

## INTRODUCTION



[1] As we shall see, the Muslim conquest of Palestine was not an expeditious event, at any rate not in present-day terms. It was evidently a process which began before the death of Muḥammad and at first, its principal aim was to draw the Arab tribes living under Byzantine rule into the Islamic camp – a process which lasted some ten years until the capture of Ascalon, which held out until 644. The Muslim conquest of Palestine opened an entirely new page in Palestine's history. The new element in the situation was the fact that the nomadic tribes, which for many generations had been kept at a distance from the cultivated lands and their cultures by the rulers of those lands, were now forcefully spearheading into these lands and becoming their masters. A new society was born. While the subdued population, Jews and Christians, continued to form the majority in Palestine during the period under discussion, the Bedouin constituted the ruling class under the Damascene caliphate; whereas for generations after 750, the year of the Abbasid revolt, the Muslim officials, the military, the religious personalities and legalists, ruled the country.

The most characteristic feature of this period was the undermining of internal security. These scores of generations (or more precisely, 465 years), witnessed almost unceasing warfare. The Muslim camp, which first appeared on the scene in an amazingly disciplined and united fashion, soon disintegrated. Behind the façade of the Islamic state, which stubbornly pursued its war against enemies from without, ancient inter-tribal differences arose, adding to the struggle for leadership. These quickly extended beyond the boundaries of verbal argument and political conniving and moved into the field of war and bloodshed. Later on, we shall discover, these wars took on a special significance for Palestine after the process of fragmentation of the caliphate was completed and Egypt assumed independence, ridding itself of the yoke of the central Muslim rule then located in Baghdad. The circumstances which prevailed in Palestine in ancient times were then renewed with even greater vigour,

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when adversaries from the North, East and South each sought to dominate it in order to prevent the likelihood of its being used as a springboard for attack by the opposing side. At the same time, Palestine once again became a permanent theatre of war between the belligerent camps, with an intensity and persistence of a kind unknown in antiquity. This led to the uprooting of the population and the destruction of the flourishing economy handed down by the Byzantines.

Apart from some ninety years during which Palestine was subject to the rule of Damascus, the country was far from the centre of government. The Damascene rulers viewed it as a region of Syria, part of al-Shām, a comprehensive term with more than one meaning which was used to denote both Syria and Palestine. True, they did not have the power to prevent inter-tribal warfare within Palestine's borders, but they did carry out building projects and attempted to improve the roads and irrigation systems. The rulers who succeeded them, however, in Baghdad and afterwards in Egypt, considered Palestine to be a neglected outlying area of interest only because of the taxes which could be extracted from the country and also for military purposes. The Christian world was interested in Palestine – particularly in Jerusalem – for religious reasons, expressing this interest in the form of pilgrimage, which continued despite difficulties and the enormous distances, as well as concern for the churches and monasteries. Nevertheless, it appears that the Christians' hold gradually declined, except in Jerusalem, and even there the Christian population became increasingly destitute. On the eve of the Crusades it was in a very sorry state indeed. Only in the Jewish mind did Palestine continue to occupy a central position. When Jews used the expression al-Shām at this time, the intended connotation was generally Palestine. The Jewish population residing in the country at the time of the Muslim conquest consisted of the direct descendants of the generations of Jews who had lived there since the days of Joshua bin Nun, in other words for some 2,000 years. During the more than four hundred years of Muslim rule, the Jewish population continued to exist despite difficulties. As to the conquest itself, it marked an important turning point in the annals of the city of Jerusalem and the history of the Jewish population in Palestine, the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and the establishment of a Jewish quarter within its confines. From a more general outlook, as the Muslim world allowed for comparatively greater freedom of movement from country to country and from region to region, we shall witness the phenomenon of Jews immigrating to Palestine from the East and the West. This immigration, which bore no ideological earmarks apart from a pure and simple attachment to the country, would at times be caused by hardship, such as the immigration from Iraq, while that of the Karaites forms a special chapter of its own.

