

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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**Ninth-century Arabic Christian Apology and Polemics: a
Terminological Study of ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s *Kitāb al-Masā’il wa-l-
aḡwiba***

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I. Preliminaries to the Research, Topic and Objectives

The aim of the dissertation is the examination of an important author of Arabic Christian literature, ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, from a terminological perspective. ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī (d. 840) is an understudied yet interesting Christian author; he was among those early Arab Christian authors who wrote the most sophisticated theological works of their era. The little information we possess about him has been collected by M. Hayek.¹ We do not know anything certain of his life, except that he was a native of Baṣra, an important Nestorian centre of the age. He was a Nestorian theologian who had vast religious and philosophical education. Two of his works survived: The Book of the Proof (*Kitāb al-Burhān*) and The Book of Questions and Answers (*Kitāb al-Masā’il wa-’l-ağwiba*). These are considered to be among the most sophisticated texts in early Arab Christian theology. The former concentrates on controversial issues that Christians living under Muslim rule had to deal with, such as the authenticity of the Bible, the question of the Trinity, Incarnation, sacraments, etc. It is written in dialogue form, as a reference work for Christians who might eventually be interrogated by Muslim opponents.² The latter piece introduces reasoning on the existence and unity of God, and then discusses the Trinity and the Incarnation. Other contemporary authors include the Jacobite Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidma Abū Rā’iṭa al-Takrītī (d. probably soon after 830) and the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra (d. c. 820-25). Theodore Abū Qurra was a Melkite scholar and polemicist. Born probably in Edessa, later on he is likely to have been a monk in the

¹ HAYEK, M., *‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, La première somme de théologie chrétienne en langue arabe, ou deux apologies du christianisme*, In: *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976) pp. 70-132. And HAYEK, M., *Introduction générale* In: Ed. HAYEK, M., *Apologie et controverses*, Beyrouth, Dar el-Machreq, 1986. pp. 13-84.

² C.f. BEAUMONT, M., *Christology in Dialogue with Muslims: a Critical Analysis of Christian Presentations of Christ for Muslims from the Ninth and Twentieth Centuries*, Oxford, Regnum Books, 2005., p. 68. And GRIFFITH, S., *‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s Kitāb al-Burhān: Christian Kalām in the First Abbasid Century*. In: *Le Muséon* 96 (1983), pp. 145-181.

monastery of Mar Sabas in the Judean desert, and finally he was bishop of Ḥarrān. He is the first known Christian author who wrote theological works in Arabic. He was not only known in his own community, but by Christians of other denominations and Muslims, as well. He must have held a high status in the society of his day, and he is thought to have disputed even in the court of the caliph.³ Some of his *opuscula* survived in Greek,⁴ but his main works are in Arabic and include the *Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion*⁵ and the *Treatise on the Veneration of Icons*.⁶ As for the third author, not much is known of Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidma Abū Rā'īṭa al-Takrītī's life, except for his being the Jacobite bishop of Takrīt or Nisibis in the beginning of the ninth century, and that his native language was Syriac.⁷ His surviving works are edited by G. Graf, and include pieces written against Muslim and Melkite opponents.⁸

By this period, namely the first half of the ninth century, Hellenism had entered Arabic culture, with the translation, dissemination and development of sciences, including that of *kalām*. D. Gutas demonstrates that the translation of non-literary and non-historical secular Greek books that were available in the Eastern Byzantine Empire and the Near East into Arabic had already started, but it was a long process, lasting for more than two

³ GRIFFITH, S. H., *Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām: Theodore Abū Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion*. In: Ed. SAMIR, Kh. - NIELSEN, J., *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period, 750-1258.*, pp. 6-8.

⁴ ABŪ QURRA, Theodore, *Opuscula ascetica*, In: MIGNE, J. P., *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 97., Paris, 1865. cc. 1461-1598.

⁵ ABŪ QURRA, Theodore, *Maymar fī wuḡūd al-Ḥāliq wa-'l-dīn al-qawīm*, Ed. DICK, I., Ḡūniyya, al-Maktaba al-Būlusiyya, 1982.

⁶ ABŪ QURRA, Theodore, *Maymar fī ikrām al-īqūnāt*, Ed. DICK, I., Ḡūniyya, al-Maktaba al-Būlusiyya, 1986.

⁷ GRIFFITH, S. H., *Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidma Abū Rā'īṭa, a Christian Mutakallim of the First Abbasid Century*, In: *Oriens Christianus*, 64 (1980), pp. 164-165.

