

References to Muhammad from the 7th Century

[arranged in Chronological order]

“Ashtiname Letter” (625 AD)

Document allegedly written by Muhammad to monks of St Catherine’s monastery promising them protection. This has many historical anachronisms. Also the traditions say that letters were only sent out to Medina and not until 628. It uses Egyptian and Medieval Arabic

10 Problems with the Ashtiname

1. The date for the document given is AH 2 (625 AD). According to the Traditions, Muhammad sent no letters until 628 AD, and these were only to Medina. Certainly not outside the Hijaz.
2. Ibn Sa'd (845 AD) gives a list of Muhammad's 47 writings, but the Ashtiname is not included.
3. There is a minaret pictured on the right. The first known minarets appear in the early 9th century, during the Abbasid Caliphate, and were not widely used until the 11th century.
4. It uses the term sultan. The first to ever use this term was Mahmud of Ghazna (998–1030), 350 years too late.
5. It employs Christian, Egyptian, and Medieval Arabic, which were not used by any Arabs in the Hejaz that early
6. It refers to plundering and repairing Churches, forced marriages, and non-participation in the military, which are all later Dhimmi rules, introduced centuries later.
7. It forbids Muslims from taking building material from churches to use in their mosques. There were no mosques in Egypt in 625 AD. They only came to Egypt in 641 AD, 16 years later.
8. It permitted the Christians to decide the rate of their Jizyah, but there is no example anywhere for this.
9. The term ‘Malak Muqarrah’ = Angel of Proximity, only cited in Sufi writings: First by Mutannabi (d. 965 AD). NOTE: 10th – 13th c., or 300-500 years too late!
10. The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Jews was known first by Waqidi (d. 823 AD). NOTE: 9th – 15th c., or 200-800 years too late!

Scholar’s Conclusions

1. Bernhard Moritz: (the classic work done on this document in 1918), "The impossibility of finding this document to be authentic is clearly apparent. Date, style and contents each independently provide its inauthenticity"
2. Dr Pat Andrews: "The dating is too late, and the originals – not produced in an age of papyrus – are lost. The criteria for authenticity that Morrow suggests does not meet the standards of valid historical criticism"
3. Dr Mark Durie: "This letter appears to address characteristic abuses of dhimmis, in terms which only make sense after the dhimma regulations were established (so, long after Muhammad's time). I suspect that it is later, namely during the period of the Turkish invasion of Egypt (early 16th C)"
4. Amidu Olalekan Sanni: Referring to the Covenants of Muhammad, he says, "we find no evidence of pre-sixteenth century codices".
5. Gabriel Said Reynolds: "Forged by Christians intent on proving to their Muslim overlords that the Prophet himself had guaranteed their well-being and the preservation of their property, they are all quite late. They date to the sixteenth century (over eight hundred years after the death of Muhammad)".

Summary of conclusions:

In short, the monks at St. Catherine's Monastery in the 16th c. needed protection from the marauding Muslims all around then, so they forged this letter, and then added Muhammad's name to it to give it authority in order to safeguard their Monastery. The fact that Muslims today, like John Morrow, are also using this document in the 21st century to support their narrative of a peaceful Islam is indeed rather ironic.

EXPLANATION

This is most likely a 16th century forgery by the Monks of St Catherine's monastery where the added Muhammad's name to safeguard their monastery. It is not evidence of a historical Muhammad.

The Constitution of Medina" (624 AD)

This refers to a set of rules allegedly created by Muhammad when he moved to Medina. This is very pro-Jewish and also gives much protection to Christians.

There are a number of problems with it supporting the SIN:

1. There is NO record of any such agreement in Jewish literature or even the Quran
2. There is NO archaeological record of Jews in Medina.
3. It contradicts much of the Quran's treatment of Jews eg paying the Jizhya etc.
4. The earliest record for it is 9th century (Ibn Hisham)

The Constitution of Medina?

