his progenies after him.

#### *3.3.3. Noah’s ark and the flood*

<But> wishing to take his creature away out of the hand of the devil, He directed Noah to His people so that they might repent and withdraw from the works of the devil. When he had come to them, they showed him contempt and convicted him of being a liar. Therefore, as a

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<sup>51</sup> Isaiah 14:12-15.

<sup>52</sup> Genesis 2:17-18.

result, God instructed Noah to make an ark and put all creatures in it. And God sent the flood. The springs of the abyss and the floodgates of heavens were opened. And water was poured out. All inhabitants on earth and everything that (319C) were moving upon it were wiped away, except for Noah who was in the ark, and his wife, the family of his sons and their wives. After all these things, having pitied on those which He had made, God commanded water to go back. And people and animals came out of the ark, and God blessed them and said, “Increase and multiply, and fill the earth.”<sup>53</sup>

#### *3.3.4. The idolatry of people and the Law of Moses*

Afterward, men, tempted by devil, made sculpted gods, adoring them as the God who had made them. And God, wanting to take them away out of the hand of the devil who had corrupted them, soon came down in power over the Mount Sinai; He spoke to his servant Moses, and gave him the law, electing the children of Israel among all people.

#### *3.3.5. The idolatry of people and God’s punishment*

Afterwards, the children of Israel, abandoning what God had given to Moses, made a graven image for them, (319D) adoring them as if living God. Immediately, He sent serpents upon them and He consumed some of them. And then He had pity upon them. Likewise, due to the temptation by the devil, He sent fire, and killed many of them;<sup>54</sup> then He had pity upon them, he took His wrath away from them. Also, they made idols for themselves, adoring them like

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<sup>53</sup> Genesis 8:17.

<sup>54</sup> Numbers 11:1.

God, sacrificing their sons and daughters to demons.<sup>55</sup> God raised up prophets encouraging them to do repentance, and to return to God and to leave from the devil. They (i.e. people who worshipped idols) refused and called them liars and <even> killed some of them.

### *3.3.6. The necessity of incarnation and the coming of Christ*

However, <when> God had seen that the devil was prevailing among them, because of what Adam had done and was expelled from paradise, and that they killed the prophets, wanting to take them away from the dominion of the hosts, He sent His Word to (320A) Mary whom He had chosen. The Word of God took human form, taking flesh from Mary along with mind and soul. This very Word of God, who was from God, inhabited in his own body, without separation from it in perpetuity. If it was not that body which he put on, no one could see the Word of God, just as Moses had not been able to see the Word of God. The Word of God came, putting on the body from Mary, and saved his people from the dominion of devil. Without any doubt, the Word which Mary had begotten; this is the one whose name is Messiah and God, who was before the annunciation came to Mary, and took body from Mary. This is God, and it is [due to] dullness in you that you will not understand.

### *3.3.7. How humanity and divinity were in Christ*

(320B) Again you wrote to me, saying, “Because he said, ‘I was sent to you,’ and he ate, drank and slept.” But now I shall show you that there were two operations and two expressions in Christ: one, that of the Word, and the other, that of the body which he took from Mary. This is

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<sup>55</sup> Psalm 105:37.

a Perfect Body, having mind and soul. When along with the Father he created everything; this is the work of the Word. When he was in the body he forgave sins, raised up the dead, and did other such things; this is the work of the body. But you, ignoring the works of the Word, follow only the work of the fleshly body which he took from Mary, which was from Adam. Because of that reason, you say that Christ is like Adam, for he ate and slept. And that is what of those who do not know about Christ nor do study the law of God as well. And according to your view (320C), the Jews, knew about Christ, and they persecuted him, arrested him and crucified him. And they spoke blasphemy against Mary, his mother, <saying that> was disgrace of chastity for her.

### *3.4. On the veneration of Christ*

#### *3.4.1. The veneration of the Ark of Covenant and ancient Israelites and the veneration of Christ of Christians*

And you also say why we adore Christ, the Word of God. Is it not found in the law of God that the children of Israel adored the Ark of the Covenant which God had instructed to Moses to make? Nevertheless, they neither adored nor served the Ark of the Covenant nor wood, but they adored and served the law and word of God which was in the Ark of the Covenant. For this reason, they were not going astray from God nor should they be judged to venerate two gods.