⁸ ABŪ RĀ'ITĀ, Ḥabīb Ibn Ḥidma, *Die Schriften des Jacobiten Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidma Abū Rā'īṭa*, Ed. GRAF, Georg, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, vol. 130.; *Scriptores Arabici*, tom. 14., Louvain, Pecters, 1951.

centuries (8-10th c.s).⁹ The effect of Hellenistic theology and philosophy can particularly be seen in the Arabic language which underwent a terminological revolution in the theological, philosophical, linguistic and literary fields. For this reason, the study of terminology is of great interest. As a first step, this dissertation aims at demonstrating how the effect of Hellenistic ideas and Patristic influence can be discerned in a ninth-century Arab Christian author's work; and then, as a second step whether and how these ideas recur in contemporary or later works of Muslim authors.

By the third/ninth century the translation of philosophical works from Greek to Arabic had started,¹⁰ but exact understanding and accurate use of concepts and terms is thought to have been in its inchoative stage. It is due to the fact that when the Arabs began translating Greek texts, they lacked a complexity of pre-existing technical vocabulary in Arabic to express philosophical concepts. Early translators and *falāsifa* had to develop a vocabulary, since they needed terms in specific meanings not previously set up in their ordinary language. They did it in a variety of ways: by transliterating Greek words (e.g. Abū Rā'īṭa's *barsūb*, which stands for *πρόσωπον*); by adopting foreign words (e.g. 'Ammār al-Baṣṭī's *uqnūm*, which stands for the Syriac *ܩܢܘܡ*), and by dedicating ordinary language words to a technical philosophical use or concept (c.f. *'aql*, present in all above-mentioned authors' works).¹¹

The standard scholarly view on the early development of *kalām* had it that Muslim theologians owe their terminology to the translation movement of philosophical works in the 'Abbāsīd era. In this respect, scholarly consensus relies on the interplay of terminologies between *kalām* and philosophy. The two fields were still in their formative stages, as well as their

⁹ GUTAS, D., *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture.*, New York, Routledge, 2005., 1. o (Later on: GUTAS, D., *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*).

¹⁰ GUTAS, D., *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 1. However, Kiki Kennedy-Day estimates that the beginning of the translation movement is the beginning of the tenth century. C.f.: KENNEDY – DAY, K., *Books of Definition in Islamic Philosophy. The Limits of Words*, London – New York, Routledge, 2004. p. 19.

¹¹ KENNEDY – DAY, K., *Books of Definition in Islamic Philosophy*, p. 19.

scientific methodologies. Philosophy and *kalām* themselves were not clearly separated, either; since philosophy dealt with the question of God's existence and cognition in the early period, that is, it concentrated on questions that would make up the subject matter of *kalām* later on. Though 'Abd al-Amīr al-Aṣsam argues that Ḡābir Ibn Ḥayyān (d. c. 815) is considered to have made a distinction between the two sciences already in the first half of the third (i.e. the eighth) century,¹² defining philosophy as the science dealing with the essences of caused existents (*al-ʿilm bi-ḥaqāʾiq al-mawǧūdāt al-maʿlūla*), thus separating it from metaphysics (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*), 'Abd al-Amīr al-Aṣsam admits that this distinction becomes widely spread only later, especially after al-Kindī (d. c. 873).¹³

In addition, scholars who adhere to this view highlight the tensions between theology and philosophy in the early works. As Kennedy-Day claims it, this tension is evident while both sciences aimed at delineating their terminology.¹⁴ It is generally accepted that al-Kindī incarnates a transition momentum where philosophy and *kalām* were still closely related, although apparently philosophy was on its way to a complete de-theologizing. In this approach, philosophy is considered as a separated, self-sufficient field free from theological terms and impact from the tenth century, beginning with the works of al-Fārābī (d. 950/51).

This view has recently been challenged by Miklós Maróth. In his *The Correspondence between Aristotle and Alexander the Great* (an anonymous novel of letters translated from Greek to Arabic), he examines the earliest case of transmitting Greek wisdom. M. Maróth demonstrates that Arabic prose literature started by this translation in Damascus, in the first third of the eighth century; he also proves that Arabic prose literature developed under a strong Greek influence. Thus he modifies the scholarly consensus, according to which Arabic prose literature started around the

¹² al-AṢSAM, 'Abd al-Amīr, *al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-falsafī ʿinda al-ʿArab*, Cairo, al-Hay'at al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-ṭ-Kitāb, 1989, p. 21.