- The Constitutions of Medina was a document supposedly created by Muhammad when he first moved to Medina, sometime between 622 – 624 AD.
- It was an agreement between the 3 major groups then in Medina, the Ansar (the native Arabs of Medina), the Jews (the native Jews of Medina), and Muhammad and the 'Muhajiroun' (those who accompanied Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD).
- Muslims consider it a model for agreements today.
- It is the "oldest constitution for Mankind"
- It is the "oldest example of multi-faith/multi-culturalism"
- It is an "egalitarian document guaranteeing religious liberty and equality"

The Content of the 'Constitution'

- Christians can gather anywhere, and Muslims will protect their buildings
- No one can plunder Christians, or destroy their churches, or take anything from within
- A Christian woman must give her consent before she marries a Muslim man.
- Christian women married to Muslim men are free to go to their churches.
- Christians can build and repair churches and convents.
- Christians cannot participate in the military.

Problems with the 'Constitution'

1. It is clearly pro-Jewish, yet there is no record of it in any Jewish historical documents
2. There is no archaeological evidence for the existence of Jews in Medina or its vicinity that early
3. It contradicts the Sira and the Hadith's treatment of Jews, which is much more cruel
4. The isnads for the Constitution are confused, with different versions, & why do they need them?

5. The Qur'an does not refer to any Constitution in Medina
6. No Jew would sign a treaty which gave Muhammad the authority between man and God
7. It doesn't appear until the Sira of Ibn Hisham in 833 AD, so much too late to be authentic
8. Muslims should be careful of accepting such a treaty as authentic, as it contradicts so much of the Qur'an's view of Jews

Scholar's Conclusions

1. Robert Hoyland doubts its authenticity, saying: "There is not a single clearly Jewish inscription' that has yet been found 'at Mecca, Yathrib or Khaybar despite quite a number of epigraphic surveys conducted at all three sites... it is only Muslim tradition that informs us of a Jewish community in Yathrib".
2. Frederick M. Denny: "ibn Ishaq preserved this ancient document, which does not appear in any other historical source, It seems to consist of separate documents from differing times in Medina".
3. Dr Pat Andrews: "If there is no extant archaeological evidence for Jews in Yathrib/ Medina, then it is impossible that the so-called "Constitution of Medina" is historically valid; rather, it is a legendary, apocryphal construct".

Comparison: It would be as if the 1812 War between the US & the UK was written in 2012, or the 1815 Battle of Waterloo was written in 2015. It's just written too late to be viable.

This is highly unlikely to be an original from the 7th century.

Historians eg Hoyland, Andrews do not accept it as authentic

It is either a 9th century fabrication or a 9th century redaction back to 7th century based on SIN

[Hoyland, Seeing Islam as others saw it]

The Doctrina Iacobi" (634 AD)

This is an anti-Jewish document called the 'Doctina Jacobi nuper baptizati, that describes a letter allegedly written by a Palestinian Jew named Abraham. The relevant passage is

'A false prophet has appeared among the Saracens..they say that the prophet has appeared coming with the Saracens, and is proclaiming the advent of the anointed one who is to come. I, Abraham...referred the matter to an old man very well-versed in the Scriptures. I asked him 'What is your view, master and teacher, of the prophet who has appeared among the Saracens?' He replied, groaning mightily, 'he is an imposter. Do the prophets come with sword and chariot?'...so I, Abraham, made enquiries, and was told by those who had met him: 'There is no truth to be found in the so-called prophet, only bloodshed; for he says he has the keys of paradise, which is incredible'

- This document was written in 634 and suggests that the prophet is still living but according to the SIN, Muhammad died in 632.
- The Jews spoke Aramaic or Greek. Any prophecy in Arabic would have attracted very little attention. SIN makes a big deal of the ARABIC revelation for the ARABIC people
- This prophet is proclaiming the advent of the 'anointed one' ie the Messiah so he is saying that one will come AFTER HIM. The SIN says that Muhammad is the SEAL of the prophets and that none will come after him.

- The prophet is supposed to have the keys of Paradise. There is no reference to Muhammad having these in the SIN or anywhere else. It is much more likely that this refers to the keys to the kingdom heaven referred to in Matthew 16:19 by Jesus.
- Just because the Saracens were accompanied by a ‘monotheistic’ prophet tells us NOTHING about the religion of the Saracens themselves. The prophet could have been a Jew or a Christian or an Ebionite.
- ‘*On all these counts, the Doctrina provides no support for the identification of this prophet with Muhammad. In fact if one thing is clear, it is that the account in the Doctrina Jacobi does not describe the Muhammad that we know*’ [Nevo, p208]

The Doctrina Iacobi is a Greek Christian polemical tract, from Carthage (Tunis), but written in Palestine by a Christian apologist, between 634-640 AD.

