Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq

Eutychius of Alexandria

BIOGRAPHY

Little can be established with certainty about the life and career of Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq, a 10th-century Melkite patriarch of Alexandria. The earliest source to provide some detail is a 13th- or 14th-century copy of Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographical treatise, allegedly written by the patriarch himself (Ibn Baṭrīq, *Eutychii*, ed. Cheikho, Carra de Vaux and Zayyat, ii, pp. 69-70, 86-87). It is here that we are informed for the first time that Ibn Baṭrīq, the *mutaṭabbib*, i.e. a practitioner of medicine, was born in Fusṭāṭ in the eighth year of the caliphate of al-Muʿtamid (r. 870-92), i.e. 877, and was appointed in 933 as patriarch of Alexandria by the Caliph al-Qāhir (r. 932-34), whereupon he was named Eutychius; he died in 940.

Michel Breydy suggests fixing the year of his election as 935 (Breydy, *Études*, p. 5). Further information about Ibn Baṭrīq is given in the historiographical treatise of Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī (d. approximately 1066), the Melkite historian who continued Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographical endeavor (al-Anṭākī, *Kitāb al-dhayl*, ed. and trans. Kratchkowsky and Vasiliev, pp. 713-19). Al-Anṭākī relates that Ibn Baṭrīq died in Egypt in 328 AH, following an illness. It was surmised that he contracted his fatal illness in the course of practicing medicine. As for his ecclesiastical office, according to Breydy, Ibn Baṭrīq had not received the regular intellectual and theological training of the Melkite clergy of his time and was well immersed in the Fusṭāṭ milieu of Muslim traditionists (Breydy, *Études*, p. 1).

Al-Anṭākī also reports that in Ibn Baṭrīq's time there was a great dispute between the latter and members of his flock. The source of this dispute, we are told, was opposition to the patriarch that came from the direction of a group of physicians from Fusṭāṭ. The opposition, led by a one of the Melkite bishops, reached the point where

Ibn Baṭrīq's name was banned in some of the Egyptian bishoprics and their churches.

Al-Anṭākī also appears to be the source on which a substantial part of Ibn Baṭrīq's biography in the 13th-century biographical dictionary of Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 1270) is based. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa attributes three works to Ibn 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 (Sbath, *Al-Fihrist*, i, p. 9, no. 23; Sezgin, *GAS* iii, p. 297); *Kitāb al-jadal bayn al-mukhālif wa-l-Naṣrānī*, 'A treatise on the debate between the heretic and the Christian'; and *Kitāb naẓm al-jawhar*, 'The string of pearls'. A work that has been wrongly attributed to Ibn Baṭrīq is the *Kitāb al-burhān*, 'The book of proof', now believed to have been composed by Peter of Bayt Raʾs (q.v.).

Of the above-mentioned works of Ibn Baṭrīq, however, it is the third, *Kitāb naẓm al-jawhar*, also known as *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh al-majmūʿ ʿalā l-taḥqīq wa-l-taṣdīq* ('The book of history, compiled through investigation and verification') for which the Melkite patriarch is most famous. This is a historiographical treatise, called the *Annales* by Edward Pococke in his edition and Latin translation of the work in 1658-59. According to al-Anṭākī, Ibn Baṭrīq finished writing it in 938, two years before his death in 940.

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary
Al-Masʿūdī, *Les prairies d'or*, trans. C. Pellat, 7 vols, Paris, 1966-79, ii, p. 493
Al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf*, ed. M.J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1894, p. 154
Sāwīrus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kitāb al-majāmiʿ* (*PO* 3), ed. and trans. P. Chélbi, pp. 21-242
Elias of Nisibis, *Buch vom Beweis der Wahrheit des Glaubens*, ann. and trans. L. Horst, Colmar, 1886, pp. x, 22-44, 73-84
Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī, *Kitāb al-dhayl* (*PO* 18), ed. and trans. J. Kratch-kowsky and A. Vasiliev, pp. 705, 713-19
William of Tyre, *Chronique* (*Corpus Christianorum* 63-63A), ed. R.B.C. Huy-gens, 2 vols, Turnhout, 1986, p. 1018
Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ*, ii, pp. 86-87
Ibn al-ʿAmīd (= al-Makīn), MS Paris, BNF – ar. 294, fol. 245r (13th century)
T.F. Michel, *A Muslim theologian's response to Christianity. Ibn Taymiyya's Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Delmar NY, 1984

Abrahamo Ecchellensi, *Eutychius Patriarcha Alexandrinus vindicatus, et suis restitutus Orientalibus*, Rome, 1661