As far back as Byzantine rule, the Palestinian sages were already arguing

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over the question 'whether most of Palestine is in the hands of the gentiles' or 'whether the greater part of Palestine is in the hands of Israel',<sup>1</sup> that is to say, to whom the major portion of the land of Palestine belongs. We may reasonably state that at the time of the Muslim conquest, a large Jewish population still lived in Palestine. We do not know whether they formed the majority but we may assume with some certainty that they did so when grouped together with the Samaritans.

An important source regarding Palestine's demographic structure during Byzantine rule are the stories of the Christian monk Bar-Şawmā. In the biography of this fighting monk, who was born in Samosata in Asia Minor and active in Palestine in the fifth century AD, it is told that the Jews, together with the heathens, constituted the majority in Palestine, Phoenicia and Arabia (which included the south of Palestine). There were as yet few Christians. The Jews and the Samaritans virtually governed the land and were persecuting the Christians. In the campaign against the Jews and the idol-worshippers, a band of forty monks led by Bar-Şawmā, and evidently with the assistance of the Byzantine army, came up against the opposition of 15,000 armed Jews. Among the synagogues that Bar-Şawmā destroyed was one (the source refers to a synagogue as *beyt shabe*) in the city Reqem of Gaya (Petra) 'which could bear comparison only to Solomon's temple'. In about the year 425, the Jews of the Galilee and its surroundings applied to the empress Eudocia to permit them to pray on the ruins of Solomon's temple, as Constantine had forbidden them to reside in the Jerusalem area. The author of the biography also cites the letter written by the Galilean Jews to Jews in Persia and Rome after they had received the empress' permission:

To the great and elevated nation of the Jews, from the Priest and Head of Galilee, many greetings. Ye shall know that the time of the dispersion of our people is at an end, and from now onwards the day of our congregation and salvation has come, for the Roman kings have written a decree to hand over our city Jerusalem to us. Therefore come quickly to Jerusalem for the coming holiday of Succoth, for our kingdom is established in Jerusalem.

And indeed 103,000 Jews came and gathered in Jerusalem but were stoned from the sky, 'something that cannot be doubted', whereas the Jews complained to Eudocia claiming that it was the monks who had attacked them.<sup>2</sup>

[2] The relative strength of the Samaritans is evident in their rebellions,

<sup>1</sup> PT Demai, ii, 22 c.

<sup>2</sup> The stories of Bar-Şawmā: Nau, *ROC*, 18 (1913), 19(1914); *REJ*, 83(1927); and Honigmann, *Le couvent*, Louvain 1954, 17f, who thinks that the stories of Bar-Şawmā are not credible, certainly with regard to the Jews mentioned there; he sees them as figments of the author's imagination, as he lived 100 years later. But this is a very facile way of dismissing ancient sources. We must not disregard or refute their contents even if they appear legendary in character; they still retain a germ of historical truth.

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which broke out generation after generation, in 484, in approximately 500, in 529, and in 555. An anti-Jewish polemical tract written at the beginning of the Muslim invasion of Palestine, entitled 'The Didaskalia [doctrine] of Jacob, the Recently Baptised', is indirect evidence of the large number of Jews in Acre and Sykamona (Haifa) at the time. Sufficiently clear reference to a dense population of Jews in southern Palestine has been preserved in Arabic sources which tell of the covenant made by Muḥammad in 630 with a number of Jewish settlements. Eilat (Ayla) is also described in Arabic sources as a city with many Jewish inhabitants. Procopius of Caesarea, writing in the middle of the sixth century, mentions the Jewish population in Eilat and its surroundings, which enjoyed a kind of autonomy there until Justinian's day.<sup>3</sup>