- Within the debate that ensues is a passage, written by someone named Abraham, who relates some quite startling information concerning the appearance of a new Prophet among the Saracens:
- “...And they were saying that the prophet had appeared, coming with the Saracens, and that he was proclaiming the advent of the anointed one, the Christ who was to come...What can you tell me about the prophet who has appeared with the Saracens?...He is false, for the prophets do not come armed with a sword...So I, Abraham, inquired and heard from those who had met him that there was no truth to be found in the so-called prophet, only the shedding of men's blood. He says also that he has the keys of paradise, which is incredible [i.e. not credible]” (Hoyland 1997:57)

Problems with the ‘Doctrina’

1. How can you have a Muslim prophet proclaiming ‘the Christ who was to come’, unless he was a Jewish Messiah? In the Qur'an in Surah 33:40 it says that Muhammad is the last prophet.
2. This passage assumes ‘Muhammad’ is still alive in 634, but the traditions say he died in 632 AD.
3. This prophet ‘has the keys of paradise’ which confronts the Islamic Traditions
4. This prophet is more than likely a Jew, as it fits a Judeo-Christian Monotheist background.
5. The ‘Anointed one to come’ (This is ‘Christ’ = ‘Christos’ in Greek = ‘Mashiah’ in Hebrew). Who was to come, thus not Muhammad.
6. He has the ‘Keys of Paradise’ (from Matthew 16:19 – referring to Peter’s papal authority in the Catholic Church)
7. He spoke in Aramaic, not Arabic (Jews wouldn’t know Arabic, and Muhammad wouldn’t have known Hebrew)

Scholar’s Conclusions

1. Crone & Cook: “This testimony is of course irreconcilable with the Islamic account of the Prophet’s career...we have here older material, a stratum of belief older than the Islamic tradition itself”
2. John Wansbrough: “Prophethood was a monotheistic constant, a basic belief, concrete examples of which arose in the area in every monotheistic religion, the specific manifestation of course differing from religion to religion”. [i.e. every leader claimed to be a prophet in order to get credibility]
3. Nevo & Koren: “The Doctrina Jacobi provides no support for the identification of this prophet with Muhammad. In fact, if one thing is clear, it is that the account in the Doctrine

Jacobi does not describe the Muhammad that we know...He could more easily be almost anybody else...In those troubled years there can have been no shortage of such prophets, appealing to the various Christian and Jewish sects"

SIN says that Muhammad is the seal of the prophets and the final prophet. He could not have been proclaiming a coming Messiah. The references to the keys of Paradise most likely relate to Matthew 16. Therefore this document is probably talking about a Christian prophet or Messianic figure who was to come, NOT the Muhammad of the SIN.

4. Robert Spencer: "Inasmuch as the 'keys of paradise' are more akin to Peter's "keys to the kingdom of heaven" than to anything in Muhammad's message, the prophet in the Doctrina Jacobi seems closer to a Christian or Christian-influenced Messianic millennialist than to the prophet of Islam as he is depicted in Islam's canonical literature"

Conclusion: There is no reference to the name Muhammad, no reference to this prophet being a Muslim, or belonging to the religion Islam, nor any reference to the city of Mecca, nor of his book the Qur'an. He sounds more like an Arab/Christian brigand, employing the status of a prophet to gain himself more credibility and authority. There's just nothing Muslim about him!

Thomas the Presbyter

He refers to a battle that happened near Gaza between the Tayaye of Mhmt and the Romans.

