

Cyril of Alexandria, Image Worship, and the *Vita* of Rabban Hormizd *

by

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In the modern scholarly discussion of the putative monophysite affiliations of either the iconophile¹ or the iconoclastic² party in the Byzantine controversy over image worship in the eighth and ninth centuries relatively little attention has been paid to a number of possibly relevant medieval Arabic and Syriac texts, according to which Cyril of Alexandria, the acknowledged champion and patron saint, so to speak, of monophysite christology, was the first to introduce the worship of images into the Christian church. In this paper all the pertinent material will be presented and analyzed; the texts are potentially important, and at least deserve a more careful investigation than has hitherto been accorded to them.

* For being able to assemble a fairly complete documentation for this paper I am greatly indebted to the excellent facilities of Widener, Houghton, and Andover-Harvard Libraries of Harvard University. I was particularly fortunate in gaining ready access at these Harvard libraries to a number of quite rare seventeenth and eighteenth-century books, inter alia Gouvea's *editio princeps* (1606) of the Portuguese text of the Acts of the Synod of Diamper, La Croze's *Histoire du christianisme des Indes* (1724), Geddes' *The History of the Church of Malabar ...* (1694), and Raulin's *Historia ecclesiae malabaricae ...* (1745). I wish to express my thanks to Professors Robert W. Thomson and David R. Blumenthal who kindly read the manuscript, and offered a number of helpful suggestions. I also would like to acknowledge here the unfailingly courteous and efficient help of the Brown University Library staff.

¹ E.g. W. Elliger, "Zur bilderfeindlichen Bewegung des achten Jahrhunderts" in W. Elliger (ed.), *Forschungen zur Kirchengeschichte und zur christlichen Kunst* (Leipzig 1931), pp. 40-60, esp. pp. 51ff.

² E.g. P. J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford 1958), p. 44; G. Ostrogorsky, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites* (Breslau 1929), pp. 24-28; J. Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington and Cleveland 1969), pp. 139-40; E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954), p. 131. (With reservations). It is unfortunate that this last excellent article, which does cite the Byzantine texts that accuse the monophysite theologians Severus and Philoxenus of iconoclastic actions, and states that "this opposition is rooted in heretical doctrine" (*loc. cit.*), does not discuss the material pertaining to Cyril. For a brief survey of the various theories propounded to account for the genesis of Byzantine iconoclasm see my article "Notes on Byzantine Iconoclasm in the Eighth Century", *Byzantion* 44 (1974) 23-42.

The discussion of the primary sources will, however, be prefaced with a brief review, which, it is hoped, the reader will find useful and illuminating, of the oblique manner in which several of these texts have been first made known to, and were then utilized by, western scholarship, in the context of Catholic-Protestant historical polemics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The lack of images (though not of the plain cross) and the occasional verbal rejection of Roman Catholic devotional pictures was duly noted by the Portuguese traders and the missionaries who came in contact with, and temporarily subdued the indigenous Christian population (usually referred to as "Saint Thomas Christians") of the southwest part of the Indian subcontinent³. In 1599, at the synod of Diamper (Udayamperur), presided over by the Portuguese archbishop Menezes, measures were promulgated to remedy this particular deficiency, as well as many others⁴.

³ J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* ... III, 2 (Rome 1728), p. CCCXLIX citing the testimony of a native informant, Joseph the Indian, and the *Jornada* of Antonio Gouvea. See also A.M. Mundadan, *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St. Thomas Christians* (Bangalore 1970), pp. 158-159 who cites, in addition to Joseph, some early Portuguese descriptions of Indian churches. Cf. L.W. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas: An Account of the Ancient Syrian Church of Malabar* (Cambridge 1956), p. 21; P. Placid, "Les syriens du Malabar" *OrSy* 1 (1956) 393. Reliable descriptions of Indian Christian usages before Diamper are scant; there is no archeological evidence to indicate the presence of pictures or statues in churches prior to the Portuguese occupation. There is, to be sure, no mention of the absence of images in the Jesuit F. Roz' *De erroribus Nestorianorum*; this is a first-hand account of doctrinal deviations of the St. Thomas Christians by a Jesuit missionary (later to become archbishop of Cranganore) who knew well both the vernacular, Malayalam, and Syriac, the language of the ecclesiastical books and the liturgy (ed. I. Hausherr, *De erroribus Nestorianorum* ... auctore P. Francisco Roz S.I., inédit latin-syriaque de la fin de 1586 ou du début de 1587 (*Orientalia Christiana* XI, 1 (Rome 1928)). Rather, there is an anachronistic and quite enigmatic passage, quoted by Roz in Syriac (with a Latin translation) apparently from a service book ("ex alio precum libro") wherein the emperor Constantine, going to battle, vows to have made, if he returns victoriously, *three images* for "Mar Narsai". (ܡܝܢ ܝܡܝܢ ܕܡܪ ܢܪܫܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ) a crown and a vestment for "Mar Nestorius", and a stole (ܕܡܪ ܓܝܘܪܝܘܨ) for "Mar Georgius"! (*op. cit.*, p. 32).

⁴ The Acts of the Synod of Diamper (VII:29) make the matter very explicit: "Since almost all the churches of this bishopric are without reredos [*retabulos*], for the nation of Nestorian heretics who used to prevail do not admit the wholesome use of sacred images" etc. ("Como quasi todas as Igrejas deste Bispado estão sem retabulos o q̃ naceo dos hereges Nestorianos q̃ o governauão não admitirẽ o saudauel uso das sagradas Imagẽs" etc. (ed. Gouvea, p. 50 *recto*)). The Synod orders the erection with every altar of a *retabolo*, i.e. a decorated altar screen, in addition to the Cross ("Manda o Synodo ... em cada altar se fara hũa Cruz afora o retabolo ..." (*ibid.*)). The Acts of Diamper are extant in the original Portuguese, and were published by Antonio Gouvea under the title *Synodo Diocesano da Igreja e Bispado de Angamale dos antigos christiãos de Sam Thome das Serras de Malabar das partes da India Oriental* (Coimbra 1606). I utilize this *editio princeps*, the text of which has been frequently reprinted (e.g. Paiva

It should be noted that this ancient Christian community, though its connections even with the legendary descriptions, in the "Acts of Thomas", of the missionary labors of the apostle are not demonstrable⁵, clearly is an offshoot of Persian Christianity, formerly acknowledged a rather vague subordination to the Nestorian catholicos of Mesopotamia, and received its Syriac liturgical texts and other ecclesiastical literature from Nestorian sources. At the Synod of Diamper a large number of these books were declared heretical, and were subsequently burned; many of these cannot be identified with certainty, though it does not seem that (apart from possibly informative historical colophons) any important piece of Syriac literature has thus been lost permanently⁶. Among the condemned works was "the book of Hormisdas Raban"; one of the errors of this text, according to the Synod, was that it vilified Cyril of Alexandria and accused him of introducing image worship and idolatry. Fortunately the hagiographical text has been preserved in other, Mesopotamian⁷, manuscripts; both the prose *Vita* of Hormisdas and its metrical reworking have been published, and the significance of the actual statements made therein can now be

Manso, *Bullarium patronatus Portugalliae regum*, Appendix, t. I (Lisbon 1872), pp. 147-368. J. Thaliath, who has made a most thorough study of the manuscripts and printed texts of the Acts, argues convincingly, that a very early translation of the Acts from Portuguese into Malayalam, preserved in several manuscripts in the Vatican, is more faithful to the original than is Gouvea's edition; unfortunately the Malayalam version is not accessible in published form (*The Synod of Diamper, OrChrAn* 152 (Rome 1958), pp. 176ff., esp. p. 190). Apparently only one Portuguese MS copy of the Acts is extant (*op. cit.*, p. 192). The Portuguese text has been translated into Latin by J. F. Raulin, *Historia ecclesiae malabaricae cum Diamperitana synodo* ... (Rome 1745), p. 59ff. Raulin's translation (not always reliable) is reprinted in J. D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, tom. XXXVB (Paris 1902, reprint of the edition of 1752), col. 1162ff. Raulin clearly made his translation from the same MS which was used for Gouvea's printed text (Thaliath, p. 201), so for text-critical purposes his translation is of limited value. All later editions and translations derive either from Gouvea's or from Raulin's text; there is a good literal English translation of the Acts, made directly from the Portuguese, in M. Geddes, *The History of the Church of Malabar* ... (London 1694), pp. 98ff.; reprinted in J. Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. II (London 1839), pp. 511-683, with modernized orthography, but with otherwise no changes or additional commentary.