[3] The period preceding the conquest by the Muslims of important parts of the Byzantine Empire, was undoubtedly a period of decline and even of internal disintegration of the empire. The death of Justinian was followed by eras of anarchy, poverty and plagues. The chronicles describing the days of Justin II speak of the approaching end of the world. The prevailing and central event during this period was the war with Persia. In addition, the emperors were forced to wage wars against the Slavs and the Avars in the Balkan Peninsula, and also against the Longobards – Arians by creed – in Italy, which only came to an end in 568 with the latter's victory. Justinian reached a settlement with the Persians in 561 or 562 for a fifty years' peace.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The subject of Acre and Haifa: Maas, *BZ*, 20(1911), 576f; see also Procopius in the First Book of the Wars, ch. xix, 3–4. Many interpret his text as applying to the island of Iotabe which he mentions. But in saying 'there the Jews lived', he means the entire neighbourhood of Aila-Eilat, which he mentions at the beginning of that narrative. Eilat (Etzion Gaver) is 'Asya, or Asya, in the Talmudic sources. See Klein, *Freimann Jubilee Volume*, 116ff; Alon, *Studies*, I, 320. Eusebius already identified it in his *Onomastikon*, see the Klostermann edition, p. 62. On the Jewish character of certain localities in Palestine, such as Tiberias, Kefar Nahūm, Sepphoris and Nazareth, see what is written according to the sources of the Church Fathers in: Couret, *La Palestine*, 5f. He stresses that the Jews were part of the agricultural population of the country, as he puts it, together with the Greeks, the Samaritans and the Arabs. (See *ibid.*, 82, and his sources in n. 1 of that work.) The fact that Sepphoris was inhabited by Jews in the sixth century is recognisable from the Muslim tradition about Umayya, father of the family of the Damascus caliphs. He stayed in Palestine for ten years and lived with a captive who was kept by the Banū Lakhm, who was a 'Jewess from the people of Sepphoris', and had left behind a husband. She gave birth to Dhakwān, whose *kunya* was Abū 'Amr; one of the descendants of the family, 'Uqba b. Abī Mu'ayt, made an attempt on Muḥammad's life near the *ka'ba* in Mecca and was executed on the order of the Prophet, after having been captured during the battle of Badr; when he claimed that he was a tribesman of Quraysh, the Prophet retorted: 'You are but a Jew of the Sepphoris people'; see Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 1186, 1336f; Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 319; Bakrī, 837; Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, V, 90 (*s.v.* Abū 'Amr). Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, IV, 257f, has an additional tradition, in which al-Walid, the son of this 'Uqba, was governor of Kūfa at the time of Caliph 'Uthmān, when 'Aqīl ('Alī's brother), shouted at him that he was but a foreigner, of the people of Sepphoris.

<sup>4</sup> Vasiliev, *History*, 169ff; details of the peace settlement, see Menander, *CShB*, XII (1829), 346ff; cf. Bury, *History*, I, 467ff; II, 120 ff.

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[4] Justin II (565–578) violated the treaty and refused to pay the annual tribute to the Persians which was one of its conditions (30,000 gold nomismas, or the equivalent of *ca.* 130 kilograms). The negotiations conducted between Byzantium and the Turkish tribes on the northeastern borders of the Persian empire added to the tension. Meanwhile the Byzantines were busy in Italy with the Longobards' attacks, and long, drawn-out battles were waged against the Persians, continuing well into the era of Tiberius (578–582) and Mauricius (582–602). Only during the latter's reign did the scales tip down on the side of the Byzantines, principally because of internal quarrels within the Persian royal family. The Persians were obliged to sign a new peace agreement which involved the loss of large tracts of land in Armenia and northern Mesopotamia, and the cancelling of the annual tribute mentioned earlier.