Problems:

1. SIN does not record Muhammad fighting any battles near Gaza; this is too far north.
2. Tayaye came from north-west Mesopotamia or Iraq NOT the Hijaz. This is where the Lakmids lived. They were generally in alliance with the Sassanian Persians
3. Mhmt is the Persian spelling of Muhammad

EXPLANATION

- This document could have been referring to a battle near Gaza between the Byzantines and a Lakmid ruler with Persian ties.
- It must be noted that the word 'Muhammad' can be used as a PARTICIPLE (the praised one) and a NAME.
- This means that it could just as easily be referring to 'the praised one' as to a particular man named Muhammad. Even if it were referring to a man, Muhammad would have been a common name so how do we know that he was the Muhammad of the SIN.
- This man could even have been called Mhmt or referred to as 'the praised one' but he is NOT consistent with the Muhammad of the SIN who comes from the Hijaz

Fly Leaf in Gospel copy (636 AD)

A 6th century Syriac copy of Gospel of Matthew and Mark has a fly leaf (inserted page) that describes a battle between the where Byzantine are defeated by the "Arabs of Mhmd" at Gabitha. Supporters of the SIN claim that this refers to the battle of Yarmuk which supposedly happened in 636.

There are several problems with this being a reference to the Muhammad of the SIN:

1. 'Arabia' to Byzantines referred to southern Syria and Jordan NOT the Hijaz
2. According to SIN, Muhammad did not fight any battles this far north.
3. SIN says that Muhammad died in 632 which predates this battle by 4 years.

4. The valley of Yarmuk is 20km south of Gabitha
5. Other scholars say it could just as easily refer to the battle of Ajnadayn in 634.
6. The fragment is UNDATED and could have been written in late 7th century or beyond. One cannot therefore use an undated document to verify a theory that already accepts a date to verify that theory. It is circular reasoning.
7. Nevo and Cohen state that the reference to Mhmd dates it to post 690, consistent with the date on the Dome of the Rock.

This document could be referring to a 7th century Arab warlord. As noted above, It may refer to him as the 'praised one' or he may even have been named Muhammad, but it is NOT consistent of the Muhammad of the SIN

Sophronius (637AD)

- He was the Patriarch of Jerusalem and writes about the Arab conquest of Jerusalem. He describes them as destroyers, burning churches and Monasteries, and blasphemers against God.
- He calls them Saracens NOT Muslims and says that their leader is the devil.
- He makes no mention of Muhammad, Mecca or the Quran
- The main point of his lament is that the Christians cannot reach Bethlehem for the Christmas ceremonies. In fact the scribe of the Greek manuscript added a heading that says that Sophronius was talking of a time when '*the Saracens, out of control and destructive, were rebelling*', not of a time when they were in possession of the holy places of Bethlehem. Thus the passage can be read as the while the Arabs controlled Jerusalem, they did not conquer or besiege Bethlehem but prevented the Christians from going there
- He also exhorts Jesus Christ to deliver the Arabs '*as before, to be the footstool of our God-given emperors*'. This is very significant, as it suggests that the Arabs were previously under the control of the Byzantine Emperor. This is entirely consistent with the historical evidence that shows that the Arabs were paid subsidies by the Byzantines as 'foederati' to patrol the border regions of the empire south of Antioch. They assumed full control of these regions when the Byzantines withdrew the subsidies and there was no 'conquest' involved.
- NEVO and COHEN sum this up well as follows: '*But clearly there as a subservient relationship; the Arabs described here have not suddenly smashed into the civilised world from somewhere far beyond it. They were around all the time; but they used to be tame and now are running wild*'
- In 637, Sophronius describes destruction and plunder with the churches pulled down and mocking the cross and blaspheming Christ. The problem is that the archaeological record and other sources tell us that this simply did not happen. Arab coins used crosses and the rulers did not object to the Christians using the cross as a symbol.
- There is no information on the date of this manuscript or its transmission history so it is possible that the entire section was added later on and redacted back to the 7th century

[This is not consistent with the SIN. While the Arabs did in fact conquer Jerusalem, they were NOT Muslims at this time. They were more likely Ghassanids or Lakmids who were loyal to Heraclius. When he died, this loyalty ended and they decided to expand their empire beyond what Heraclius gave them. The Byzantines had been weakened by the long wars with the Persians and could provide no resistance.]

THE SIN IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE EVIDENCE

Maximum the Confessor

In 634-640 he writes of a 'barbarous people of the desert overrun a foreign land as if it were their own.'

There is no mention of a new non-Christian religion, merely that they are 'barbarians' or non-Byzantines.