⁵ Brown, *The Indian Christians*, pp. 43-63.

⁶ J. B. Chabot, "L'autodafé des livres syriaques du Malabar" in *Florilegium ou recueil des travaux d'érudition dédiés à Monsieur le Marquis Melchior de Vogüé* (Paris 1909), pp. 613-23. The Spanish Jesuit Roz, with the token collaboration of three local priests, acted as Menezes' *ensor deputatus* in examining the Syriac books. (La Croze, *Histoire* ... p. 283). Menezes himself knew neither Syriac nor Malayalam, and had to use interpreters.

⁷ The number of extant Syriac manuscripts of demonstrably Indian origin is small; for an inventory see A. Mingana, "The Early Spread of Christianity in India" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, Manchester 10 (1926) 499-504.

assessed⁸. But until quite recently scholarship depended on the information provided by the Acts of Diamper: therefore the relevant passage will be first translated and quoted in full.

"Also the book of Hormisda Raban, who is called a saint⁹, in which it is said that Nestor was a saint and a martyr, and he suffered for the truth, and that St. Cyril, who persecuted him, was priest of the demons and minister of the devils, and is in hell; that the images are dirty and foul, and ought not to be adored, and that St. Cyril, as a heretic¹⁰, invented and introduced them. [The book] relates many false miracles¹¹, which, it is said, the same Hormisda wrought as proof of the truth of the sect of Nestor¹², and what the Catholics did to him for being obstinate in his heresy¹³, [and] relates how persecutions were suffered [by him] for the truth"¹⁴.

The actual text of the *Vita* of Rabban Hormizd will be discussed later; suffice it to say that this passage does not allow one either to conclude, as some modern scholars have done¹⁵, that it was a tradition of the St. Thomas Christians that Cyril invented image worship, or to exaggerate its import to imply that this was a general Nestorian belief¹⁶.

The efforts of Menezes and his successors to coerce the Indian Christians into accepting Latin doctrines and usages came to be known in Europe quickly, and, although the Acts of the Synod of Diamper did not receive

⁸ See below, pp. 90ff.

⁹ Raulin, introduces his own gloss by rendering the phrase as "cui nomen Sancti falso tribuitur" (*op. cit.*, p. 100).

¹⁰ Raulin adds here a gratuitous comment: "(ut ipsi calumniose dictitant)" (*ibid.*).

¹¹ "Conta muitos milagres falsas". Raulin renders this phrase by an unnecessarily pleonastic "Plura in eodem libro narrantur falsa, & commentitia miracula".

¹² Raulin again introduces an unjustified pejorative note: "falso annumeratur" *op. cit.*, p. 101).

¹³ "Por ser pertinaz in sua heregia" Raulin here simply mistranslates the phrase as "ad frangendam illius contumaciam" (p. 101).

¹⁴ "Item o liuro de Hormisda Raban a que chama Santo: em que diz que Nestor foy santo & martyr, & padeceo pella verdade, & que São Cyrillo que a perseguio era Sacerdote des Demonios. & ministro dos Diabos, & está no Inferno: que as imagẽs sam Idolos torpes & luyos, & senão deuem venerar, & que São Cyrillo como herege as inuentou & introduzio: conta muitos milagres falsos, que diz que fez a dito Hormisda em proua da verdade da Seita de Nestor, & o que lhe fazião os Catholicos por ser pertinaz em sua heregia, conta como perseguições padecidas pella verdade" (ed. Gouvea, page 13, *verso*, part of Acção III, Decreto 14).

¹⁵ J.C.L. Gieseler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, 4. Auflage (Bonn 1845), Bd. I, Abtheilung II, p. 284-5, note 51 end): "Die Thomaschristen in Indien meinen, dass Cyrillus die von ihnen verabscheuten Bilder eingeführt habe". See below, p. 84.

¹⁶ Thus K. Schwarzlose states, without qualification, *Der Bilderstreit* (Gotha 1890), p. 15): "Cyrill von Alexandrien ... die bilderfeindlichen Nestorianer als Urheber der Idolatrie brandmarken".

papal approbation, gave rise to lively debate. In particular the Protestant scholar La Croze, in his influential historical account of Indian Christianity¹⁷, comments at length on the decrees of Diamper. He summarizes the entry cited above on the book of *Hormisda Raban* and in a footnote, à propos the statement that Cyril introduced idolatry¹⁸, first adduces Coptic evidence, namely the testimony of the Jacobite chronicler al-Makīn, and claims that here one encounters a general tradition of the Orient, which may well be genuine¹⁹. Now, La Croze did use the Portuguese original of the Acts of Diamper and was acquainted with works of western travellers in India; and though seemingly a prolific and versatile orientalist²⁰, was not an Arabist of Renaudot's caliber and in particular there is no proof that he had access to a manuscripts of the first part (to this day unpublished!) of al-Makīn's work²¹. Rather it is quite clear that he must have based his statement only on an entry in Renaudot's account of the Coptic church²². Renaudot, an accomplished Arabist, used extensively manuscript material available in French libraries, including the text of al-Makīn's whole work, Severus' History of the Patriarchs, as well as the Muslim al-Maqrizī's History of the Copts. Renaudot states: "Elmacinus & ex eo Makrizius aiunt eum [i.e. Cyril] primum imagines in Ecclesia collocasse ..." ²³. But

¹⁷ M. V. La Croze, *Histoire du christianisme des Indes* (The Hague 1724). Mathurin Veyssière de La Croze was the librarian of the King of Prussia; his work is marked by a predictable anti-Catholic bias, and, somewhat more surprisingly, by a great animus against the person and teachings of Cyril of Alexandria (e.g. *op. cit.*, p. 16).

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 243: "L'Auteur ajoute que les Images sont des Idoles infames & abominables, que Cyrille les a inventées & introduites, comme un Heretique qu'il étoit".

¹⁹ "C'est une Tradition établie en Orient, que Cyrille est l'Inventeur des Images. Elmacin Ecrivain Jacobite, & par consequent devot de Cyrille, en convient. Ainsi, le fait pourroit bien être veritable".

²⁰ Among La Croze's unedited works, sold after his death to the University of Leyden, there were a "dictionnaire slavon-latin", a "dictionnaire arménienne" a "dictionnaire cophte" and a "dictionnaire syriaque". (Formey, *Éloges des académiciens de Berlin et des divers autres savans, Tome second* (Berlin 1757), pp. 77-78. On La Croze's career and works cf. Hofer, *Nouvelle bibliographie générale* (Paris 1877), cols. 72-73. The Coptic dictionary was published by Woide (Oxford 1775).