The declining security along the borders of Byzantium brought about by attacks from the Barbarian peoples, gave rise to a change in the internal governing order; new administrative bodies were formed, such as the exarchates and themai, in which the ruling power lay in the hands of the army commanders. Finally, the army took over the capital itself, Mauricius was assassinated, and the army commander, Phocas, ascended the emperor's throne (602–610). During his reign, Byzantium was torn by internal dissension, which developed into a cruel civil war between the aristocrats (the blues) and the populist party (the greens). Some sources ascribe an important role to the Jews in these events, especially the Jews of Antioch.<sup>5</sup>

[5] In 610, Heraclius was crowned emperor. The chronicles speak highly of him and admit to his being able and well intentioned. Many world-shaking events took place during his reign: the Persian victories, which also led to their temporary conquest of Palestine, changes within the empire, and the Muslim conquests, which deprived Byzantium of much of its Mediterranean lands.

The Persian offensive had already begun in 611, and in the course of seven or eight years the Persians conquered Antioch, the major city of the Byzantine East, Damascus and all of Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor and also Egypt. The Persian campaign brought to light the existence of connections – at least emotional and possibly also one-sided – between the Jews and the Persians. Mutual interests had already been evident about a hundred years earlier, during the war in Ḥimyar, the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. Jews and Persians then shared interests although no evidence has been preserved of actual contact or collaboration, unlike the affiliation between Byzantium and the Ethiopians and the local Christians

<sup>5</sup> See: Demetrius Martyr, in *MPG*, vol. 116, 1261ff; Isidor Hispalensis, in *MPL*, vol. 83, 1056A; Sa'īd Ibn Biṭrīq (Cheikho), 589ff; Theophanes, 269; *Chronicon Paschale*, in *MPG*, vol. 92, 980; Maḥbūb (Agapius), 189 (449).

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of Ḥimyar. The Jews evidently enjoyed an important status in the Persian kingdom owing to their large numbers and also to the role occupied by Jewish merchants in Persia's international trade. Jewish soldiers served in the Persian army, and if we are to credit the account of Michael the Syrian, they even caused Persian commanders to put a halt to fighting on Jewish holidays.<sup>6</sup>

[6] There seems to be considerable exaggeration, however, in the accounts of those who describe the Persian conquest of Palestine as if it were an era of squaring accounts for the Jews; a sort of Messianic era. The *Chronicon Paschale* describes the death and destruction inflicted by the Persians in Jerusalem, without mentioning the Jews in this connection at all.<sup>7</sup>

[7] Antiochus Eustratios (his name dwindled to Strategios), a monk captured by the Persians in Jerusalem, describes the conquest of the city in greater detail. The patriarch Zacharias apparently intended to hand over Jerusalem peacefully but as its inhabitants opposed a settlement, it was conquered after a siege of twenty days. Antiochus places the blame for the murder of many of the city's Christians on the Jews; according to him Christians were murdered due to their refusal to accept Judaism. He also accuses the Jews of destroying the churches. Theophanes repeats Antiochus' remarks in his own chronicle, adding the story of a wealthy Jew called Benjamin of Tiberias, whom the Christians accused of having attacked them before the Emperor Heraclius when he passed through Tiberias after the Byzantine victory. Benjamin admitted his guilt and justified his actions as grounded in Jewish hostility towards Christians. He was saved from punishment by being baptised on the emperor's orders.<sup>8</sup>

[8] Other mediaeval chronicles merely copied and elaborated on these accounts, such as the anonymous Syriac chronicle which adds a story about the scheme which the Jews ('sons of the crucifiers') proposed to the Persian commander, namely to dig underneath the grave of Jesus in order to find the gold treasures lying underneath. From other sources it is clear that after the Persian conquest, Jerusalem and its inhabitants enjoyed a spell of serenity.

Modestus, abbot of the monastery named for the Holy Theodosius, who was the locum tenens for the exiled Zacharias, began to rebuild the city out of its ruins with contributions which poured in from the entire

<sup>6</sup> Michael the Syrian (Chabot), II, 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Chronicon Paschale*, in *MPC*, 92, 988.