The fact that they 'overran' the area suggests that they did not wrest it by force or conquest from an empire determined to protect it, but simply took it via a power vacuum

Sebeos 660s AD

Armenian Bishop who writes a semi-legendary account about **Mahmet**, an Arab preacher who taught his people to worship the God of Abraham and how he led 12,000 Jews and Arabs to invade Palestine.

This contradicts the Quran which describes the Jews as the 'worst of enemies' (5:82). Mahmet is also called an 'Ishmaelite' with no mention of Muslim or Islam.

The fact that this contradicts the Quran and the SIN as well as there being NO record of 12,000 Jews partnering with Arabs in 7th century suggests that this is not historical

Also note that Sebeos refers to **Mahmet**, NOT **Muhammad**. Given that the Greek language already has vowels built into it, one cannot explain this by appealing to 'dialectical differences'. It means that in the 7th century, whoever this Arab preacher was, he was MAHMET, and not the 'Prophet Muhammad' of the SIN. In addition, if all the transmission was oral (as claimed by the SIN) then if they were hearing 'Mu-ham-mad' ie a 3 syllable word they would not have referred to him as MHMT or MHMT.

This is consistent with coins that refer to a MHMD or a MHMT

Maronite Chronicle

This was an anonymous document thought to be composed in the 660s and discusses the Muawiya. It says that he has his sister's son killed, kills Ali while Ali was praying at Hira and then '*Muawiya went down to Hira and received allegiance from all the Arab forces there*'

This most likely refers to Al-Hira, a city in central Iraq and the former capital of the Lakhmid kingdom. There is no mention of the Mecca, Medina or the Hijaz.

Let us look at what else the Chronicler says about Muawiya

*'Many Arabs gathered at Jerusalem and made Muawiya king and he went up and sat down on **Golgotha** and prayed there. He went to **Gethsemane** and went down to the tomb of the blessed Mary and prayed in it...In July of the same year the emirs and many Arabs gathered and gave their allegiance to Muawiya. Then an order went out that he should be proclaimed king in all the villages and cities of his dominion and that they should make acclamations and invocations to him. He also minted gold and silver, but it was not accepted because it had no cross on it. Furthermore, Muawiya did not wear a crown like other kings in the world. He placed his throne in Damascus and **refused to go to the seat of Muhammad** [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as others saw it, p108]. [Here it must be noted that 'Muhammad' is Hoyland's translation. The original was most likely MHMD or Mahmed, as per Sebeos]*

This is a very significant source as it shows that it is **most unlikely that Muawiya was a Muslim**. Indeed, it strongly suggests that Muawiya was some kind of Christian. We can see this from the following:

1. He is crowned in Jerusalem.
2. He goes to the site of Crucifixion and to Gethsemane to pray
3. The importance of the cross on coins.
4. He refuses to sit on the throne of 'Muhammad'. Here the word 'Muhammad' is most likely being used as a title ie the 'Chosen One' rather than a proper name. [See the section on the 'evolution of an Arab prophet for details]. The throne of the chosen one was JERUSALEM and we see that Muawiya decides to set himself up in Damascus rather than risk offending the Messiah.

John Bar Penkaye 690

He is a Nestorian Christian who writes about the brutality of the Arabs and their leader. He mentions them following the teachings of 'Muhammad' including the worship of 'one God' and the customs of the 'Old Covenant'. There is no mention of Islam or a new religion

The Nestorian Christian John bar Penkaye writes, "*The Arabs...had a certain order from the one who was their leader, in favor of the Christian people and the monks; they held also, under his leadership, the worship of one God, according to the customs of the old covenant; at the outset they were so attached to the traditions of Muhammad who was their teacher, that they inflicted the pain of death upon anyone who seemed to contradict his tradition... among them there were many Christians, some from the heretics, and some from us.*" (Quoted in Alphonse Mingana, "Sources Syriaque", vol.1, pt.2, pgs.

146f; also quoted in Mingana's "The Transmission of the Koran", and in Ibn Warraq's ed., The Origins of the Koran, Prometheus, New York, 1998:107)

This is consistent with what became Islam beginning as a 7th century Christian heresy that denied the Trinity. It began in what is now Syria/Jorda and Iraq, NOT the Hijaz. It could also have been influenced by Judaism

John of Nikiou

This Coptic Bishop makes first extant mention of term 'Muslims' and describes the doctrine of 'Muhammad'. The earliest manuscript of this quote is from a 1602 Ethiopic translation from an Arabic text which was translated from a Greek text. Neither of these exist today.