¹³ al-AṢSAM, 'Abd al-Amīr, *al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-falsafī ʿinda al-ʿArab*, p. 21.

¹⁴ KENNEDY – DAY, Kiki, *Books of Definition in Islamic Philosophy*, p. 19.

middle of the eighth century, in Baghdad, under Persian influence. An important aspect in M. Maróth's examination uses a terminological method, demonstrating that many technical Arabic terms had already been present by this time: he introduces some specifically philosophical terms that had already appeared.¹⁵ Scholarly consensus concentrates on the 9th or 10th centuries as the period of the formation of Arabic philosophical and theological terminology, but on the basis of these results, we need to be aware that it had already started earlier.

In this dissertation I considered 'Ammār al-Baṣrī an author who plays an important role in this early Greek influence on Arabic prose. A terminological examination of his *Kitāb al-Masā'il wa-'l-ağwiba* can help us get to know the formation of terminologies of *kalām* and *falsafa* even more. The main issue would be whether Christian authors played any role in the delineation of the vocabularies of philosophy and *kalām* by influencing Muslim authors while interacting with them. Scholarly consensus asserts it that Arab Christian theologians played a prominent role in the process of the Hellenization of the Islamic theology, which ultimately led to the systematic and logical development of *kalām*. Apart from carrying out most of the translations of Greek works into Arabic, they provided Muslim theologians with chief themes of theological inquiry such as predestination and the attributes problems.¹⁶ It is expected then, that Arab Christian theologians had their impact on the formation of Arabic language and especially on the philosophical-theological terminology, as well.

Christian terminology can be examined from many points of view; according to a given field, either philosophical or theological terms can be

¹⁵ MARÓTH, M., *The Correspondence between Aristotle and Alexander the Great. An Anonymous Greek Novel in Letters in Arabic Translation*, Piliscsaba, Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 2006. E.g. *al-māhiyya*: pp. 77., 91.; *iḥdāt*: pp. 77-78., 91.; *ayniyya*: p. 78.; *kayfiyya*: p. 78.; *mā'iyya*: p. 78.; *šūra*: p. 78.; *ğawhar*: p. 91.; *mādda*: p. 91.

¹⁶ WOLFSON, H. A., *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, Harvard University Press, 1976., pp. 58-63, 80-82. On dialectics, see COOK, M. A., *The Origins of Kalām*, In: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 43 (1980) 1, pp. 32-43.

concentrated on. Christian polemical and apologetic writings mainly belong to the field of theology, since they deal with theological issues, but due to their nature, they are less descriptive than argumentative, and argumentation needs clear, accurate concepts and terms, so philosophical terms may also appear in these texts. ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s *Kitāb al-Masā’il wa-’l-ağwiba* is an apology (as such, it is polemical in nature), so its terminology may offer interesting examples of interaction between philosophy and *kalām*. Through the study of its terms I also aim at answering the question: to what extent did Arabic Christian authors affect Arabic prose? To what extent did Arabic Christian theology in general, ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī in particular, interact with Muslim theology and philosophy in the field of terminology?

The encroachment of Arabic Islam into the religions in the Near East was felt on many fronts, and in unexpected ways of which non-Muslims had no experience from Umayyad times. Hence the palpable need to explain themselves and to maintain, enlarge, and at times even re-establish their rights and positions. As a result, the first ‘Abbāsīd century saw an unprecedented rise in Arabic Christian apologetic writings directed against Islam. Christians were no strangers to polemical literature. Disputation was the main form of communication in the seventh century, particularly in the conflict among Chalcedonians, Monophysites, and Nestorians. When the Christian–Muslim dialogues began in the ‘Abbāsīd period, they owed a lot to the long tradition of using the dialogue form for Christian apologetic and polemic purposes.¹⁷ As it is attested by Griffith, Islamic ‘*ilm al-kalām* grew out of the participation of Muslims in the styles of scholarly discussion Christian intellectuals employed in the Greco-Syrian milieu of the Christian centres of learning in the oriental patriarchates. Griffith emphasizes that Christian *kalām* already existed in the formative period of Arabic thought in the Islamic world. They used the Arabic language according to the Islamic

¹⁷ GUTAS, D., *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture.*, pp. 66-67. And: CAMERON, A. *New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature*, In: Ed. Averil Cameron - Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I, Problems in the Literary Source Material*, Princeton, 1992. pp. 97-100.

frame of reference: so Christian teachings needed to be investigated and interpreted in a new framework.¹⁸

After the Islamic conquests, Greek rhetorical schools became the educational centres of Christians, who could learn classical Greek knowledge there for centuries. It means then that rhetorical schools, i.e. schools of Christian communities were the transmitters of classical Hellenistic culture for the world of Islam. In general, on the basis of the works of the Christian authors living in the ninth century, one can demonstrate the main topics, themes and imagery shared by them. What is remarkable is that these topics and images, as well as analogical demonstrations can be found in later Muslim writings, and especially in scientific prose. In order to complete this examination, this dissertation aimed at the examination of terminology, so that it can be seen how Greek concepts could make their way into Muslim authors' writings through the mediation of Christian authors.