Secondary

S.K. Samir, 'Le traité sur les icônes d'Abù Qurrah mentionné par Eutychius', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 58 (1992) 461-74

Nasrallah, *HMLEM* ii.2, pp. 23-34

A. Makhlouf, 'The trinitarian doctrine of Eutychius of Alexandria (877-940 AD)', *Pd'O* 5 (1974) 5-20

G. Troupeau, 'La littérature arabe chrétienne du Xᵉ au XIIᵉ siècle', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 14 (1971) 1-20, pp. 6, 16-17

Sezgin, *GAS* iii, p. 297

P. Cachia (ed.) and W.M. Watt (trans.), *Eutychius of Alexandria. The book of the demonstration (Kitāb al-burhān)* (CSCO 192-93, 209-10), 4 vols, Louvain, 1960-61

A.A. Vasiliev, *Byzance et les Arabes*, 3 vols, Brussels, 1935, ii [La dynastiie macédonienne], pp. 24-27

E. Michailidis, 'Eutychios Alexandreias', *Ekklesiastikos Pharos* 33 (1934) 7-29, 209-36, 344-66

Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 32-38

G. Graf, 'Ein bisher unbekanntes Werk des Patriarchen Eutychius von Alexandrien', *Oriens Christianus* [n.s.] 1 (1911) 227-44

C. Brockelmann, *Die syrische und die christlich-arabische Literatur*, Leipzig, 1909, p. 71

L. Cabrol, art. 'Alexandrie', in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 15 vols, Paris, 1907-53

F. Nau, art. '*Eutychius*', in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 15 vols, Paris, 1923-50

Brockelmann, *GAL* i², pp. 154-55, S i, p. 228

L. Leclerc, *Histoire de la médicine arabe*, 2 vols, Paris, 1876, i, pp. 404-5

J.M. Neale, *History of the holy Eastern Churches*, 5 vols, London, 1847-73, ii [The patriarchate of Alexandria], pp. 181-83

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Kitāb al-taʾrīkh al-majmūʿ ʿalā l-taḥqīq wa-l-taṣdīq, 'The book of history, compiled through investigation and verification'; *Kitāb naẓm al-jawhar*, 'String of pearls', also known as the *Annales*

DATE   938

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE   Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The Arabic historiographical treatise known as the *Annales*, following its Latin translation by E. Pococke in 1658-59, is also known as *Kitāb naẓm al-jawhar*, 'String of pearls' and *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh al-majmūʿ ʿalā l-taḥqīq wa-l-taṣdīq*, 'The book of history, compiled through investigation and verification'. Although the work has often been referred to as a Byzantine universal history, nothing in the composition suggests its classification within a particular category of historiographical works. Rather, the work reflects a mixture of diverse historiographical traditions, among which one can list Eusebian chronography, Sasanian and Muslim historiographies, Palestinian hagiography, and legendary tales of various sorts. It was completed, according to al-Anṭākī, in 938.

The oldest manuscript copy of the work, MS Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine – Ar. 582 (163 folios), represents the oldest known text of the *Annales*. Indeed, Michel Breydy, who has presented the most detailed study of the manuscript, has argued that the text is the autograph of Ibn Baṭrīq himself. The manuscript has the dimensions of a notebook and consists of 163 folios. According to Breydy, it lacks roughly two parts of the beginning of the original work and six of its end. Furthermore, the part referring to the caliphs al-Qāhir (r. 932-34) and al-Rāḍī (r. 934-40), could not have been composed by Ibn Baṭrīq himself. The original manuscript may have consisted of 242 folios, of which 23 are missing at the beginning and about 56 at the end. A comparison of the text of MS Sinai Ar. 582 with the texts conserved in later manuscripts, reveals evident traces of successive manipulations, as well as divergences of the later texts from the earliest (and possibly original) version.

Breydy's analysis has yielded what is now a generally accepted distinction between MS Sinai Ar. 582 and those that came after it, thus designating the former as part of a so-called Alexandrian recension and the latter as a so-called Antiochene recension. Whereas MS Sinai Ar. 582 is believed to have originated in Alexandria, perhaps written by the patriarch himself, the subsequent manuscripts, of which the earliest can be dated to the 13th century, appear to have originated in Antioch.