<sup>8</sup> See the story of Antiochus in Couret, *ROC*, 2 (1897), 147–154 (MS Paris, Ar. 262); see also Peeters, *MUSJ*, 9:3, 1923–4; Clermont-Ganneau, *PEFQ*, 1898:44; Conybeare, *EHR*, 25:502, 1910; Peeters, *Anal. Boll.*, 38:144, 1920; Milik, *MUSJ*, 37:127, 1961; see more details concerning Antiochus in Peeters, *Tréfonds*, 210; Graf, *GCAL*, I, 411; see Theophanes, 300f, 328.

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Christian world, especially from the patriarch of Alexandria. In 619, while the country was still in Persian hands, Sophronius, who was to become patriarch in the autumn of 633, returned to Palestine. It is not clear whether Zacharias managed to return to Jerusalem as well, and there is conflicting information on the subject. A useful survey of sources dealing with the situation of the Jews in Palestine under Byzantine rule in the seventh century and with events which took place during the Persian conquest, including the Emperor Heraclius' policy towards the Jews, can be found in Nau's edition of the above-mentioned 'Didaskalia of Jacob', although the sources are treated by him with equal consideration and little critical discrimination. The same approach can be found today among some scholars dealing with the history of this period and its sources. Thus Stratos, who sees the Jews as responsible for whatever occurred in Jerusalem during the Persian conquest, produces an undiscerning mixture of sources together with present-day literature. For we have seen that those sources which are nearest in time and place to the events, do not mention the Jews at all. In the same manner, Hage repeats the 'information' that the Jews used to buy Christian captives in order to hand them over to be killed by the Persians. Pertusi writes in a similar vein.<sup>9</sup>

[9] While still engaged in the war against the Avars, Heraclius began to organise his forces for war against the Persians. It seems that an important aspect of his preparations was the pacts he concluded with tribes and peoples who were the Persians' enemies, particularly those of the Caucasus and the Khazars. Meanwhile the Persians were busy strengthening their alliance with the Avars. This war lasted some six years, from 622 until 628. One of its significant results was the defeat of the Avars in 626, when they were attempting to attack Constantinople in the wake of their collaboration with the Persians. One year later, towards the end of 627, the Persians suffered their greatest defeat near the ruins of ancient

<sup>9</sup> See the translation of the Syriac chronicle: Nöldeke, *Sitzungsb.* Wien, 128 (1892), No. 9, 24ff. The information regarding the Jewish revolt in Antioch that was supposed to have taken place in 610, with the approach of the Persians to the city, in Avi-Yonah, *Rome and Byzantium* (Hebrew), 1, 189, is basically erroneous. Maḥbūb (Agapius), 189(449), has information regarding this revolt as having taken place during the reign of Phocas, and it does not belong here. The town of Caesarea which the Jews handed over to the Persians, according to Sebeos (whose information is generally not correct) is not the Caesarea of Palestine, as assumed by Sharf, 49, but Caesarea in Cappadocia; cf. Avi-Yonah, *ibid.*, 224. See also Sa'īd Ibn Biṭriq, I, 216, who repeats the account of the Jews' aid to the Persians. These sources served as a pretext for a violently anti-Semitic article by Vailhé, *Échos d'Orient*, 12:15, 1909. 'The popular belief he says, 'disseminated almost throughout the entire world, which sees the hand of the Jews in the great calamities which spilled the blood of mankind, is not only the product of our times, and it is not only now that this strange race is ascribed a frightening role in the tragedies that befall a city or a nation . . .'; see Schönborn, 71, on the agreement and rehabilitation; see Nau, *Didaskalie*, 732ff, Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 109ff; Hage, *Syrisch-jakobitische Kirche*, 86; Pertusi, *Persia*, 619.

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Nineveh, in the northern part of Mesopotamia. The Byzantine army plunged into the heart of Persia, Khusraw was dethroned and assassinated, and his heir, Kawad Sheroe, entered into negotiations with Heraclius. The Byzantines thus recovered all their lost lands and the Persians returned to the Byzantines the 'holy wood', a relic of the cross on which, according to Christian belief, Jesus was crucified. During his triumphal journey, Heraclius visited Jerusalem and together with his wife, Martina, participated in the ceremony of returning the 'holy wood'. This victory is hinted at in the Koran, in *sūrat al-rūm* (the chapter on Byzantium) xxx:1: 'The Byzantines were subdued in the nearby country, but after their defeat, they will be the victors in a few years time.'