²¹ See below, p. 86. La Croze makes some rather ungenerous (and unjustified) comments on Renaudot's transcription of oriental names (*op. cit.*, p. 51, note b; p. 244), which seemingly indicate a defective grasp of Semitic phonology and the problems involved in the proper rendering of Syriac names such as Hanan-Yesu' before the introduction in printing of diacritical signs and a symbol for the letter 'ayin. Renaudot was apparently a linguistic virtuoso, who taught himself a number of oriental languages ("grecque, hébraïque, syriaque, chaldaïque [= Arabic?], sanscritique, et égyptienne [= Coptic?] ..."). A. Villien, *L'Abbé Eusèbe Renaudot* (Paris 1904), p. 19, quoting from the *Journal* of Renaudot's father, a reference to the multilingual epistles he received from Renaudot then studying at the *Oratoire* in Saumur. Cf. also *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²² E. Renaudot, *Historia patriarcharum alexandrinorum jacobitorum* (Paris 1713).

²³ *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

"cultus imaginum factorem", Assemani commits the rather egregious error of saying that La Croze must be referring to Erpenius' edition³⁰ of the second half of the work, from the Muslim conquest onward; of course in this latter part of al-Makīn's work "Cyrillum fuisse Imaginum inventorem nullibi affirmat"³¹. But there is little doubt that (whatever the correct interpretation of the text) La Croze's source, Renaudot, had access in MS to al-Makīn's description of Cyril's activities³².

Not long after the appearance of Assemani's work, the publication of Raulin's Latin translation (1745) of the Acts of Diamper made the complete text more readily accessible to European scholars³³; but his annotations, as far as the matters at hand are concerned, are of little value; Raulin simply refers to Assemani's refutation of La Croze's arguments.

As we have already noted, the relevant portion of al-Makīn is still unpublished; but the work of al-Maqrīzī was published, together with a Latin translation, by H. J. Wetzer in 1828³⁴. We shall discuss the actual Arabic text later; the accompanying translation should be noted here, since it reinforces Renaudot's interpretation: "Primus fuit [Cyrillus] qui in ecclesiis Alexandriae et terrae Aegypti imagines (?) statuebat"³⁵. The work was then re-edited by the eminent German orientalist F. Wüstenfeld³⁶; his translation of the passage, unlike Wetzer's, is accompanied by no sign

of the Mesopotamian and Chinese communities was more nuanced vis-à-vis images, the Malabar Christians, long isolated from the mother church, preserved an aniconic cult until the arrival of the Portuguese. We have seen that Assemani's explanation is hardly cogent; the same holds for that of Raulin who (besides echoing Assemani's "ex defectu Pictorum in Malabaribus") proposes the alternative of the influence of the local Jews ("suggestione Hebraeorum ibi degentium" (*Historia*, p. 239-40, note (a), end) L. E. Browne's speculation that "probably they gave up the use of images in view of the prevalence of Hindu idolatry" is unsupported and has likewise little cogency. (*The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia: From the Time of Muhammad till the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge 1933), p. 79). In fact the Malabar Christians adopted a number of Hindu customs.

³⁰ Th. Erpenius, *Historia Saracenica* ... (Leiden 1625).

³¹ *Bibliotheca Orientalis* III, 2, p. CCCII. Assemani could have had access to, it is quite likely, one of the Vatican MSS of al-Makīn.

³² Renaudot perhaps used either the MS of al-Makīn which now bears the catalogue No. 294 or else No. 4524; the passage concerned with Cyril is to be found on p. 208 of the latter MS (E. Tisserant - G. Wiet, "La liste des patriarches d'Alexandrie dans Qalqachandi", *ROC* 23 (1922-1923) 131, note 2).

³³ See note 4.

³⁴ Taki-eddini Makrizi's *Historia Coptorum Christianorum* ... edita et in linguam latinam translata ab Henrico Josepho Wetzer (Solisbaci 1828).

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 53. Wetzer's own question mark after "imagines" should be noted!

³⁶ *Macrizi's Geschichte der Copten. Aus den Handschriften zu Gotha und Wien mit Übersetzung und Anmerkungen* (Göttingen 1843).

of hesitation: "er [i.e. Cyril] war der erste, welcher in den Kirchen von Alexandrien und Ägyptenland Figuren aufstellte"³⁷.

The nineteenth-century church historian Gieseler comments at some length, but for the most part second hand, on the Cyril tradition. It is extremely instructive to see how Renaudot's cautious negative comments are overshadowed by La Croze's rather categorical assertions, and, in spite of Assemani's critique, the "tradition" is now erected into an undisputed fact: "Die Thomaschristen in Indien meinen, dass Cyrillus die von ihnen verabscheuten Bilder eingeführt habe, s. *La Croze hist. du christianisme des Indes, à la Haye* 1724, 4, p. 243. *Assemanus Bibl. orient.* III, II, 401, sucht zwar zu beweisen, dass diese Tradition nicht sehr alt sein könne: es ist aber merkwürdig, dass sich dieselbe auch bei dem Kopten Elmacin (um 1250) findet, aus welchem sie Makriz (um 1400) wiederholt (s. *Renaudot hist. Patr. Alex.* p. 114. *Makrizii hist. Coptorum ed. Wetzer, Solisb.* 1828, 8. p. 53). Jedenfalls steht geschichtlich fest, dass in der Zeit des Cyrillus die Bilder Eingang in die Kirchen fanden"³⁸.

In his still valuable history of the iconoclastic controversy, Schwarzlose, as we have already noted³⁹, registers in passing the Nestorian charge that Cyril introduced idolatry; he then speculates further that the acceptance of images indeed took place in Cyril's time⁴⁰, and even postulates, without providing any evidence, that in Cyril's time were christological concerns and a doctrinal preoccupation with images first linked, though, to be sure, this connection was made stronger only at a later date⁴¹. E. von Dobschütz in his encyclopaedic monograph on the history of, and legends connected with, images of Christ notes, in connection with the supposed sanctioning of practices of popular piety by official Christian theology, the tradition

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

³⁸ J.C.L. Gieseler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Vierte Auflage (Bonn 1845), Bd. I, Abtheilung II., pp. 284-5 note 51 (end).

³⁹ See note 16.

⁴⁰ "Im Orient scheint weiterhin die Zeit des Patriarchen Cyrill von Alexandrien ... für die Bilder einen günstigen Wendepunkt zu bezeichnen. Der eigentümliche Verlauf, den die Geschichte des Bildes in der Folge in der griechischen Kirche nimmt, macht es wahrscheinlich, dass es gerade die Zeit Cyrills war, wo sich die griechische Anschauung über das Bild von der allgemeinen Vorstellung trennte und ihren besonderen Weg nahm" (*Der Bilderstreit*, p. 15).

⁴¹ "Im Rahmen dieser historischen Einleitung genügt die Hindeutung, dass es sehr wohl vorstellbar ist, dass gerade in der Zeit Cyrills, wo es sich doch vornemlich um das christologische Dogma handelte, das Bild in das dogmatische Bewusstsein des griechischen Volkes rückte und mit dem christologischen Thema in Beziehung gesetzt wurde, allerdings vorerst noch nicht in jener engen Weise, die wir später als charakteristische Eigenart des griechischen Glaubens kennen lernen werden" (*ibid.*).

that Cyril introduced image worship⁴²; but, in an unusual departure from his customary total thoroughness, he does not cite the texts in question, but clearly depends on second-hand information⁴³.