Ibn Baṭrīq, like Muslim traditionists (*muḥaddithūn* or *ahl al-ḥadīth*), did not compose a historiographical work in the scientific sense of the word. He compiled traditions whose historical value remains to be established. The scheme of the principal sections of the work is as follows: 1) Biblical history – from the creation of Adam till the reform of Joshua son of Jehozadak, following the return of the

Babylonian captives to Judah. In MS Sinai Ar. 582, where the two first sections are missing, this first section begins with the rescue of Moses from the waters of the Nile. 2) Secular history – up to the coming of Christ, including the history of ancient Persia, Alexander the Great, Cleopatra, and the Roman emperors of that period. 3) Evangelical history – from the birth of Christ till the end of the reign of Constantine, with special reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, the Diocletian persecutions, the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus under the emperor Decius, and the heresy of Arius. 4) Secular and religious history of the Near East – until the beginning of the 7th century, containing details regarding the Emperor Theodosius and the Patriarch Theophilius of Alexandria, the rest of the legend of the Seven Sleepers, with fragments of Sasanian history and hagiographical extracts on the monks of Palestine, Epiphanius of Cyprus, Apollinarius of Alexandria, and the Emperor Maurice, with the legend of the brigand of Thrace. This part concludes with the last Sasanian kings, the recovery of Jerusalem, the life of John the Almsgiver, and the exploits of the Emperor Heraclius. 5) Arab-Muslim history – from the migration (*hijra*) of Muḥammad till the period of Ibn Baṭrīq, including the Arab conquest of south Palestine, the history of Sophronius of Jerusalem, and the Muslim takeover of Damascus, the rest of Palestine and Egypt. Whereas the continuation of the narrative of the last section in the Antiochene recension follows the order of succession of the caliphs till al-Rāḍī in 935, in MS Sinai Ar. 582 it is mutilated after f. 161, where we find only two fragments of this continuation. These fragments concern the end of the history of Thomas of Jerusalem and the beginning of the narrative about the Coptic revolt in Lower Egypt during the reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Maʾmūn.

In addition to parts of the Bible, Ibn Baṭrīq also made extensive use of Judaeo-Christian apocrypha, such as the *Cave of treasures, The lives of the prophets*, and *The martyrdom and ascension of Isaiah*. It is unclear to which version of the Bible Ibn Baṭrīq had access or whether he did in fact rely on a written version of it. The section on secular history is mainly based on extracts taken from the famous *Alexander Romance*. The third section, dealing with the life of Christ and the sending out of the Apostles, depends on chapters of the New Testament and the Acts of the Apostles. In the fourth section, which deals with the secular and religious history of the Near East, we can verify a number of immediate sources in Arabic hagiographic writings, well disseminated among the Melkites of Palestine and Sinai. These

include the *Life of St Epiphanius of Cyprus* and Cyril of Scythopolis' (d. 558) *Lives* of St Euthymius and St Sabas. Finally, a particular work from which Ibn Baṭrīq drew much of his narrative is the Arabic translation of the history of the Sasanid kings, prepared by the Muslim convert ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. c. 756). A strikingly literal correspondence between the last section of MS Sinai Ar. 582 and Muslim sources that conserve a textual transmission that had originated with the Egyptian *muḥaddith* ʿUthmān ibn Ṣāliḥ (d. 834) regarding the conquest of Egypt, allows us to believe that Ibn Baṭrīq had similarly transcribed extracts from other Muslim authors as well.

In addition to his explicit reliance on Muslim sources for relating the period following the Muslim conquest, Ibn Baṭrīq's work suggests an awareness of the Muslim environment. Two examples are particularly striking. The first is his presentation of Judaeo-Christian apocryphal narratives in a manner that had been adapted by Muslim authors, particularly narrators of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* ('Tales of the prophets'). We see this, for example, in his reference to Muslim prophets such as Shuʿayb and al-Khiḍr (Sinai Ar. 582, fols 1, 5, 19). The second example pertains to his description of the encounter between the second caliph, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644) and the patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius (d. 638). The version of events presented in the *Annales* is the only extant account that includes a commitment on the part of the new Muslim sovereigns to preserve the rights of the Christians in the Holy City (fols 138-40).

The *Annales* also stand in affinity with the works of Ibn Baṭrīq's Muslim contemporaries. Thus, for example, there appears to be a remarkable correlation between the *Annales* and al-Yaʿqūbī's *History* in their account of the biblical history of the patriarchs up to the time of Abraham. It has therefore been suggested that the two authors were making use of a common Arabic translation of the *Cave of treasures* (Griffith, 'The Gospel, the Qurʾān'). Furthermore, not only does the Muslim historian and geographer al-Masʿūdī (d. 956) inform us that he has seen Ibn Baṭrīq's work, but various parts in his historiographical composition, *Murūj al-dhahab* ('The meadows of gold'), suggest that he may even have consulted Ibn Baṭrīq's work before putting down his own narrative. The Melkite historian Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī (d. c. 1066) considered himself as the formal continuator of Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographical endeavor through his work *Kitāb al-dhayl* ('The supplement'). As for later reliance on Ibn Baṭrīq's work, one can mention among the authors who made

use of the *Annales* the Catholic Archbishop William of Tyre (d. 1186), who in his chronicle relied on Ibn Baṭrīq's list of Muslim caliphs, and the Coptic historians Ibn al-Rāhib (d. c. 1290-95) and al-Makīn (d. 1273), who had adopted the literary model found in Ibn Baṭrīq's composition. It is this latter literary tradition that later also served the Mamlūk historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442).