This cannot be accepted as evidence for a 7th century Muhammad as prophet of the Arabs and the founder of a new religion. It is more likely a later redaction.

Are there any References to other Muslim Leaders from the 7th Century

SIN gives us the following chronology for the first 4 Caliphs after the death of Muhammad in 632 AD

1. Abu Bakr 632-634
2. Umar 634-644 AD
3. Uthman 644-656
4. Ali 656-661
5. Muawiya founds Umayyad dynasty in 661 AD

EVIDENCE.

[Unless otherwise specified, references are from Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others Saw it, 1997]

We have NO clear archaeological or written sources for ANY of these Caliphs.

The earliest reference we have to any Caliph described by the SIN is for Muawiya.

There is a rock inscription with the name “Umar” but this was a common name for 7th Century Arabs so there is no reason to think that it refers to the Caliph Umar.

The pact of Umar” (637)

- This allegedly describes an agreement between the Caliph Umar and the Christians in Jerusalem. It assures the safety of the Christians, their property and their churches.
- This is very different from the letter of Sophronius who calls the Saracens evil. There is no convincing reason to believe that it is referring to the Umar of the SIN. The earliest reference we have is from Al Tabari (923). There is therefore no evidence linking it to the Umar of the SIN
- It is more contemporaneous with the Sira and Hadith of 9th and 10th centuries.
- Umar was a common name in that part of the world.
- Given that our earliest reference is from the same time period when the traditions behind the SIN were being composed, this is more likely a redaction from the 10th century back to the 7th century to give credibility to the SIN.
- THE SIN IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE EVIDENCE

Letter of Muawiya

Sebeos also records that Muawiya, governor of Syria and later Caliph, sent a letter to the Byzantine emperor Constantine in 651. The letter calls on Constantine to renounce calling on him to renounce worshipping Jesus and worship the God of Abraham. There is no mention of Islam. Also notice that he is somewhat contemptuous of Jesus which is in contrast to the reverence given to Issa in the Quran.

‘If you wish to live in peace...renounce your vain religion, in which you have been brought up since infancy. Renounce this Jesus and convert to the great God whom I serve, the God of our father Abraham..if not, how will this Jesus whom you call Christ, who was not even able to save himself from the Jews, be able to save you from my hands?’

Nevo and Koren, Crossroads to Islam

Spence, ‘Did Muhammad Exist’ 2022

[Lest anyone rush to say that this shows that Muawiya was not a Christian, we must compare this with the Maronite Chronicle 10 years later where he prays at Golgotha. Remember that a lot can happen in 10 years. All this really proves is that in 651 Muawiya may not have been a trinitarian but it doesn’t contradict the other sources that suggest that by 661 he WAS a Trinitarian Christian. It would not have been the first time that someone hostile to Christianity became a Christian: think of Saul of Tarsus becoming the Apostle Paul.]

Other Sources

Writings of the time talk of ‘Arab’ tribes fighting on the side of Heraclius as well as an Arab general who defected to the Persians. These Arab tribes were from Mesopotamia and Syria and were the descendants of the Ghassanid and Lakhmid client kingdoms of the 6th century. They were referred to as ‘foederati’(allies) of the Byzantines. According to Christophe Luxemberg, foederati is the Latin equivalent of Q-R-S from which the word Quraysh can be derived. [The Syro-Aramaic reading of the Quran, 2007]

There is a papyrus dated 642-3 that talks of the 'amir' of the 'magaritais'. It is written in Greek and the term 'magaritais' most likely refers to the Aramaic term 'mhaggraye' or 'Hagarenes' ie descendent of Hagar. Notice that there is no reference to Islam or a warrior prophet named Muhammad.

What do Contemporary written sources say about the Arabs?

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[This is not consistent with the SIN. While the Arabs did in fact conquer Jerusalem, they were NOT Muslims at this time. They were more likely Ghassanids or Lakmids who were loyal to Heraclius. When he died, this loyalty ended and they decided to expand their empire beyond what Heraclius gave them. The Byzantines had been weakened by the long wars with the Persians and could provide no resistance.]