II. Approach and Method

The investigation was carried out on the basis of comparative methodology: representative terms 'Ammār al-Baṣrī used were classified and compared to corresponding Hellenistic and Patristic terms, and then to their contemporary use by Muslim and other Christian authors. Interaction should be examined in the framework of polemics, where both Christians and Muslims used the Arabic language, interacted, and discussed specific problems. Terms were classified according to their nature – that is, whether they are theological or philosophical ones.

¹⁸ GRIFFITH, S. H., *Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām: Theodore Abū Qurrah on Discerning the True Religion*. In: Eds. SAMIR, Kh. - NIELSEN, J., *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period, 750-1258*. pp. 1-6.

As far as philosophical and theological terms are concerned: when comparing the way ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī used them to how Muslim philosophers and theologians did, in order to find them in their clearest form, I examined their usage in books of definitions (*kutub al-ḥudūd*). I took the latter as references for comparison, since my approach dealt with technical terms in both Islamic theology and philosophy. What interested me primarily was to compare ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s terminology to what became standard terminologies of kalām and falsafa. For this reason I relied on the following books of definitions: Abū Yūsuf b. Ishāq al-Kindī’s (d. c. 873) *Risāla fī ḥudūd al-ašyā’ wa-rusūmiḥā*, the first Arabic book of philosophical definitions,¹⁹ by an author contemporary to ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī. Then I progressed in chronological order with the following works: Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Kātib al-Ḥwārizmī’s (d. 997) *Mafātīḥ al-‘ulūm*; Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Fūrak al-Anṣārī al-Iṣbahānī’s (d. 1015) *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*; Ibn Sīnā’s (d. 1037) *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*; Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī’s (d. 1233), *al-Mubīn*; and finally, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ġurġānī’s (d. 1414) *al-Ta’rīfāt*. I investigated whether a given term was earlier used by ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī than the Muslim authors: that would mean that Christian authors might have been active in inventing and outlining terms; or it would then be a sign that a term may be either ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s own invention or a term coming from a tradition of the rhetorical schools in which Christians were educated.

I carried out my terminological analysis in five chapters. In every chapter, I started with the introduction of corresponding Greek terms with particular concern for their appearance in Patristic schools. This is due to what was said above: Christian authors were educated in the traditions of Greek rhetorical schools, so Greek ideas, terms, and at the same time, Christian traditions (including the ideas of Patristic literature) must have been known to them. Then, I am examined how these terms were used by ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, and checked whether he was a continuer of Patristic ideas. As a third step, I examined the same term as it was defined by Muslim books of definition, and checked whether ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s usage in particular (or

¹⁹ al-A‘SAM, ‘Abd al-Amīr, *al-Muṣṭalaḥ al-falsafī ‘inda al-‘Arab*, pp. 34., 36.

Christian ideas in general) preceded the appearance of the term or the idea on the Muslim counterparts' behalf.

In the first chapter, I started my terminological analysis with the term *'aql* (intellect). I decided to start with this one for several reasons. First, its place corresponds to the one it occupies in *kalām* manuals. Muslim theologians start their books with a chapter on knowledge where they examine the intellect as a provider of acquired knowledge. Further, it is an important term for 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, who uses it extensively and refers to it as the method of demonstration. Another reason for placing this chapter at the head of the study is that it covers, in a general manner, several subsequent terms.