SIGNIFICANCE

While Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative is not always loyal to its sources (for example, in the case of the reference to the Sasanids, which was most likely borrowed from ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's translation), it should be noted that we have no way of ascertaining whether the sources on which the *Annales* are based were revised directly by Ibn Baṭrīq or by intermediate authors. In fact, the only parts of the work that we can attribute to Ibn Baṭrīq with confidence are those few instances of personal reflections the historian chose to insert in his narrative. That said, some consideration should be given to the role played by Ibn Baṭrīq both in selecting his sources and in dictating the thematic arrangement of his work.

The *Annales* are currently extant in some 30 manuscripts, copied both in the Near East and in the West. However, nothing in Ibn Baṭrīq's biography helps to explain the importance of his work. The historiographical objective of the work notwithstanding, it has been suggested that it was its apologetic aspect that has sustained its relevance over the centuries. The treatise triggered an apologetic literary response by some of the leading theologians of Ibn Baṭrīq's time and afterwards, such as the Copt Sāwīrus (Severus) ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. after 987) (q.v.), the East Syrian Iliyyā (Elias) of Nisibis (d. c. 1049) (q.v.), and the Muslim Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) (q.v.). Like his Melkite contemporaries, Ibn Baṭrīq appears to have been preoccupied with matters pertaining to his denominational affiliation, as can be discerned from various parts in the work that refer to rival Christian groups. At the same time, however, he was firmly embedded within a Muslim cultural milieu, which increases our confusion as to the author's objectives, particularly as we note his resort to Muslim sources, to the extent of exact quotation.

MANUSCRIPTS

For a detailed survey of the extant manuscripts, see Breydy, *Études*, ch. iv; Graf, *GCAL* ii, pp. 34-35; Nasrallah, *HMLEM*, ii.2, pp. 26-28. See also B. de Slane, *Catalogue des mss. orientaux de la Bibliothèque*

Nationale, Paris, 1883, i, p. 80; G. Vajda, *Répertoire des catalogues et inventaires de mss arabes*, Paris, 1949, p. 525 and *passim*; G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des mss. arabes*, Paris, 1972, i, pp. 258-64.

EDITIONS & TRANSLATIONS

B. Pirone, *Eutichio, patriarca di Alessandria. Gli Annali* (*Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographiae* 1), Cairo, 1987 (Italian trans. of Cheikho's 1906-9 edition)

M. Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios von Alexandrien. Ausgewählte Geschichten und Legenden kompiliert von Saʾīd ibn Baṭrīq um 935 AD*, 2 vols (*CSCO* 471-72), Louvain, 1985 (edition using the oldest MS: Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine – Ar. 582 [10th century], with German trans.)

L. Cheikho, B. Carra de Vaux, and H. Zayyat (eds), *Eutychii Patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, 2 vols (*CSCO* 50-51), Paris, 1906-9 (edition using MSS Paris, BNF – Ar. 288 [14th century] and 291 [15th century according to Cheikho, 17th century according to De Slane, and 18th century according to Troupeau, *Catalogue*])

PG 111, cols 907-1156 (a reprint of Pococke's edition and trans.)

E. Pococke, *Contextia gemmarum sive Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini annales*, Oxford, 1658-59 (edition and Latin trans. based on Selden's edition)

J. Selden, *Eutychii Agyptii, patriarchae orthodoxorum Alexandrini…Ecclesiae suae origines*, London, 1642 (an edition of Arabic extracts taken from MSS Oxford, Bodleian – Ar. Christ. 46 [1628], 90 [1673], and 91 [1639])

STUDIES

S.H. Griffith, 'Apologetics and historiography in the annals of Eutychius of Alexandria. Christian self-definition in the world of Islam', in R. Ebied and H. Teule (eds), *Studies on the Christian Arabic heritage*, Louvain, 2004, 65-89

S.H. Griffith 'The Gospel, the Qurʾān, and the presentation of Jesus in al-Yaʿqūbī's *Taʾrīkh*', in J.C. Reeves (ed.), *Bible and Qurʾān. Essays in scriptural intertextuality*, Atlanta GA, 2003, 133-60, pp. 147-49