### *3.4.2. Angels prostrated to Adam*

Again, you say that it is to be found in your law that God commanded His angels to adore Adam.<sup>56</sup> If it is something to be believed, then what would you think about the Word, who is named Messiah?

### *3.4.3. Refutation against cult of the black stone of Kaba*

(320D) Isn't it better to adore him than the deaf rock you are adoring, just as they adored Iaoth, Jaoc, Nazara, Allac, Allogery and Mena? Some of them were gods in the form of men and others were of women. Higher ones among them were called Alcubre, and from which the word Alacuiber was derived.<sup>57</sup> Some among you are sacrificing sheeps and camels on one day in every single year, having followed the custom of pagans over that stone in Mekka, at the corner of that house of the idolatries, to which pagan ancients served and sacrificed.

### *3.5. On the natural birth of Christ from the Virgin with the analogy of the Sun*

You also said, Christ and Adam are the same before God. And you posit him 'a creation out of dust,' who went opposed to his God and did not keep His commandment, same to the Word of God and His light, (321A) who was not made, but through whom all things were made; and he is Messiah, whose reign exists eternally. You are questioning how could God enter into a womb of a woman, which is dark, narrow and fetid. But perhaps you will understand, if we give

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<sup>56</sup> Q 2:34.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. PG: Aleubre. Jeffery reads it "Alcubre," instead of "Aleubre" as indicated in PG version, saying, "If we can suppose Aleubre to be a misprint for Alcubra, then the two words may be the two superlative, masc. and fem. *al-kubrā* and *al-akbar*, 'the greatest,' used in titles of the original male and female deity of the shrine, i.e. the Hubal and 'Uzzā whom we learn figured together in pagan Meccan war-cry.' see Jeffery, "Correspondence," 302, n.52. For further discussion on these names of pre-Islamic deities, see chapter III.

you an example. Do you not see that the Sun moves over uncleanness, dung and festering things, but nevertheless it is not polluted, but cleanses all; how much more God, who made the Sun, would not be polluted from creature? Don't be unbelieving that God would not go into a womb of a woman, who went in a fiery bush on Mount Sinai and spoke to His servant, Moses, and gave him the law. Is it not that the body of the Virgin is better than that fiery thorn-bush?

### *3.6. On the alteration of the scriptures by Ezra*

But you said that the Law of Moses was destroyed by fire, and that (321B) Ezra recalled it by memory incorrectly, and there was no mention about resurrection, or eternal life, or paradise. Now I will prove it you, if God wills! God, Blessed be He, sent His revelations to His prophets and every prophet spoke through the revelation of God; and He gave the law to Moses, in which the commandment for the children of Israel, their exodus from Egypt, numbering, contradiction, and the disdain of God over them were written. And it is written how He created all, the recollecting of the kings, and how He exalted them and humiliated them. And He revealed Psalms to David his servant, wisdom to Solomon, and prudence to His beloved Job and to Daniel. And we believe resurrection, paradise, and hell, and we find them written in the Old Testament (321C) by Ezra, to whom God revealed; and he wrote them fully. And just what God gave Moses His prophet, so did Ezra declare, and he did not skip anything. Because there is neither falsehood nor oblivion in the prophecy of God, since God is the revelation to them.

### *3.7. On the Eucharist*

#### *3.7.1. The true sacrifice*

You wrote to me about sacrifice –what it is- and that you could not find anyone among the servants of God who offers sacrifice. At the beginning, two sons of Adam offered, but what was accepted was from one of the two. The true sacrifice is beyond people, and whoever offers to him <with faithful> intention<sup>58</sup> is accepted by God, except for the sacrifice which offered to idols. For truly, those who offer [to idols], they were corrupted and were gone astray.

#### *3.7.2. The last supper*

At the night when the passion began, Christ said to his disciples about what the Jews would do to him,<sup>59</sup> and about resurrection and their running away, (321D) and he announced their turning back to him.<sup>60</sup> And yet, at that night, he was eating with disciples, taking bread and blessed it and said, “Take and eat! This is my body which is given up for you.”<sup>61</sup> Also, taking a chalice, he said, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood which is offered for the forgiveness

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<sup>58</sup> The Latin text runs as follows: Scripsisti mihi de sacrificio quid esset, et quod non reperires quemquam de servientibus Dei qui obtulerit sacrificium. Primitus, duo filii Adae obtulerunt, et acceptum est ab uno. Sacrificium veritatis est super hominess, et acceptum Deo, et aedificatio ei quicunque obtulerit: excepto sacrificio quod idolis offertur: per enim illud offerunt, alleni sunt et perdit.