F. Loofs, in his influential compendium of the history of Christian doctrine, in a rather compressed statement, seemingly both denies and accepts Cyril's role in the introduction of image worship⁴⁴, but again depends only on second-hand material, this time von Dobschütz and Schwarzlose. K. Holl, in an article written in 1907, rejects the very qualified credence given by von Dobschütz and Loofs to the tradition of Cyril having been instrumental in the introduction of image worship, and rightly points out that there is no evidence that image worship was established in Alexandria earlier than elsewhere⁴⁵. In more recent literature, A. J. Visser, in a monograph on the ninth century iconophile patriarch Nicephorus, alludes to the accusation of the Nestorians (supposedly "fanatical opponents of image worship") that Cyril introduced "the new idolatry"⁴⁶.

⁴² "Zunächst ist die Theologie des Kyrillos von Alexandria, die hier wie in so vielen Stücken bleibende Bedeutung für die griechische Kirche erlangt hat; diese stellt sich uns unklar dar in der hier und da auftauchenden Behauptung, Kyrill habe die Verehrung der Bilder in der christlichen Kirche eingeführt. Thatsächlich war es Kyrills Grundanschauung von der völligen Einigung göttlicher und menschlicher Natur in Christus, welche dem Bilderglauben eine besondere Bedeutung gab". *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig 1899), pp. 33-34.

⁴³ "Diese Behauptung findet sich sowohl bei den Thomas-Christen Indiens als bei den Kopten (nach Elmakin). (*Op. cit.*, p. 33, note 4). Von Dobschütz then refers only to the works of Gieseler and Schwarzlose already cited, but does not quote in his copious *Beilagen* any primary sources on the question.

⁴⁴ "... die Antiochener müssen vor 433 sie abgelehnt haben; die persisch-nestorianische Kirche kennt weder Kirchenbilder, noch Bilderverehrung. [A quite incorrect assertion; cf. note 29]. Die später nachweisbare Anschauung, dass Cyrill v. Alexandrien die Verehrung der Bilder in die Kirche eingeführt habe, wird trotz ihrer Haltlosigkeit Richtiges enthalten". (*Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte* 6. Aufl. (Tübingen 1959), p. 251).

⁴⁵ Der "Ueberlieferung", dass Kyrill von Alexandrien die Bilder eingeführt habe ... vermag ich, in Gegensatz zu v. Dobschütz ... und Loofs ... keinerlei Wert zuzuerkennen. Es gibt m. W. keinen Beweis dafür, dass in Aegypten oder in Alexandrien die Bilderverehrung sich früher einbürgerte als anderwärts ("Der Anteil der Styliten am Aufkommen der Bilderverehrung" in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte* II (Tübingen 1928), p. 388, note 1). However, by the same token, there is no documentation to support Holl's further surmise that "eher könnte man aus den Quellen den Eindruck gewinnen, dass Aegypten sich gegenüber anderen Provinzen etwas zurückhielt" (*ibid.*).

⁴⁶ "Die Nestorianer, fanatische Gegner der Bilderverehrung, nannten Cyrillus, den grossen Bestreiter des Nestorius, den Anstifter des 'neuen Götzendienstes'". *Nikephoros und der Bilderstreit: Eine Untersuchung über die Stellung des Konstantinopoler Patriarchen Nikephoros innerhalb der ikonoklastischen Wirren* (The Hague 1952), p. 19. Visser is very sparing with providing references, and gives none for the above-cited statement; in particular Visser does not give the source for the quoted phrase "the new idolatry"; it hardly corresponds verbatim

The foregoing selective survey of modern scholarship makes it clear that though the Cyril tradition in question has provoked some comments, for the most part these are not based on the examination of the sources; a closer look at the relevant texts themselves, not all of which have been adduced in previous treatments, is clearly called for. There are two sets of texts: first the *Vita* of Rabban Hormizd, in its various recensions, and secondly the testimony of Egyptian writers, both Christian and Muslim, which have been adduced as relevant from Renaudot and La Croze onward. We shall first deal with the latter set of passages, and then deal with the Hormizd material.

Since, as we shall see, the exact translation of one phrase in the several passages is the crux of the matter, we shall first present the texts here, and postpone interpretation and analysis.

The chronologically earliest extant text is from the 10th-century Jacobite Severus' *History of the Patriarchs*:

وبدا فاقام قومة للبيع التى فى جميع الكرسي لثلا تشتغل عن الطعام الروحاني.
الذى به تتقوى على الامور المرضية لله⁴⁷.

The next oldest text, from the chronicle of the 13th-century Jacobite al-Makīn⁴⁸, as we have noted, is not yet available in published form⁴⁹.

with any part of the pertinent passage from the Acts of Diamper. The other (and vastly superior) recent monograph on Nicephorus, by P.J. Alexander (*The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford 1958)) is silent on the question in its historical survey of the antecedents of the iconoclastic controversy, and simply notes (with implied, but unformulated dissent) von Dobschütz' view that "the theology of Cyril of Alexandria favoured images" (p. 44, note 2).

⁴⁷ Ed. B. Evetts, *PO* 1 (1907), p. 430. The other edition of the text (C.F. Seybold, *Severus Ben el-Moqaffa', Historia patriarcharum alexandrinorum*, CSCO, vol. 52, *Scriptores Arabici*, Tomus 8 (Louvain 1904, reprint 1954), p. √√) provides some slight orthographic variations which do not change the sense of the passage. Though the text of Severus, as we have it, seems to be an eleventh century redaction (*GCAL* II, 301-3) the work clearly depends on earlier sources; in particular for the account of Cyril it uses a work in Sahidic Coptic which dates from the late fifth century (and is perhaps a translation of a Greek original composed by the famous monophysite patriarch Timothy Ailuros himself!); unfortunately this text, extant in fragmentary form, has a lacuna at the beginning of Cyril's patriarchate, and thus it is not at all certain that there was a Coptic text which underlies the passage in question (ed. T. Orlandi, *Storia della chiesa di Alessandria: Testo copto, traduzione e commento ...* vol. II, *Da Teofilo a Timoteo II* (Milan 1970), p. 37 (text); p. 76 (Latin trans.) Orlandi at this point, to fill the gap, simply reproduces Evett's English translation of the passage from Severus! On the problem of Severus' sources, cf. T. Orlandi, *Studi Copti* (Milan 1968), pp. 58-86, and W.E. Crum's earlier discussion, and partial translation of the material in "Eusebius and Coptic Church Histories" *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archeology* 24 (1902), pp. 68-84).

⁴⁸ Cf. Graf, pp. 348-351.

⁴⁹ What al-Makīn's source is at this point is not clear; it certainly is not the chronicle of

Another thirteenth-century Jacobite work, the so-called *Chronicon orientale*, commonly, but with little reason, attributed to Petrus Ibn Rāhib⁵⁰, has a passage which, like the text from Severus, has not yet been introduced into the discussion; the work itself is with great likelihood dependent on al-Makīn⁵¹. The pertinent passage reads:

وهو اول من اقام القومة في الكنائس⁵².

The fifteenth-century Muslim scholar al-Maqrīzī drew upon both Eutychius and Jacobite sources, in particular al-Makīn⁵³; we have already referred to some interpretations of the text, which reads:

وهو اول من اقام القومة في كنائس الاسكندريه وارض مصر⁵⁴.

Eutychius of Alexandria on which he often depends (Graf, p. 349; for one clear instance cf. my article "The Resurgence of Byzantine Iconoclasm in the Ninth Century according to a Syriac source", *Speculum* 51 (1976), p. 4, note 31). Al-Makīn may have drawn his information from Severus directly.