THE SIN IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE EVIDENCE

Maximum the Confessor

In 634-640 he writes of a 'barbarous people of the desert overrun a foreign land as if it were their own.

There is no mention of a new non-Christian religion, merely that they are 'barbarians' or non-Byzantines.

The fact that they 'overran' the area suggests that they did not wrest it by force or conquest from an empire determined to protect it, but simply took it via a power vacuum

Monothelete Christian (662-680)

He writes that the 'Tayyaye' appeared and took control of Syria and many other areas. He does not use the word 'conquered' but simply 'took control'. This is consistent with the simple transfer of power via a power vacuum.

John Bar Penkaye

This author talks about the Arabs being internally divided and that Muawiya was the first Arab ruler to bring some kind of peace: "*Henceforth since Muawiya came to power, this peace has been current in the world, the like of which neither we nor our fathers nor our father's fathers have ever heard or seen*"

Sebeos

He also talks about the rise of Muawiya and says that they had 'no respite from the sword, captivity, violent combat on land and sea, until Muawiya became powerful and overcame them all. When he had submitted them to himself, he ruled over all the possessions of the children of Ishmael and made peace with them all'

This claim that Muawiya was the first to rule over all the Arab lands is NOT consistent with the SIN but it IS consistent with the historical evidence and the archaeology.

Maronite Chronicle

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Let us look at what else the Chronicler says about Muawiya

*'Many Arabs gathered at Jerusalem and made Muawiya king and he went up and sat down on **Golgotha** and prayed there. He went to **Gethsemane** and went down to the tomb of the blessed Mary and prayed in it... In July of the same year the emirs and many Arabs gathered and gave their allegiance to Muawiya. Then an order went out that he should be proclaimed king in all the villages and cities of his dominion and that they should make acclamations and invocations to him. He also minted gold and silver, but it was not accepted because it had no cross on it. Furthermore, Muawiya did not wear a crown like other kings in the world. He placed his throne in Damascus and **refused to go to the seat of Muhammad** [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as others saw it, p108]*

This is a very significant source as it shows that it is **most unlikely that Muawiya was a Muslim**. Indeed, it strongly suggests that Muawiya was some kind of Christian. We can see this from the following:

1. He is crowned in Jerusalem.
2. He goes to the site of Crucifixion and to Gethsemane to pray
3. The importance of the cross on coins.
4. He refuses to sit on the throne of 'Muhammad'. Here the word 'Muhammad' is most likely being used as a title ie the 'Chosen One' rather than a proper name. [See the section on the 'evolution of an Arab prophet for details]. The throne of the chosen one was JERUSALEM and we see that Muawiya decides to set himself up in Damascus rather than risk offending the Messiah.

Summary: Why The 7th century sources DO NOT support the SIN

Nevo sums up the written sources as follows:

'The local written sources down to the early 8th century do not provide any evidence that a planned invasion of Arabs from the peninsula occurred, and that great and dramatic battles ensued which crushed the Byzantine army and vanquished the empire. What we do have is many descriptions of 'barbarous' people 'from the desert': Tayyaye, Ishmaelites, Mhaggre. The first 2 names occur prior to the 7th century, and none of them indicates a specifically peninsular origin. The most usual word for 'Arab' in the Syriac sources, Tayyaye, had long been applied to all the desert dwellers in any part of the interface area from the northern regions of the Syrian desert down. Nowhere do we find any mention of Islam..

..The earliest Arab event described in contemporary literary works is the war between Muawiya and Ali (657). No Caliph's name before Muawiya is mentioned in the early manuscript" [p135]

He goes on to finish this section with the somewhat sarcastic statement:

"Perhaps there was indeed a great invasion, with battle after battle between 10s of 1000s of opposing soldiers, over the course of several years (629-636). But if there were, it would seem that, at the time, nobody noticed" [p135, emphasis added]

Sources AFTER the 7th century.