F.C.W. Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus. Zeven eeuwen Arabische Alexandertraditie, van Pseudo-Callisthenes tot Ṣūrī*, Leiden, 2003 (Diss. Leiden University), p. 18 and passim (see also F.C.W. Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus. A survey of the Arabic Alexander tradition through seven centuries, from Pseudo-Callisthenesto Ṣūrī*, Louvain, forthcoming)

U. Pietruschka, 'Muslimische Überlieferungen in christlichem Gewand. Das Annalenwerk des Eutychius von Alexandria', in W. Beltz and J. Tubach (eds), *Regionale Systeme koexistierender Religionsgemeinschaften (Leucorea Kolloquium 2001)*, Halle, 2002, 257-86

R. Pummer, *Early Christian authors on Samaritans and Samaritanism*, Tübingen, 2002, pp. 430-40

S.H. Griffith, 'The *Kitab miṣbāḥ al-ʿaql* of Severus Ibn Al-Muqaffaʿ. A profile of the Christian creed in Arabic in tenth century Egypt', *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996) 15-41

H. Horst, 'Eutychios und die Kirchengeschichte – Das erste Konzil von Nikaia (325). Eutychios et l'histoire de l'église. Le premier concile de Nicée (325)', *Oriens Christianus* 74 (1990) 152-67

G. Troupeau, 'Un réfutation des Melkites par Sévère ibn al-Muqaffaʿ', in C. Laga, J.A. Munitz, and L. Van Rompay (eds), *After Chalcedon. Studies in theology and church history*, Louvain, 1985, pp. 371-80

H. Möhring, 'Zu der Geschichte der orientalischen Herrscher des Wilhelm von Tyrus. Die Frage der Quellenabhägigkeiten', *Mittellateinsches Jahrbuch* 19 (1984) 170-83

M. Breydy, *Études sur Saʾīd ibn Baṭrīq et ses sources* (*CSCO* 450), Louvain, 1983

S.H. Griffith, 'Eutychius of Alexandria on the Emperor Theophilus and iconoclasm in Byzantium. A 10th-century moment in Christian apologetics in Arabic', *Byzantion* 52 (1982) 154-90

M. Breydy, 'Mamila ou Maqella? La prise de Jérusalem et ses conséquences (614 AD) selon la récension alexandrine des Annales d'Eutychès', *Oriens Christianus* 65 (1981) 62-86

M. Breydy, 'Aspects méconnus des Annales d'Eutychès d'Alexandrie, et une compilation historique arabo-chrétienne à la façon de traditionnistes musulmans', in W. Voigt (ed.), *XX. Deutscher orientalistentag* (*ZDMG* suppl. 4), Wiesbaden, 1980, pp. 148-53

P. Mayerson, 'Procopius or Eutychius on the construction of the monastery at Mount Sinai. Which is the more reliable?', *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 230 (1978) 33-38

G. Troupeau, 'Ibn Taymiyya et sa réfutation d'Eutychès', *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 30 (1978) 209-20

M. Breydy, 'La conquête arabe de l'Égypte. Un fragment du traditionniste ʿUthman ibn Ṣāliḥ (144-219 A.H. = 761-834 A.D.) identifié dans les Annales d'Eutychios d'Alexandrie (877-940 A.D.)', *Pd'O* 8 (1977-78) 379-96

M. Breydy, 'Mitteilung über die älteste Vorlage des Annales Euty-
chii in der identifizierten Hs. Sinaï Arab. 580 (582)', *Oriens
Christianus* 59 (1975) 165-68

P. Schreiner, 'Fragment d'une paraphrase grecque des Annales
d'Eutychès d'Alexandrie', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 37
(1971) 384-90

R.W. Crawford, 'William of Tyre and the Maronites', *Speculum* 30
(1955) 222-28

G. Levi Della Vida, 'Two fragments of Galen in Arabic translation',
JAOS 70 (1950) 182-87

J. Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1923,
passim

R. Burtin, 'Un texte d'Eutychius relative à Éleona', *Revue Biblique*
[n.s.] 11 (1914) 401-23

T. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasani-
den, aus der Arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetzt und mit
ausführlichen Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen versehen*, Leiden,
1879, pp. xix, xxi

A. von Gutschmid, *Kleine Schriften. Schriften zur Geschichte und Lit-
eratur der semitischen Völker und zur älteren Kirchengeschichte*,
5 vols, Leipzig, 1890, ii, pp. 399-400, 412, 480, 486, 495

Uriel Simonsohn