⁵⁰ Graf, pp. 432-433.

⁵¹ So Graf, following M. Chaîne, "Le Chronicon Orientale de Butros Ibn Ar-Rahib et l'Histoire de Girgis el-Makīn" *ROC* 28 (1931-32), pp. 390-405.

⁵² Ed. L. Cheikho, *Petrus Ibn Rahib, Chronicon orientale* (CSCO, vol. 45, *Scriptores Arabici*, Tomus 2 (1903, reprint Louvain 1955), p. ۱۱۲, bottom. The text has been available earlier only in the 17th-century Latin translation of Abraham Ecchellensis, later revised by J.S. Assemani (reprinted in CSCO, vol. 46); the rendering of the phrase is "Idem primus fuit qui Stationes in Ecclesia instituit" (*op. cit.*, p. 121). Eighteenth and nineteenth-century scholarship thus could not suspect that this text had any possible relationship to image worship.

⁵³ G. Wiet gives several examples of al-Maqrīzī's dependence on al-Makīn in a note appended to J. Maspéro's posthumous work *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie* (Paris 1923), p. 219, n. 2. In particular al-Maqrīzī seems to draw his information from al-Makīn about two patriarchs in the late sixth century both called John, one of whom had the sobriquet القائم بالحق ("guardian of the truth"?) and the other, a Melkite, القائم بالامر ("guardian of authority"?) (*op. cit.*, p. 218). Wüstenfeld gives the epithets with the spelling قيم (*Macrizi's Geschichte ...*, p. ۱۸ line 2 from bottom) whereas the MSS of al-Makīn at Wiet's disposal had قائم, judging by Wiet's transcription of the word in question as *qaim* (*apud* Maspéro, pp. 220, 222).

⁵⁴ For a complete English translation, made directly from Wüstenfeld's Arabic text, see S.C. Malan, *A Short History of the Copts and of Their Church* (London 1873). Malan translates the passage in question as: "He was the first to set up figures [statues or images] in the churches of Alexandria and in the land of Egypt" (p. 54). Incidentally, the archaeologist A.J. Butler adduces the text of al-Maqrīzī, from Malan's translation, as evidence for the existence of early Coptic art: "That the churches of Egypt were once rich in wall paintings is proved no less by the fine remains existing than by the testimony of history. According to al-Maqrīzī, the patriarch Cyril, c. 420 A.D., was 'the first to set up figures' (i.e. paintings and not 'statues or images' as Mr. Malan renders it) 'in the churches of Alexandria and in the land of Egypt' (*The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, vol. II (Oxford 1884), p. 83). Butler is quite correct in observing that "there is not the smallest evidence that the Copts at any period sanctioned the use of statues or sculptured images" (*op. cit.*, p. 84), but he shows no

As the reader may already have observed, the key phrase is *اقام قومة*. The translation of *اقام* is not problematical: it can mean, "he erected, established, appointed" etc. The key word is *قومة*. Renaudot and the nineteenth century translators of al-Maqrīzī interpret it as "images" or "statues"; the seventeenth-century translation of the *Chronicon orientale*, followed by Assemani and Cheikho, renders the same word as *stationes*, apparently in the sense of an ecclesiastical ceremony. Now *قومة* in specifically Christian terminology has several meanings⁵⁵, but "image" or "sculpture" is emphatically not one of them. One of the senses of *قومة* is indeed that of the night office. The Arabic expression etymologically seems to reflect a translation of the Greek *ὄρθρος*; more closely it corresponds to part of the vigil called in Syriac *Lelyā* (ܠܠܝܐ), "night", and which in many liturgical MSS is in fact denoted by the Syriac word ܩܘܡܐ, *qaumā* (pl. *qaumē*)⁵⁶.

Another possibility, however, is that the word *قومة* is the plural of *قيم*, *qayyim*, an ecclesiastical function corresponding to that of a sacristan or sexton⁵⁷ in the West. In Christian Arabic this usage of the word seems to be specifically Egyptian⁵⁸; in Syrian usage the same functionary bears the title *قندلفت*, *qandalaft*⁵⁹, transparently derived from the Greek *κανδηλάπτης*⁶⁰.

sign of having directly consulted the Arabic text and his opting for "figures" rather than "statues" is based only on such general considerations. The text, as we will see, has no connection with either paintings or statues.

⁵⁵ For a full listing see G. Graf, *Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini*, (CSCO, vol. 147 [Subsidia, Tomus 8] Louvain 1954), p. 94 s.v. *قيم قائم*. Unfortunately Graf does not always provide text references for the entries in his glossary, and at times it is difficult to judge how common or how early is the attestation for any particular usage.

⁵⁶ See A. Baumstark, *Festbrevier und Kirchenjahr der syrischen Jakobiten* (Paderborn 1910), pp. 139-140.

⁵⁷ Graf does not provide any specific references for *qayyim* = "Kirchendiener, Aufseher, rector ecclesiae" (p. 94), in particular for the exact form of the plural, i.e. *قومة*. The one passage to which I can point where *قومه* is the plural of *qayyim* with much likelihood is in the prologue to the Arabic Didascalia, where after "the readers" (الاعنسطسيين) and "the singers" (الابسلدس) the group of *القومة* is also noted (ed. F. Nau, "Note sur le prologue de la Didascalie arabe et sur quelques apocryphes arabes pseudo-clémentines" *Journal Asiatique*, 10. série, 17 (1911) 319. Graf elsewhere appeals to this text as attesting the plural of *qā'im* (GCAL I, p. 566, note 5). At any rate *قائم* is a verbal adjective of the *fā'il* type which has a standard pluralis fractus *fa'ala* (cf. W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge 1896), vol. 1, p. 207). The uncontracted form *قومة* has several parallels (*op. cit.*, p. 208).

⁵⁸ The functions of a *qayyim* are catalogued in the ecclesiastical encyclopedia of Ibn Sabbā' (14th cent.), called "The Precious Pearl", ed. J. Périer, *PO* 16 (1922), p. 247. (On the author, cf. GCAL I, 418-419).

⁵⁹ Graf, *Verzeichnis*, p. 93.

⁶⁰ See e.g. J. Goar, *Euchologion sive Rituale Graecorum* (Venice 1730; reprint Graz 1960), p. 439, line 5.

The duties of the *qayyim* include the preparation of the eucharistic bread⁶¹. Though the etymologically related word قَائِمَة, *qā'ima*, can denote "pillar"⁶² there is no connection to the words normally used for icons or statues⁶³.