I kept the same *kalām* order in the following chapters. In every chapter, a group of terms which deal with the same theological question was examined. Thus, in the second chapter, I examined the terminology of body and incarnation (*ta'annus* – humanisation vs. *tağassud* – incarnation; and *badan* vs. *ğirm* vs. *ğasad* vs. *ğism* vs. *haykal* – body, bodily form). In the third one, I examined the terminology of eternity (i.e. *azalī*, *azaliyya* – pre-eternal vs. *sarmad* – perpetuity vs. *qidam*, *qadīm* – eternal vs. *baqā'*, *bāqin* – permanent). In the fourth chapter, I inspected the terminology of Creation (i.e. *ibdā'* and *ibtidā'* - beginning, commencement vs. *ibdā'* – direct creation vs. *ibtidā'* – instauration vs. *iḥtirā'* – creation ex nihilo vs. *ḥalq* – creation vs. *iḥdāt* - creation ex nihilo vs. *šinā'a*, making vs. *takwīn* – generation vs. *inšā'* – bringing into being). In the fifth chapter, the terminology of Fatherhood-Sonship (*Ubuwwa* – fatherhood vs. *Bunuwwa* – sonship) was considered. The last chapter concentrated on terms that refer to divine Trinity and Unity (i.e. *tatḥīṭ* - trinity, „making three” vs. *waḥdāniyya*, *tawḥīd*, *ittiḥād* – unity, “making one,” union) in addition to the question of duality.

III. Achievements

I demonstrated that 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's *Kitāb al-Masā'il wa-'l-ağwiba* is an important piece of Christian theology. It played an important

role in the transmission of Greek wisdom and Hellenistic knowledge to Muslim theology. I relied on various Arab Christian and Muslim sources, and examined their terminologies. On this basis, I demonstrated that these terminologies and the ideas expressed by them show similarities, and by comparing them I drew the conclusion that either Christian authors had influenced Muslim thought, or that both parties had relied on a shared tradition. I found the fact that the Christian authors of the ninth century had already had a ready set of terminology in Arabic remarkable.

So the hypothesis I started with about the role of rhetorical or Christian schools in the transmission seems to be confirmed. The examination of the *Kitāb al-Masā'il wa-'l-ağwiba* proves this, since I demonstrated that its terminology corresponds to Greek philosophical terminology, more specifically in the form these terms were used by Church Fathers in Patristic literature. I carried out a comparative terminological examination including contemporary and later Muslim sources, as well, in which I discovered further agreement, which may indicate direct influence in some cases, or reliance on mutually known sources in other instances.

In the first chapter, I examined the concept of the intellect, referred to by the term *ʿaql*, which is the Arabic translation of the Greek philosophical terms ἡ φρόνησις, and ὁ νοῦς. In Patristic literature, these terms mean intellect, understanding; description of mind and its functions with reference to man's distinctive nature: in relation to other faculties; particularly in relation to sense perception. Mind's capacity for knowing God is often discussed; as well as mind between good and evil. In mind's way to perfection divine assistance was referred to. I showed that in Theodore Abū Qurra's analogy mind is God's gift, a means for cognition, and as such, it is a faculty. It had a responsibility for choosing between right and wrong. In this, I showed that Patristic ideas are clearly reflected. Then I demonstrated that according to Abū Rā'īṭa, faith goes beyond the capacity of the intellect, so man needs divine assistance. In this, I recognized another recurring Patristic theme. I analysed ʿAmmār al-Baṣṣī's usage, and found that he introduced intellect as a cause, a faculty, a disposition, an attribute, and a quality. In the examples I examined, I found ideas that had already been present in Patristic literature, but ʿAmmār al-Baṣṣī's differentiated usage shows greater

elaboration and development. In his argumentation, I pointed at the influence of rhetorical education. I found several examples for Christian influence on Muslims: e.g. Theodore Abū Qurra's medical allegory shows an interaction between Christian and Muslim imageries. I realized that contemporary Muslim thought on *ʿaql* shows another approach, based on a different tradition. In the examination of Muslim definitions I highlighted those points that are present both in ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī's work and later Muslim definitions, as well: e.g. intellect's being a faculty, a means of cognition, a distinctive feature of humankind, etc. These features could already be seen in Greek writings, then in Christian ones, and finally in Muslim works, in which I saw a proof for Christian transmission. Later Muslim authors represent a more elaborated stage of philosophy; but in their distinguished classifications the aspects emphasized by Christian authors are also included.