During the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614, Muḥammad was already deeply engaged in his struggle against his townsmen, the people of Mecca, in an attempt to win them over to the small community of believers gathered round him. In 622, while he was fleeing to Medina with his followers, the Byzantines unleashed their war against the Persians. At the time, the latter were still reigning in Palestine, not far from Medina, and it seems that their influence was considerably felt in the Arabian Peninsula. In 628, with the return of Byzantine rule in Palestine, Muḥammad had already managed to arrange the truce in Ḥudaybiyya which prepared the ground for his conquest of Mecca. According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet was informed of the Byzantine victory on 'Ḥudaybiyya Day' and was pleased when he learned of the event. By summer's end of the same year, he organised his campaign against the Jewish farmers living in Khaybar, north of Medina. One can assume that this campaign was in some way connected with the defeat of the Persians, assumed to be the defenders of the Jews. The Byzantine victory was accompanied by a wave of persecution of the Jews throughout the Christian world. Both Christian and Muslim sources speak of Heraclius' edict of apostasy, intended to force all the Jews in his kingdom to convert to Christianity. This edict evidently suited the policy of centralisation and religious unity which Heraclius was resolutely trying to achieve, now that he was crowned with the laurels of victory. He undertook vigorous negotiations with the Monophysites in order to formulate a unified framework for the Church, for which purpose he was prepared to forego certain dogmatic precepts. They were to maintain the principle of Jesus' two natures (the divine and the human), but as a concession to the Monophysites, the Orthodox Church would have to recognise the unity of action and will (*hen thelēma*) from which stems the name of the new creed, Monotheletism. The patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius, supported the plan, as did the Monophysite patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria. Even the pope Honorius was inclined to accept the reform and was persuaded to authorise it in



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his letters to Sergius. It was the Palestinian monk Sophronius, later patriarch in Jerusalem, who emphatically objected to the emperor's plan. When Heraclius made public his plan for a new religious reform in 638, there was already another pope seated in Rome, Severin, who rejected it altogether. What was worse, the Christians in the East, whom the emperor had hoped to bring back into the arms of the Church on the score of his reform, had already been or were about to be conquered by Islam. During this period of efforts to arrive at the centralisation and maximal administrative and religious unification of the empire, the persecution of the Jews became a fixed and fundamental principle of state policy.

The Romanian historian of Byzantium, Brătianu, has described the situation very aptly in 1941:

One should stress a noteworthy fact, which sheds particular light on the similarity between the totalitarian, or at least authoritarian, regime in Byzantium in the seventh century, and those states which had, or still have today, a similar form of government: that the decline of political parties and the advent of absolute power, were in that period accompanied by a wave of acute anti-Semitism. There was nothing unusual in this, as the feeling of hatred toward the Jews was a commonplace feature of the Middle Ages, in Byzantium and elsewhere. But we are concerned here with planned and systematic persecution, which is not restricted to the Byzantine empire but attempts and also succeeds in dragging along with it the other Christian states on the Mediterranean coast.<sup>10</sup>

[10] Heraclius demanded of Dagobert, king of the Franks, that he compel all the Jews in his kingdom to convert to Christianity. This was indeed carried out, as it was in the rest of the empire, according to the chronicler Fredegarius. He, as well as Muslim writers, speaks of the portent revealed to Heraclius by his own reading of the stars, that a circumcised people would destroy his kingdom. As he was convinced that this portent referred to the Jews, he then issued decrees against them, unaware that the Muslims shared the tradition of having sons circumcised. Ibn Khaldūn gives a specific report about the fate of the Jews of Palestine: at first Heraclius promised the Jews security; afterwards he learned from the bishops and monks what the Jews had done to the churches, and even saw some of the destruction himself, and learned of the slaughter. He then decreed that the Jews should be killed; no one was saved except for those who hid or escaped to the mountains and deserts. As for the slaughter of the Jews of Palestine, this can also be inferred from the fact that one of the official fasts of the Coptic Church, which goes on for a week after the first