The foregoing lexical material indicates that this group of texts is of no relevance to the question of the origin of image worship. It is more difficult to decide whether the texts claim that Cyril innovated in the division of the nocturnal canonical hours or introduced a lesser grade of ecclesiastical servers. The earliest and most complete text, namely that in Severus, fits much better with the latter meaning. The most natural translation of the passage is: "[Cyril] at the outset [of his patriarchate] appointed sextons for the churches which were in the totality of [his] see so that [the people] may not be alienated from the spiritual nourishment by means of which they became stronger in the things which are pleasing to God"⁶⁴. The meaning of the text seems to be that Cyril took measures to facilitate the celebration of the liturgy. For this, of course, the availability of the eucharistic bread was important; hence the institution, or revival, of the guild of ecclesiastical bakers, so to speak⁶⁵. The interpretation "night

⁶¹ Ibn Sabbā', *loc. cit.* Cf. A.J. Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, vol. II, (Oxford, 1884), pp. 277-8: "the baking [of the eucharistic bread] must be done by the doorkeeper or sacristan, who during the process must chant fixed portions of the psalms in a solemn manner". See also, O.H.E. KHS-Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church: A Detailed Description of Her Liturgical Services ...* (Cairo 1967), p. 81. KHS-Burmester explicitly identifies the *qayyim* with the Bohairic ΕΜΝΟΥΤ (Sahidic ΜΝΟΥΤ). This Coptic word often renders the Greek "doorkeeper" (πυλωρός, θυρωρός etc.); however, in the Coptic-Arabic glosses cited in Crum's *Dictionary* (Oxford 1939), p. 176, the Arabic equivalent is خادم (cf. Graf, *Verzeichnis*, pp. 41-42), not قِيم. At any rate, according to Ibn Sabbā' one of the duties of the *qayyim* is to guard the doors of the church (حفظ ابواب البيعة). In Byzantine ecclesiastical titlature also the doorkeeper, δσσιάριος is at times confused with the torch-bearer, λαμπαδάριος, (J. Darrouzès, *Recherches sur le ΟΦΦΙΚΙΑ de l'église byzantine* (Paris 1970), pp. 238-239).

⁶² But the plural is قَوَائِم *qawā'im*, not قَوْمَة.

⁶³ I think it is not entirely impossible that Renaudot may have simply misread قَوْمَة as قَوْنَة *qūna* (derived from εἰκών). The plural (*images*) however, would be قَوْن *qavan* (see Graf, *Verzeichnis*, p. 81 *s.v.*). It is more difficult to account in this way for Wetzer's and Wüstenfeld's translations, since both give قَوْمَة in their editions of al-Maqrīzī.

⁶⁴ Evett's translation (PO I, p. 430) rather inaccurately renders قَوْمَة as "priests" and makes these "priests" to be the ones who were in danger of being deprived of their spiritual food.

⁶⁵ In support of this, it should be noted that J.M. Vansleb, after describing the duties of "Le Sacristain, qu'ils nomment *Keim*", states: "Saint Cyrille, le 24. Patriarche de cette nation, a été le premier qui a établie en Égypte des Sacristains" (*Histoire de l'église d'Alexandrie ...* (Paris 1677), p. 38. But Vansleb does not give his source; perhaps he is only

office" is inappropriate here, though for the brief notices of al-Maqrīzī and the *Chronicon orientale* it is admissible, grammatically at least. In any case though Cyril's name is attached to one of the Coptic anaphoras, there is no tradition, to my knowledge, which links him to the reform of the night office.

This brings us to the second set of texts, in Syriac, from Nestorian *Vitae* of Rabban Hormizd, the eponymous founder of the famous monastery by that name near Mosul. The statements made at the Synod of Diamper about the contents of the text are borne out, though not quite in the same way as one would be led to expect.

First, there are extant several versions of the Life of Hormizd⁶⁶. The short metrical version composed by Emmanuel of Beit Garmai (11th cent.)⁶⁷ certainly is not the one condemned at Diamper, since it does not mention either Nestorius or Cyril. The extant long prose *Vita* ostensibly written by Simeon "disciple of Rabban Mar Yozādḥāq" does contain the adverse comments on Cyril, and the lengthy descriptions of the miracles performed by Hormizd⁶⁸, but so does the metrical version composed by one Sergius⁶⁹,

interpreting, in an apparently correct sense, the text of al-Maqrīzī (which he consulted in MS) rather than recording an oral Coptic tradition.

⁶⁶ Cf. BHO 88-89. For a detailed, but not entirely accurate, discussion of the ensemble of the Syriac texts, see J.M. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, vol. II (Beyrouth 1965), pp. 535-40. For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that there are two late Arabic MSS which contain hagiographical material, of undetermined nature, pertaining to Hormizd (GCAL I 527).

⁶⁷ Ed. G. Cardahi, *Liber thesaurus de arte poetica syrorum* (Rome 1875), pp. 142-145; for an annotated translation, see G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Leipzig 1888), pp. 19-22. On the author cf. GSL 288 and J.M. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, vol. III (Beyrouth 1968), p. 44. There are a number of other poetic compositions in the praise of Rabban Hormizd, for the most part unedited, but apparently of little historical value (Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne* II, p. 586); one of these, written by the 16th-century monk, Adam of 'Aqrā is edited in Cardahi, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-4. Cf. GSL 334.

⁶⁸ Ed. E. A. W. Budge, *The Histories of Rabban Hōrmīzd the Persian and Rabban Bar-Idtā*, vol. I (London 1902), pp. 1-109; trans. vol. II, part I, (London 1902), pp. 1-160. The section which is of particular interest to us here has been separately edited by Budge earlier in the Introduction to his edition of *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas of Marga ...*, vol. I (London 1893), pp. clxiv-clxv. Though Budge edited the complete text from a modern copy of only one MS, there are several MSS extant: see Baumstark, *GSL*, p. 205. One is rather surprised to note that Fiey firmly believes that the prose *Vita* is still an *ineditum* (*Assyrie chrétienne* II, p. 535), not realizing that Budge edited not only the metrical *Vita* (see next note) but also the prose *Vita*. Fiey moreover rather unjustly accuses Baumstark of confusing the prose and metrical *Vitae* (*op. cit.*, p. 535, note 2); Baumstark in fact lists separately the MSS of, and characterizes admirably, both works. The confusion rather is to be imputed to Fiey, who, quite amazingly, has seemingly failed to note that Budge edited and translated the prose *Vita* in vols. I and II, pt. I.

⁶⁹ Ed. E. A. W. Budge, *The Life of Rabban Hōrmīzd and the foundation of his Monastery at Al-Ḳōsh* (*Semitistische Studien: Ergänzungshefte zur Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, Heft 2/3*

in more florid language. It is not clear whether the prose or the metrical version was condemned at Diamper⁷⁰; here we shall concentrate on the text of the prose *Vita* on which Sergius' metrical version is apparently based⁷¹.

Before presenting and analyzing the pertinent material, some comments on dating are called for. Several pieces of evidence concur that Rabban Hormizd indeed lived in the middle of the seventh century⁷²; the dating of the hagiographical texts is more problematical. The prose *Vita* is attributed to a disciple of Rabban Yozādhāq the Great, who founded a monastery in the 7th century⁷³ and was, according to the *Vita*, one of Hormizd's early companions. Whether the work which is hardly a sober historical record, and which, in particular, introduces a fictitious Catholicos Tomaršā "the Second"⁷⁴, is to be dated so early is quite debatable. To place the

(Berlin 1894); translation Budge, *The Histories of Rabban Hōrmīzd the Persian and Rabban Bar-Idtā*, vol. II, part II, London (1902), pp. 307-514 (bound separately, but continues the pagination of part I; it should be noted that the numbering of the lines in the edition of the Syriac text does not exactly correspond to that in the translation). Fiey's aforementioned error of claiming that the prose *Vita* is not yet published is perhaps a result of his not having consulted at first hand all three volumes of Budge's work of 1902; Fiey states that Budge edited the metrical *Vita* first in 1894 "et enfin a Londres (1902), sous le titre de *Metrical Homely* [sic] of R. Hormizd's Life dans *The Histories of Rabban Hormizd the Persian and Rabban Bar Idta* [sic], en trois volumes". The work of 1902 only includes a translation of the metrical *Vita*, not the text itself. For a characterization of the work see GSL 330-31 and Th. Nöldeke's review of Budge's edition of 1894 in ZDMG 48 (1894) 531-39.