In the second chapter I examined the following terms: *ǧirm*, *ǧism*, *ǧasad*, *badan*; adjectival forms like *ǧismānī* and *ǧasadānī*; and derived forms like *taǧassud*, alongside with *ittiḥād*, *taʿannus* and *ḥulūl*. I set up a hierarchy of meanings according to ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, and I arrived at results as far as Christian role in transmission between Greek and Islamic cultures is concerned. In the case of the first term, *ǧirm*, I demonstrated that 9th-century Christian usage can be paralleled to the Muslim usage of the same period, so a parallel development on the basis of Greek roots can be discerned. In the case of *ǧism*, a differentiated Christian usage was introduced, which relies on Neo-Platonic and Patristic roots, but is further developed by this time in Christian authors' works. A recurring range of ideas in later Muslim use may indicate a strong Christian influence. I found that *ǧasad* is a Christian term: corresponding contemporary Muslim examples could not be found. It is the term that denotes the Messiah's flesh, or sometimes human body. Since its appearance is early documented in Christian texts, while it cannot be found among Muslim definitions for a long time, a later Muslim appearance and interpretation may well be influenced by Christian usage. I found *badan* as a term denoting human body made up of elements, or sometimes as the human corporeal part of the Messiah. Its appearances at Christian authors, as well as at their Muslim contemporary, al-Kindī, represent an early stage of terminological development; this parallel, and the one found at Muʿtazilī

authors imply an analogous evolution of the term at both parties. I also showed that in the case of incarnation, interaction in the field of ideas had happened, especially in the emphasis on divine transcendence. I found that ideas and analogies used in the demonstration of incarnation echoed Patristic ideas in a more developed form. In the case of *ittiḥād*, I observed a possible influence of Qur'ānic terminology in the use of this term for expressing assumption. I found that *ta'annus* as a specifically Christian term developed from Patristic roots, while Christian *ḥulūl* had an undeniable influence on later Muslim usage.

In the third chapter, I investigated terms referring to eternity or perpetuity, continuity. In every case, I demonstrated that the connotations of corresponding Greek, Patristic terms were recurrent in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's interpretation but his interpretation also shows a further development of these ideas. In case of two terms (: *baqā'* and *sarmad*) scarce occurrences made a detailed analysis impossible. However, I discerned 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's being influenced by Patristic usage, as well as the fact that he preceded Muslim authors in the use of them; and I discovered that *baqā'* in later Muslim authors' usage resembles 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's *azalī*. I found all this as attesting to the early formation of terminology. I found that the only term described by a contemporary Muslim author is *azalī*, which made me confirm 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's pioneer role in this field. His use of *qadīm* is synonymous to *azalī*: similar examples were observed. I showed that in his usage of *qadīm*, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī preceded Muslim authors. In the more detailed definitions of later authors, his ideas were recurrent, which may be a sign for Christian influence on Muslim thought. Given that Patristic ideas are developed by Christian authors, and that their ideas recur in later Muslim books, it shows that Christians are transmitters of ideas between Greek and Islamic cultures.

In the fourth chapter, I examined terms denoting creation. Through the examples of *ibdā'* and *ibtidā'* I showed that 'Ammār al-Baṣrī developed Patristic concepts, though a Qur'ānic parallel can also be observed in his usage of the term. Examining Muslim authors' definitions I found that 'Ammār al-Baṣrī had preceded them in this field. In the usage of *ibdā'* and *ibtidā'* I found that 'Ammār al-Baṣrī relied and carried on Greek and Patristic ideas as far as he used this term in the meaning of engendering. A Qur'ānic

parallel could be found in this case, as well. ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī is among the earliest authors to have used this term. His contemporary, al-Kindī emphasizes the *ex nihilo* approach, and it is mentioned by later Muslim authors, too. I showed that ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s ideas expressed by this term are shared by later Muslim authors, which implies Muslim-Christian interaction in its formation. I examined different forms derived from the root *ḥ-d-t*. I also demonstrated that the meaning of corresponding Greek terms is recurrent in ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s usage. *Ihdāt*, when a source, or entity, *‘ayn*, or when a substance, *ḡawhar* are mentioned as the One who carries this action out, it is closer to philosophical terminology and interpretation. When it is God, or God, the Logos (especially in the case of incarnation), theological aspects are stronger. The contemporary author, al-Kindī uses the term *ḥādīṭ* in the meaning of ‘occurring, created in time,’ so some parallels could be observed. Later authors’ definitions show similarities with ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s interpretation: i.e. creation/createdness in time, though some of them, like al-Ḥwārizmī approach them as *kalām* terms, while others, like Ibn Fūrak, are rather philosophical in defining them. On the basis of Ibn Sīnā’s definition, which introduced *iḥdāt* as a kind that happens in time and another kind which has no relation to time, I demonstrated that the first meaning is usually represented in ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s book, as well. On the basis of the other kind, which is concentrating on the emanation of existence without respect to time, I drew a parallel with what ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī in particular, and all Christian authors in general write on the emanation of existence out of time (either in the case of the Son who has always been born of the Father; or the Spirit). I found it possible that Christian understanding of the emanation of existence might have influenced Muslim thought in this field. Later Muslim definitions were found to be similar to ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s interpretation in general terms, but it was demonstrated that later Muslim use is more specific. ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s usage already includes those two meanings that can be discerned at later Muslim thinkers: the existence of a thing, after its nonexistence, in a temporal extension, i.e. *al-ḥudūt al-zamānī*; and contingency: a being’s existence after not having existed, in an ontological or essential extension, which does not necessarily involve time, i.e. *al-ḥudūt al-dāī*. His usage shows parallels with *mutakallims*’ usage of ‘a beginning in

