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Eutychius of Alexandria

Saʿīd b. al-Baṭrīq (or al-Biṭrīq, although al-Baṭrīq meaning patrician seems more likely, 263–328/877–940), also known as **Eutychius of Alexandria**, was the Melkite patriarch of Alexandria and author of the historiographical treatise *Kitāb nazm al-jawhar*, "The string of pearls," also known as *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh al-majmūʿ ʿalā l-taḥqīq wa-l-taṣdīq*, "The book of history, compiled through investigation and verification," or by its eleventh/seventeenth-century Latin title, the *Annales*. A native of al-Fusṭāt, Ibn al-Baṭrīq was appointed in 321/933 or 325/935 as patriarch of Alexandria by the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Qāhir (r. 320–22/932–4).

The diverse source material which Ibn al-Baṭrīq made use of in his historiographic work, along with the few discrepancies in his account of early Christian history, seems to corroborate Michel Breydy's observation of the patriarch's lack of proper theological training and his close ties with Muslim traditionists (Breydy, *Etudes*, 1). The fifth/eleventh-century patriarch of Antioch, Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṭāqī (d. c. 458/1066), continued from where Ibn al-Baṭrīq left off, with his own historiographic treatise, *Kitāb al-dhayl*. According to al-Anṭāqī, Ibn al-Baṭrīq suffered from an ongoing dispute with members of his community in al-Fusṭāt, at the height of which various Melkite congregations in Egypt renounced their allegiance to the patriarch.

Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270) lists in his biographical dictionary of physicians three works by Ibn al-Baṭrīq: *Kitāb fī-l-ṭibb, ʿilm wa-ʿamal*, "A treatise on medicine, theory and practice," or *Kunnāsh [fī-l-ṭibb]*, "The principles [of medicine]," of which a manuscript was found in Aleppo (*GAS* 3:297); *Kitāb al-jadal bayn al-mukhālif wa-l-Naṣrānī*, "A treatise on the debate between the heretic and the Christian"; and the aforementioned *Kitāb nazm al-jawhar*. The latter is currently extant in some 30 copies, of which the earliest, Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine, MS Ar. 582 (163 folios), dates to the time of the author himself.

Written in Arabic, the *Kitāb nazm al-jawhar* was finished in 326/938, just prior to Ibn al-Baṭrīq's death. In line with a literary genre that traces its origins to the so-called early Christian Eusebian historiographic tradition, the treatise purports

to relate human history from the time of Creation up until the time of the author. Yet, despite its broad chronological span, it is a rather short monograph (its earliest recording, Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine, MS Sinai Ar. 582 consists of approximately 242 folios) abridged through a careful selection of historical events and the insertion of apocryphal and legendary tales within the general narrative. The integration of external sources varies from brief paraphrasing of lengthy episodes to verbatim quotations, of which the treatment of Islamic sources is no exception. The latter include *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* ("tales of the prophets") for the depiction of the biblical past; the Arabic translation of the history of the Sassanid kings by ʿAbdallāh b. al-Muqaffaʿ (d. c. 139/756); and works by Ibn Baṭrīq's Muslim contemporaries, such as ʿUthmān b. Ṣāliḥ (d. 218/834), al-Yaʿqūbī (d. c.284/897 or 898), and al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956).

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