<sup>10</sup> See Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 1009; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, XIV, 5; the Prophet was pleased because the Byzantines were 'people of the Book' unlike the Persians; Brătianu, *Revue historique du sud-est européen*, 18(1941), 55f; on the return of the 'Holy Cross', see Schönborn, 86, according to whom the cross was returned only on 21 March 631, and not on 14 November 629, as was generally assumed.

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day of the Carnival (that is, the great fast before Easter), is intended to beg God's pardon for the emperor Heraclius for having permitted the slaughter of the Jews of Jerusalem in 628.<sup>11</sup>

[11] In the light of these facts, which are undoubtedly but a very insignificant part of what actually occurred, it is not surprising that the Jews abhorred Byzantium, the kingdom known as Edom the Wicked. Daniel al-Qūmisī, the Karaite Bible commentator, writes towards the end of the ninth century AD, expounding on what is written in the Book of Daniel (xi: 30–31):

... (therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate): And he will discriminate [here the Arab root *ḥn* is used], and think about the uncircumcised that are in Jerusalem . . . the daily sacrifice is that of the uncircumcised . . . the *ṣalīb* [cross] and *nāqūs* [the pieces of wood used as a bell by eastern Christians] and the Nea church . . . ; he will turn their worship into infamy and lessen their kingdom.

What Daniel al-Qūmisī meant was that the kingdom of Ishmael would abolish Christian rule over Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Fredegarius, 153, 409; see also Mabillon, Book XI, par. 39, pp. 323ff, who speaks of the forced baptism ('which is not the thing to do') in the year 624, and *ibid.*, par. 62, on forced baptism in 627, after Dagobert submits to pressure on the part of Church circles. Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, I, 1562; Ibn 'Asākir, I, 473; Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, VI, 94; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, IV, 265f; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, II, 457; Goffart, *Speculum*, 38(1963), 237, brings the story from Fredegarius as pure legend, ignoring the Muslim sources. Again, however, the historian should not belittle the significance of sources, even if they seem to be legendary in character; on the Coptic fast: *Le synaxaire arabe jacobite*, 562; cf. *DTC*, X, 2296. According to Ibn al-Rāhib, 121, Heraclius' decrees required the apostasy of both Jews and Samaritans. The *Tōlīdā*, the Samaritan chronicle, however, tells of the crucifying of 'a great number of people from among the Samaritans' precisely by 'Khuzray [corrected reading] King of Assyria', and there it appears to have taken place four years prior to the renewed conquest of Palestine by the Byzantines, that is apparently in 624; see Neubauer, *Chronique samaritaine*, 23 (in the original text); the dates in the Samaritan chronicles are completely confused and should not be taken into account. Thus one chronicle mentions that when 'the Ishmaelites came and conquered the land of the Philistines', the great priest was Nethanel; but on the other hand, it states that the death of Abū Bakr (which happened prior to the conquest of Palestine) took place during the time of Nethanel's successor, Eleazar; see the chronicle in Adler et Seligsohn, *REJ*, 45(1902), 241; see Birmester, 13, on the Coptic fast.

<sup>12</sup> See TS 10 C 2 (no. 2), f.1v edited by Mann, *JQR*, NS 12(1921), 518, quoted here on the basis of what I read at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, film No. 19687, which is different in some instances from what Mann has read. Mann, *Texts*, II, 9, assumed that this commentary was written by one of the pupils of Daniel al-Qūmisī. Cf. Ben Shammai, *Shalem*, 3(1981/1), 295, who shows that the commentary is by Daniel al-Qūmisī.