time' as a basis for proving the existence of God. So in this case it is quite probable that Christian authors in general, and 'Ammār al-Baṣrī in particular, influenced later Muslim interpretations; but at least, they represent a transition between the two. In the case of *ih̄tirā'*, I demonstrated that apparently 'Ammār al-Baṣrī used the term before its having been defined as an idiom of a special connotation by Muslim authors. In the case of *ḥalq*, 'Ammār al-Baṣrī does not seem to have used the term in a firm, strictly limited sense, as far as *ex nihilo* is concerned, just only as a term that refers to a kind of creative action. Greek and Patristic ideas are carried on as far as "making" is concerned, but Islamic parallels could also be found in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's usage when he used the term to refer to the production of something out of something else. I found that a possible explanation for this may be that his age is a period when the terminologies of theology and philosophy were on their way to separation. 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's use of the term was examined in different contexts: I set up a classification of eight differing subsections. I showed that he developed and enriched the concept he had inherited from Church Fathers. I also contrasted his use of the term with its appearances in Muslim books of definitions: and found that though *ḥalq* is a Qur'ānic term, it appears relatively late in Muslim usage compared to the Christian one. I found that Muslim usage can be paralleled to his interpretation where *ḥalq* is not considered to be *ex nihilo*. The third theme around which 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's examples could be grouped is the idea that the created world is a reflection, a sign, or a proof of the existence of the Creator, which is an important idea in Muslim thought, too, and I considered this a common development of thought. 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's idea of "first" and "second" creation may rather be paralleled to Muslim usage of *ibtidā'* and *ibdā'*; it is not the word *ḥalq* which is used by Muslim thinkers to refer to this contrast, but the idea is present in both cases. As for the synonyms in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's text that appear alongside the term *ḥalq*, we have seen instances where they appear in Muslim definitions, too, though, given that definition needs to clarify the accurate use of a term, these terms are used in order to contrast *ḥalq* with, not as synonyms. We need to remark, finally, that 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's differentiated use of the term already in the 9th century is not paralleled in contemporary Muslim usage, so we may think of his or

more generally of Christian influence in the formation of its interpretation in later Muslim usage. I showed that ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s interpretation and use of *ṣan‘a* is parallel to the Greek use of corresponding terms. Appearances that denote a creative action were mostly concentrated on, but examples for ‘conduct’ in general were also cited. I examined this term in the framework of the same classification that was used in the case of *ḥalq*, and I found that the two terms are synonymous in ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s usage. Muslim authors did not define it, so I demonstrated that ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī is earlier to have used the term. In the case of *takwīn*, I showed that the ninth-century Nestorian author preceded Muslim authors in his use of the term in a stricter theological-philosophical sense. Contemporary parallel is offered by early Muslim occult writings. However, *takwīn* was used first by Māturīdī theologians extensively to the point where they believed *takwīn* to be the eighth essential attribute of God. Even though not present among his definitions, Ibn Sīnā used it later and in his footsteps, Šūfis and Aš‘arīs used it as well especially to express the divine command “*kun.*” Christian precedence in using this term may have influenced its interpretation on the Muslim side. In the case of *inšā’*, seemingly Christian usage, or that of ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī in particular, preceded the term’s appearance at Muslim authors with a clearly delineated meaning – as far as it is possible to judge it on the basis of books of definitions. However, I brought an example of the Qur’ān, in order to demonstrate that ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī might have used this term due to its being a part of Muslim religious terminology, acceptable and intelligible for his opponents.

In the fifth chapter, I demonstrated that Patristic ideas are carried on in Christian authors’ works. The correlative use of fatherhood and sonship is a characteristic feature of both Greek and Arab Christian authors. However, it is to be noted that Arab Christian authors either emphasize that the nature of this relation is not biological, in order to explain to Muslims what they mean by this, or they implicitly do so, when referring to fatherhood and sonship as properties, which differentiate between the *hypostases* but do not affect the unity of the divine substance. Examples of early polemics show that vivid interaction accompanied this teaching, so alongside an exchange of ideas,

terms used by Christians could also reach Muslim opponents (and *vice versa*).