This passage discusses the true sacrifice to God. It is difficult to understand the word “aedificatio.” Probably it is a translation from the word بنيَةَ which can be read either as a one word and translated into a structure or a building or as a word بنيَةَ with preposition بِ meaning “with intention or will.” It seems that Latin translator did not understand this passage correctly. This passage corresponds to the passage on sacrifice in the first Arabic letter of Leo in 72r, which says, “... رفع لمن يقربه بنية صادقة ... He benefits the one who offers with good intention.” Both passages discuss the common theme of the true sacrifice, but difficult to read.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Matthew 20:17-19, 16:21; Mark, 9:31, 10:33-34; Luke 9:22, 18:31-33.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:33-35; Mark 14:29-31; Luke 22:33-34.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19.

of sins.”<sup>62</sup> And he ordered us to do the same, so that it might be for us the remission of sins, for whomever among us, [since] we will offer it in faith and love. It is right to believe this sacrifice, not the one you claim you have in your law.

### *3.7.3. The “Manna” from heaven*

When the disciples said to the Son of God, “Ask God so that He might send us Manna from heaven,” Christ said, “Fear, God, if you are believers.” The disciples said, “We wish to eat from it and we believe you and we know that (322A) you had spoken truth to us, and we testify that you are Christ, God. Send Manna from heaven, so that it might be a solemn feast for us and a sign from you to those who will come after us. Grant us these things, for you are a giver of gifts.” And God said, “I will send it to you; after that if anyone denied, he would be tortured with the torment with which no one was tortured before.”<sup>63</sup> However, these words were of someone of Nestorian heresies, without understanding about Christ well, who taught you as if you might understand all about the faith of Christ, but he did not show reason or truth to you.

## *3.8. On the veneration of the Cross of Christ*

### *3.8.1. Christ’s crucifixion*

Since you have asked me about Christ,<sup>64</sup> now I shall give you knowledge of him. On the day when Christ was crucified, there were two robbers with him (one on the right side and the

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24; Luke 22:20-21.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Q 5:112-115, however, the Quranic passage is far different from the way that it was cited here. It is also noteworthy to remind that the similar passage is given in the first Arabic letter of Leo, being cited from the Quran 5:112-115, but with different interpretation. Moreover, the Arabic text is more accurate in citing, while the Latin text seems to have been corrupted or altered with intention. The name of Nestorians also does not appear in the Arabic letter.

<sup>64</sup> PG: Quod de Christo [f. de cruce] a me quaeſisti...

other on the left),<sup>65</sup> and soon he sent out the spirit. (322B) Immediately, the earth trembled, the Sun was obscured, and some Jewish leaders who were present there felt great fear on account of those crosses.<sup>66</sup>

### *3.8.2. Hiding of the Cross*

And in order to hide the truth from people, they hid them (i.e. crosses) under the ground. Therefore, no one knew <where these crosses were hidden> except for one man. And during his lifetime, he did not tell about this to anyone. But when he was about to die,<sup>67</sup> he revealed <the truth> to someone who was close to him, saying, “When you will be asked about the cross, look at the place and you shall be sure.”

### *3.8.3. Vision of Constantine*

Yet, when Christ wanted to expose the error of the Jews to the people, he revealed the finding of the Cross to Emperor Constantine, who was not Christian at that time. While he was waging war, he raised his eyes up to heaven in the middle of the night, he saw there were two pillars, one intersecting the other, (322C) in the likeness of a cross, and in which were text, shining fiery red and written in Greek, “Since you asked your God to show you the right faith, make to yourself a royal sign in the shape of the this cross according to what you saw, which shall precedes you against your enemies. By doing so, he rushed to the enemies and he conquered them by virtue of the holy Cross.

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27-28; Luke 23:33; John 19:18.

<sup>66</sup> Lit. great fear entered into them.