⁷⁰ Chabot in his previously cited article "L'autodafé des livres syriaques du Malabar" (see note 6) à propos the book of Rabban Hormizd notes that "cet ouvrage a été publié" with a reference to Budge's work of 1902 (p. 618) but he does not make any more comments on the different forms of the *Vita*. Budge, in the prolegomena to his various editions and translations of the material nowhere notes the mention of the work in the Diamper list. Fiey, à propos the popularity of the cult of Hormizd among the Malabar Christians, quotes some of the decisions of Diamper from Raulin's Latin translation, but simply states that the synod ordered that the legend of Hormizd be burned, "a brûler la légende de R. Hormizd" (*Assyrie chrétienne*, II, pp. 539-40, note 5). Of course it was a book, *o liuro de Hormisda Raban*, which was burned. It is harder to incinerate myths and legends!

⁷¹ So Budge, *The Histories*, vol. II, part II, pp. VII-VIII; the same judgment is reached, with respect to both Emmanuel of Beit Garmai's and Sergius' poems, by Nöldeke (*op.cit.*, pp. 531-2).

⁷² E.g. 'Amr ibn Mattā's (14th cent.) "Book of the Tower", ed. H. Gismondi, *Maris Amri et Slibae de patriarchis Nestorianorum Commentaria, pars II (textus)*, (Rome 1896), p. 50, line 6: وربان هرمزد القديس صاحب دير القوش. Cf. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, II, p. 534.

⁷³ GSL 205.

⁷⁴ Ed. Budge, p. 84. As far as Tomaršā I is concerned, the evidence (which does not antedate the 9th century) clearly places him in the fourth century (See J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide (224-632)* (Paris 1902), p. 85). There is no evidence for any Tomaršā II, besides the present text; the question *cui bono* is clearly

with the statuette, Hormizd exposes it to the ridicule of his co-religionists, the Nestorians, and exorcises the demon which dwells in, and speaks from, the image. Afterwards the image is carried around and exhibited as a kind of trophy among the Nestorian faithful of the neighborhood.

It should be noted that the wording makes it abundantly clear that an idol *stricto dictu* is meant, which is not identified by the hagiographer, even *in malam partem*, with an image of Christ or a saint. The charge is one of idolatry pure and simple, with attendant devil-worship. In a subsequent passage Hormizd has a contest with the abbot Ignatius of Mar Mattai⁸⁵; there again Ignatius is described as a heathen sorcerer, whose nefarious activities are not in any way connected with Christian practices. "Because he [Ignatius] was offering offerings always inside his cell, sometimes with birds, sometimes with kids and lambs, sometimes with cats and apes, sometimes drugs⁸⁶ in censers. He immolated and made libations to the deceiving devil⁸⁷" ⁸⁸. Ignatius is soon made aware of the theft of the idol by Hormizd, and the idol is described by the devil as his own image. "And the deceiving devil said: 'Hormizd the Nestorian⁸⁹ came with his devils by treachery⁹⁰ and went at night to the place of resting⁹¹ of Mattai and

Mattai and purified the monastery". ܡܬܬܝ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܝܬܐ (ed. Cardahi, p. 144). Emmanuel obviously depends on the same traditions which are found in the longer *Vita*, but I do not think that it is necessary to suppose textual dependence on the prose *Vita*, as Nöldeke does (*op. cit.*, p. 532). In particular the name of the idol (*Zakkay*) is peculiar to this text, the appearance of the angel is not mentioned, and instead of the diminutive *patkrunā*, the normal word *patkarā*, "idol" is employed. Perhaps one should emend ܡܬܬܝܬܐ to ܡܬܬܝܬܐ, "magic"; I find Hoffmann's emendation to ܢܢܝܐ, *Nanay*, the name of a pagan divinity (*Auszüge*, p. 21, note 157) hardly plausible. However, if one wishes to explain the MS reading, perhaps the author intends a reference to an icon of the 6th-cent. abbot Zakkay, instrumental in capturing the monastery of Mar Mattai permanently for the monophysites (*Vita* of Bar-Idtā, ed. Budge, lines 1069ff; cf. Fiey, *Assyrie*, II, pp. 768-9). It is, at any rate, quite plausible that "Zakkay" was not understood by the author of the prose *Vita* and he replaced it by ܡܬܬܝܬܐ "worthless".

⁸⁵ I have not been able to find any other reference to this abbot Ignatius, who plays a role much like that of Simon Magus in earlier legend. He meets his end when, exhibiting aerial acrobatics before the governor of Mosul he is first immobilized, then dashed to the ground by the prayers of Hormizd, and perishes miserably as his bowels burst, like Arius'! For a study of accusations of magical practices brought against ecclesiastical dignitaries, in particular the "Nestorian" bishop Sophronius of Tella, see E. Peterson, "Die geheimen Praktiken eines syrischen Bischofs" in *Frühkirche, Judentum und Gnosis* (Freiburg im B. 1959), pp. 333-45.

⁸⁶ ܡܬܬܝܬܐ, literally "eye lotions".

⁸⁷ ܡܬܬܝܬܐ.

⁸⁸ Ed. Budge, p. 95.

⁸⁹ ܢܢܝܐ.

⁹⁰ ܡܬܬܝܬܐ.

⁹¹ ܡܬܬܝܬܐ.

them, as it were, saviors and redeemers for those who are possessed by devils ..."¹⁰⁰.

The *Vita* thus far has identified Cyril as the perverter of the faith but does not connect him with idolatry or image worship; rather it is "Marcion" who, after Cyril has prepared the ground, so to speak, introduces idols in the temples of Cyril's adherents. Now quite apart from the anachronism, this can hardly be taken as serious information about the second-century heretic, Marcion. Marcion and the Marcionites are often confused with other heretics of a like appellation in heresiological literature; in particular the Marcosians, followers of the gnostic Marcus who, apparently with much more justice than Marcion, can be called a magician¹⁰¹, have been confused with the Marcionites proper¹⁰². However, unlike the Carpocratian and Simonian gnostics, the Marcosians are not specifically accused of practicing idolatry or image worship¹⁰³. The seeming allusions to Marcion rather may be a reference to the emperor *Marcian*, of Chalcedonian fame¹⁰⁴, who in the mind of medieval Nestorian writers may well have been regarded as supporting and completing the nefarious work of Cyril.

At any rate, right after identifying "Marcion" as the one who introduced idols, the angel continues to explain Cyril's role. In every altar of his adherents, in churches or monasteries, there is a small idol placed, and this idol is worshipped and sacrifice is offered to it. Divine grace is removed from these people "because [the one who] brought the destruction upon

¹⁰⁰ Ed. Budge, pp. 81-82. In translating the last phrase I have adopted Budge's emendation of ܐܝܕܠܐܬܐ to ܐܝܕܠܐܬܐ (*op. cit.*, vol. II, pt. I, p. 121, note 3). The rest of the passage is rather involved, describing forms of demonic activity, and is of no direct consequence here.

¹⁰¹ Irenaeus says that, *inter alia*, he could perform the trick of turning water into wine (*Adv. haer.* Bk. I, 13:2).

¹⁰² Cf. A. von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, 2. Aufl. (Leipzig 1924), p. 9*, note 2.