John of Damascus (730 AD)

• John of Damascus writes, “a false prophet named Mamed, who, having happened upon the old and New Testament and apparently having conversed, in like manner, with an Aryan monk, put together his own heresy. And after ingratiating himself with the people by a pretense of piety, he spread rumors brought down to him from heaven. So, having drafted some ludicrous doctrines in his book, he handed over to them this form of worship...they call us associators because, they say, we introduced to God and associate by saying Christ is the son of God and God... And we say to them, how then do you rub yourselves on a stone at your Ka'ba (Chabatha) and hail the stone with fond kisses?... This Muhammad, as it has been mentioned, compose many frivolous tales, to each of which he assigned a name, like the text of the woman, in which he clearly prescribes the taking of four wives and 1000 concubines, if it is possible... The text of the camel of God... Muhammad mentions the text of the table, and the text of the cow.” (John of Damascus, De Haeresibus, C/CI, 60-67)

• Concerning Jesus, John of Damascus writes, “he says that Christ is the word of God and his spirit, created and a servant, and that he was born from Mary, the sister of Moses and Aaron, without seed. For he says, the word of God and his spirit entered Mary, and she gave birth to Jesus, a prophet and a servant of God. And he says that the Jews, acting unlawfully, wanted to crucify him, but, on seizing him, they crucified only his shadow; Christ himself was not

crucified, he says, nor did he die. For God took him up to heaven to himself, and God questioned him saying: Jesus did you say that I am son of God and God? And, he says, Jesus answered, mercy me, Lord, you know that I did not say so.”
(John of Damascus, *De Haeresibus*, C/CI, 60-67)

Problems:

- John calls this prophet ‘Mamed’ and not Muhammad. As we saw in Sebeos, this means that even up until the 8th century, this Arab prophet, whoever he was, was NOT Muhammad but someone called MHMD , Mamed, or Mahmad.
- These ‘Arabs’ were not Muslims, but ‘Ishmaelites’: “John includes Mahmad’s followers, whom he considers to be little more than another variety of Christian heresy, naming them the Ishmaelites”. (Louth 2002:76 -83)
- His writings seem to suggest that these texts were distinctive writings on their own: This Mahmed, as was sent, composed many foolish things, and gave each of them a title, such as the writing of the women (Surah 4), while there are other writings with the titles the table (Surah 5) and the cow (Surah 2)” (Shoemaker 2022:51)
- Parts of abd al-Malik’s text were from what is in our Qur’an today, but others not: “In his refutation of the Ishmaelite’s faith, he describes certain writings that they attribute to their founder Mahmed, some of which clearly correspond to parts of the Qur’an, and others of which do not”. (Alfred-Louise de Prémare, “Abd al-Malik b. Marwin and the Process of the Qur’ans Composition,” in HOI, 2010:195-197)
- John’s description of the women is not compatible with the Surah the women (de Prémare 2010:195)
- John mentions 4 separate pieces of writing, one of which, ‘the camel of God’, is not in the Qur’an (Shoemaker 2022:51)
- Is this a different Qur’an?: “Clearly, we must conclude, the sacred Ishmaelite writing that John knew in this era and describes in his account of their beliefs cannot have been the Qur’an as we know it in its present form” (Shadler 2018:113)

“Camel of God” and ‘The Cow (Surah 2)’

- It's clear that John must have had some sort of Qur'anic apocryphon with this title ('Camel of God') before his eyes that has since vanished.
- 2 non-Islamic sources which indicate that the cow's circulation was a separate work:
 - 1) A Christian monk named Sergius Bahira, a Syriac Christian legend, written in the late 8th century. This legend of Sergius Bahira identifies a sacred writing ascribed to Muhammad which was called the book of the cow and was separate from the Qur'an. Note, by the late 8th century, Muhammad as a prophet would have been well known (Shoemaker 2022:52)
 - 2) A Syriac text widely known as the disputation between a Muslim and a Monk of bet Hale. In this disputation “the Christian identifies among the sacred writings of his opponent a text named the writing of the cow which he clearly distinguishes from the Qur'an, naming the latter separately, as a different writing.”

(David G.K. Taylor, “The Disputation between a Muslim and a Monk of Bet Hale: Syriac Text and Annotated English Translation,” in Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum 60. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2015:229)

- These two non-Qur'anic texts both attest to an independent sacred writing titled the cow that was distinct from the Qur'an, which were both written long after John's treatise concerning a similar writing with the same title. What is interesting is that John's treatise would not have circulated in the same Miaphysite and East Syrian circles that gave rise to these two documents (Shoemaker 2022:53)