<sup>67</sup> Lit. when death approached to him.

### *3.8.4. Finding of the true Cross*

As he returned, he directed his mother Helena to go to Jerusalem with army in order to find out what the truth about the Cross of Christ was. She questioned the Jews. Many were crucified. That man from his own tribe, to whom the matter (i.e. the matter of the Cross of Christ) had been notified at first, was inquired. This one, who was refusing to reveal the truth of the matter, she put him open in the well without water and food. However, when he thought about death, he (322D) showed the place. And while they (i.e. the soldiers of the queen) were digging up, fragrant smoke came up from the pit, revealing three crosses after 300 years since Christ has come. Then they (i.e. crosses) were carried before the queen, who did not know which one was the Cross of Christ. Then at once, she put one of the crosses on the dead, but he did not rise. The second one was applied, but nothing good came out of it. Truly, when the third one was placed, the dead one rose up immediately.

### *3.8.5. Building churches in Jerusalem and sending the Cross to Constantine*

After she built a church upon the sepulcher of Christ, the queen left a piece of the Cross there, and sent the remaining piece to her son. This is the reason why we venerate the Cross of Christ.

#### *4. Leo's refutation against Muslims*

##### *4.1. Accusation of Muslim law*

###### *4.1.1. Muslim law on greeting and prayer*

I have been told that you do not greet anyone of another law,<sup>68</sup> and you have it in your law that you are allowed to marry women of another <law>. Then how could it be that God would have commanded a man to take her as his wife, who is not deemed worthy to greet nor bury her?<sup>69</sup> Likewise, if she would be of another faith, it is not proper to stand at her grave or pray for her. But when you find something written in your law that many of these <women> are faithful in some law, and that are with God, then why would you not pray for her?

###### *4.1.2. Muslim law on divorce*

Also, I have been told that if anyone abandons his wife for whatever reason, it is not proper for her to return to him, until someone else legally married her.<sup>70</sup> So you are transgressing the Law and the Gospel. Because it is written in the Law that if anyone should divorce his wife for any reason, and when she wishes to go back to him, there should be no doubt that no one else has physical intercourse with her. But if anyone has physical intercourse with her, she is forever prohibited to him.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, in the Gospel, it is not allowed (323B) for a man to dismiss his wife except in the case of fornication. Anyone who would take a divorced <woman> from another man as wife, (324A) <then> he is convicted as an adulterer and a fornicator.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. Q 4:86, "When a (courteous) greeting is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) equal courtesy." See also, Saheeh Muslim, Book 026, no. 5389 and Abū Dawud, Book 41, no. 5186, in which it is not permitted for the Muslims to greet the non-Muslims on the street.

<sup>69</sup> For the Qur'ānic teaching for burial practice, see Q 9:84.

<sup>70</sup> Q 2:230.

<sup>71</sup> For the rule of divorce in the Old Testament, see Deuteronomy, 24:1-4.

<sup>72</sup> For the conversation between Jesus and others on divorce, see Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-11.

#### *4.2. Attacks on Islamic fatalism*

Also, I have been told that it was written in your law that whatever man does, either good or evil, it would have been prescribed and predestined by God before he was born.<sup>73</sup> If it is so, there is no grace if he does good nor would it be sin if he does evil: because he is not the one performing the action, for it has been already written and predestined for him before he was born. Thus, if it is true that everything had been written for him before he was born, then God is seen as having acted impiously. But, far be this for God that this would be done to people. Therefore, if it were so just as you say, whatever a man would do, either good or opposite to it, <he himself is responsible for it>, then God would not have sent prophets to demonstrate Hell to men and make them frightened (i.e. fear for Hell); for sufficient for them would be (324B) what was prescribed and predestined for them. But such an understanding is far [from the truth]; were a man to perish, he would perish only by his will.

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<sup>73</sup> Passages on fatalism, Q 9:51, 22:4, 57:22.