¹⁰³ Cf. H. Koch, *Die altchristliche Bilderfrage* (Göttingen 1917), pp. 13-14. To be sure, one of the "elders" quoted by Irenaeus apostrophizes Marcus as a "maker of idols": *Εἰδωλοποιέ, Μάρκε, καὶ τερατοσκόπε* (*Adv. Haer.* Bk. I, 15:6). À propos Cyril and Gnostic magicians it should perhaps be noted that according to the 8th-century Nestorian heresiologist Theodore bar Kōnī Cyril was "the offspring of Simon [Magus]", ܫܡܝܢ ܡܕܢܐ and that "it is reported that he was also driven to sorcery (ܠܡܥܝܢ)" and that he would even "offer in sacrifice an ass" (ܡܕܢܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ). Ed. H. Pognon, *Inscriptions mandaites des coupes de Khouabir* (Paris 1898), pp. 149-150.

¹⁰⁴ ܡܥܪܝܐܢ. The Grecizing ending is often omitted; thus, for "Nestorius" both the forms ܢܝܨܬܐ and ܡܥܝܬܐ are well attested. If the -os ending is dropped, "Marcion" and "Marcian" would be spelled identically in Syriac as ܡܥܝܐ. The epithet "sorcerer" may simply be explicable as a reflection of the interpretation of the name as meaning "drug" or "poison", attested in medieval lexica (Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus*, s.v.).

them, Cyril, the priest of devils and servant of demons¹⁰⁵, was the first in this sacrifice of rebellious demons, with the help of a certain woman, a sorceress who lived in Egypt and was called *Qgy*, the evil sorceress¹⁰⁶. And he handed on this heathen doctrine to his sons, and to the sons of the sons, the dogma and the accursed and contemptible teaching, and behold, [the teaching] was made fast and flourished in every land and city, by means of these little idols, in which destructive, accursed, execrable, and stinking devils dwell". Then, after a further characterization of the idol of the shrine as being, in the eyes of its worshippers, "in the stead of God, the governor of all"¹⁰⁷, an idol in the crassest sense of the term, Rabban Hormizd, through the angel's power, steals the statuette and regains his cell safely.

Now, since "Marcion" can hardly be explained as an *alias* for Cyril, the text, as we have it, does not even explicitly claim that Cyril himself introduced idolatry. Rather he is pictured as the one who initiated demon-worship, assisted by Marcion the sorcerer and Qaqi the Egyptian witch. Unless the declarations of the Synod of Diamper reflect a different text of the *Vita* — which is highly unlikely — the statement that "St. Cyril ... invented and introduced them [i.e. images]" is not a correct interpretation of the passage. Rather, taken in conjunction with the statement that "*the images* are dirty and foul", it seems that the epithets applied in the text to the demons themselves were misinterpreted as referring to images. At several points, it seems, the *censor deputatus* Roz and his assistants, either through haste or through a defective understanding of Syriac, misconstrued the meaning of the text, and in particular wrongly connected Cyril and image worship. Cyril seduced his followers to the cult of demons; his ally or successor "Marcion the sorcerer" introduced the practice of

¹⁰⁵ ܕܩܝܪܝܠ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܕܡܘܢܝܐ ܕܕܝܐܒܝܐ. This juxtaposition of two epithets is reflected rather faithfully in Diamper's "Sacerdote dos Demonios & ministro dos Diabos" (cf. note 14). The corresponding statement is made in a more diffuse manner in the metrical *Vita* (lines 2025-26); this points to the prose *Vita* as Diamper's *liuro de Hormisda Raban*. It is noteworthy that the next part of the Diamper summary, that Cyril "is in hell", *está no Inferno*, is not found in the Syriac text; it may reflect an explanatory MS gloss on why Cyril is "servant of devils". The mention of the persecution of Nestorius by Cyril, noted in the Diamper summary, occurs at an earlier point in the prose *Vita*, together with a characterization of Hormizd as "our Nestorius", ܕܢܝܨܬܘܪܝܘܨ ܕܡܝܪܝܬܐ (ed. Budge, p. 57). For the corresponding passage in the metrical *Vita*, see ed. Budge, lines 1467-8.

¹⁰⁶ ܩܩܝܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܥܝܠܐ. As Budge points out, the gloss points to ܩܩܐ = *Kákē*

¹⁰⁷ ܕܩܝܪܝܠ ܕܥܝܠܐ ܕܕܡܘܢܝܐ ܕܕܝܐܒܝܐ (ed. Budge, p. 83).

hiding little brass statuettes of demons in sanctuaries. This appears to be the meaning of this admittedly difficult and perhaps corrupt passage.

To conclude then: though scholars have claimed that Cyril's theology favors the cause of image worship, it is certainly not necessary to search for a historical kernel in the imputation of sorcery and demonolatry to Cyril¹⁰⁸ — and this is all that the texts say. The Coptic church in the medieval era was decidedly iconophile¹⁰⁹, as was the Syrian Jacobite church¹¹⁰. It may even be possible that, as some scholars have argued, iconophile Christian apologetic arguments were first elaborated in an Alexandrian milieu¹¹¹. But this development cannot be traced back beyond the sixth century¹¹²; our examination of the foregoing material indicates that not even medieval legend and historiography provides any evidence in favor of Cyril himself having initiated or encouraged the Christian cult of images.

¹⁰⁸ It is interesting to note that Budge gives some credence to the statement. "Cyril ... may have permitted the Mesopotamian Jacobites to retain the heathen custom [of burying apotropaic figurines under buildings], because he was familiar with it in Egypt" (*The Histories* ..., vol. II, pt. I, p. xvii). Budge apparently pictures Cyril as undertaking a sort of episcopal visitation in Mesopotamia — this, to put it mildly, hardly reflects the ecclesiastical and political situation of the fifth century! But Budge, to be sure, is more skeptical of the supposed role of *Qgy*: "whether he did so through the influence of the Egyptian sorceress 'Kâkî', i.e. *Kākē*, cannot be said". (*ibid.*)

¹⁰⁹ For a convenient collection of some pertinent texts, see O. F. A. Meinardus, "Mystical Phenomena among the Copts", *Ost* 15 (1966) 301-307.

¹¹⁰ For the sake of comparison, a typical example of a miracle wrought by an icon against heresy will be noted here. In a Syriac legendary *Vita* of Nestorius, as violently hostile to the latter as the *Vita* of Hormizd is toward Cyril, the actions of the fathers of Ephesus (headed, somewhat anachronistically, by John Chrysostom!) are approved by the miracle of the motion of the right hand of an image of the Virgin with the Child, accompanied by the image uttering words of approbation (ed. E. Goeller, "Eine jakobitische 'vita' des Nestorius", *OrChr* 1 (1901) 282).

¹¹¹ So P. J. Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, p. 36; A. H. Armstrong suggests that more specifically this may be traced to Christians in the intellectual circle of Olympiodorus, the 6th-century Alexandrian Neoplatonist ("Some Comments on the Development of the Theology of Images" *Studia Patristica* IX (Berlin 1966), pp. 125-126). The fact remains, nonetheless, that the earliest extant reasoned Christian defense of images is a letter of Hypatius of Ephesus (6th cent.). On Hypatius' arguments see G. Lange, *Bild und Wort; Die katechetischen Funktionen des Bildes in der griechischen Theologie des sechsten bis neunten Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg 1968), pp. 44-60, with references to older literature on the subject; see also my article "Hypatius of Ephesus on the Cult of Images", in *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. J. Neusner (Leiden 1975), part II, pp. 208-216.

¹¹² Cyril does discuss, without apparent disapproval, a painting of the sacrifice of Abraham (PG 77, 220). This, and other statements of Cyril taken out of context were incorporated in the iconophile arsenal of patristic prooftexts assembled in the eighth century. See P. van den Ven, "La patristique et l'hagiographie au concile de Nicée de 787" *Byzantion* 25-27 (1955-57) 349-50.