## *Appendix II: The use of the Bible in the letters of Leo in Arabic*

A number of quotations from the Bible and the Qur’ān and allusions to them are attested in the Arabic letters of Leo. Yet, Leo’s way of the use of the Bible is different from his use of the Qur’ān. While Leo gives “direct” quotations from or allusion to the Qur’ānic passage, he uses the Bible more freely. When Leo uses the Old Testament testimonia and cites “Beatitude” from the gospel of Matthew, he cites the passages directly. On the other hand, when he describes the events in the Old and the New Testament such as Moses’ making of the Ark of Covenant and putting the tablets of Torah in it, the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Satan’s temptation of Christ, the last supper and the crucifixion of Christ, he simply cites several verses or a whole chapter in abbreviation, and accounts the events only in one sentence or two. Probably it is because of his and his audiences’ close familiarity to the Bible than to the Qur’ān.

In the following chart, I presented all biblical uses of Leo.

[Chart 6: Old Testament citations in the letters of Leo in Arabic]

Genesis	1 1:2 2:7 5:5 17:8	67r 67v 86r 63r 80r
Exodus	25:10 31:18 34:4	74r 74r 74r
	12:10-15 14:21	65r 79v
Numbers	20:1	65r
Deuteronomy	34:5-8	74r
1 Kings	6:1-35 8:1-11	74r 74r

2 Chronicle	20:7 3:1	79v, 83r 74r
Job	33:4	67v
Psalm	2:7-8 33:6 19:5 104:30 107:20 109:20 119:89 143:10	68r, 80r 67r 82v 67v 67v 81v 67r 67v
Isaiah	7:14 41:8 61:1	68r 79v, 83r 67v
Zechariah	9:9	68r
Matthew	4:1-11 5:1-16 6:5 10:7 16:21 17:1-9 20:17-19 26:26 26:27-28 26:31-35 26:53-54 27:38 28:18 28:18-20	70v 80v, 81v 70r 82v 72v, 74v 78v, 74v 72v 72v 72v 72v 85v 74v 79v 79r
Mark	1:12-13 9:2-8 9:31 10:33-34 14:22 14:22-24 14:29-31 15:27-28	70v 78v 72v, 74v 72v, 74v 72v 72v 72v 74v
Luke	4:1-13 9:22 9:28-36 18:31-33 21:33 22:19-20 22:31-34	70v 72v, 74v 78v 72v, 74v 79r 72v 72v

John	36:38 12:44 19:18 20:17	72v 64v 74v 64v
Romans	6:23	63v
Hebrews	6:13-17	79v
James	2:23	79v, 83r
Jude	9?	83r

*Appendix III: Leo's use of the Qur'ān in the letters of Leo in Arabic*

When Leo uses the Qur'ānic vocabularies such as the “names of God” or “Iblīs” as a synonym of devil or Satan, I only give one citation in the chart with a few more reference in notes. Sometimes Leo uses the words which remind readers of the Qur'ān, such as رحمة mercy and حدى guidance. And sometimes he also prefers to use the words taken from the Qur'ān than more commonly used Christian ones, e.g. حواريون for apostles instead of طاغوت and رسول for idols. God is also described as the “الحي Living One” or “الواحد One God.” These uses are not indicated in the chart, for these words are not citations. They are already internalized in Leo and his audiences, and used as the words of their own.

[Chart 7: The Qur'ānic citations in the letters of Leo in Arabic]

1:1	88r	5:82-83	84r-84v
1:4-6	89v	9:84	86r
2:6-7	90v	11:115	81r
2:62	84v	12:10	67v
2:135	67r, 69v	14:4	86v
2:256	85r	14:8 <sup>74</sup>	78v
3:42	85r	15:30-33 <sup>75</sup>	81v
3:59	64v, 66r, 85v	18:39	82r, 87v
3:83	90r	19:28	65r
3:85	90r	21:91	86r, 90r
3:97 <sup>76</sup>	78v	21:107	86r
3:113	84v	25:74	78r
4:86?	86r	29:46	85r, 89r
4:125	79v, 83r	29:46 conflated with 2:256	89r
4:157-158	73v, 85v	32:9	86r
4:171	68v, 86r	33:35	90v
5:73	69v	39:4	85r
5:112-115	71v-72r	49:14	90v
5:114	81v	66:12	65r

<sup>74</sup> God is the Praiseworthy (الحمود) 78v:16). See also 31:12, 26; 41:42, etc.

<sup>75</sup> Reference to Iblīs. See also 38:74-75, etc.

<sup>76</sup> God is the Rich (الغني) 78v:16). See also 39:7; 47:38; 57:24, etc.

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