In the sixth chapter, I showed that Christian authors argued for divine unity, but this differed from the absolute oneness of Islamic doctrine. This oneness was to be interpreted in another way, and in the Christian argumentations Greek philosophical triads could be seen implying oneness at the same time. This interpretation of divine Unity could not be agreed upon on the Muslim side. Christian reliance on scriptural evidence mostly included Biblical sources. I showed that Christian authors relied on Greek philosophical and Patristic terms and interpretations; these were further developed in Arab Christian writings, and could be seen as preceding Muslim appearances in the majority of cases. In this field which is fundamental for both sides interaction can be discerned, either in an argumentative way, or on the level of terminology, and Christian influence is undeniable.

It is admitted that Christian authors use more frequently the theological terminology. The books examined, and especially that of ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī, relate more to *kalām* than to philosophy, although the philosophical influence on some materials is evident. In my view, this is the case because the adversaries in the debates were Muslim theologians. It is expected that Christian authors address them according to their vocabulary. Had they used a clearly philosophical terminology, with which they were familiar, they would have been objected. Furthermore, their aim is apologetic. They debate to defend the Christian belief and to invalidate the Muslim creed.

Apart from the examination of the terms, I benefited from my examples in order to draw attention to the Christian authors’ argumentation. E.g., we could see that ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī’s second-figure syllogism shows perfect agreement with the one accepted in rhetorical argumentation. Greek and Patristic analogies, *topoi*, and imageries were also referred to, which attested to Christian authors’ reliance on rhetorical traditions. However, I also demonstrated, that for being a dialectician, ‘Ammār al-Baṣrī had to use the terms and reasoning of his opponents, too.

We may thus conclude that either as the performers of translations, or heirs to a tradition not known to Muslims till the end of the 10th and the beginning of the eleventh century, or as genuine thinkers, Christian authors

show characteristics of a deep conceptual and terminological knowledge not paralleled by Muslims in the ninth century. ‘Ammār al-Baṣṣī’s book is one of the earliest pieces of theology written in Arabic. For this reason, an intercession of philosophical and theological terminologies has happened in his works. Having borrowed philosophical and theological terms and transmitting them to later Muslim theologians, he makes the case of a bridge between Christianity and Islam.

I aimed at demonstrating that Arab Christian theology plays an important role in the transmission and in the development of ideas and corresponding terms. The example of ‘Ammār al-Baṣṣī shows that an examination of an Arab Christian corpus with numerous sources could contribute to a better understanding of this major state of the beginning of philosophy and *kalām*, and it could add to a more accurate knowledge of the history of beginning of Arabic and Islamic prose.

The dissertation aimed at a terminological analysis, and the examined terms were selected from among a much wider range of terms, and were limited to these selected ones only for the sake of brevity. I am aware that other philosophical and *kalām* terms could have been investigated, offering significant results: they will be the theme of my future research. I have not dealt with theological issues: a comparative analysis of Christian denominations as far as their apologies and terminologies are concerned is also a topic of future elaboration.

IV. Relevant Publications

Lectures:

- *Colloque Melkite*. Libanon, Zouk Mikael, 25-26/01/2008. Title of contribution: *The Role of the Intellect in Theodore Abū Qurrah’s On the True Religion in Comparison with His Contemporaries’ Use of the Term*

- “*Orientalista Nap, 2008*” Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Budapest, 04/04/2008. Title of contribution: *Az 'intellektus' jelentése és szerepe Theodor Abū Qurránál és kortársainál*
- *25th Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants (UEAI 25)* Naples, 08-12/09/2010. Title of contribution: *Christian Terminology, God's Names and Attributes in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's Kitāb al-Masā'il wa-'l-Ağwiba*
- *Falsafah between Christianity and Islam: Inter-Religious Philosophical Encounters and Exchanges during the Classical Period of Islam*, Göttingen, 12-13/10/2011. Title of contribution: *The Concept of 'Aql: Interaction of Philosophy and Kalām in Early Arab Christian Apologetics*
- *Liberté religieuse, secularisation et éthique civique*, Piliscsaba, 19-20/01/2012. Title of contribution: *Intellect and Ethics in 9th-century Arab Christian Apology*

Articles in English, published abroad:

The Role of the Intellect in Theodore Abu Qurrah's On the true Religion.
= Parole de l'Orient 34(2009)5 pp. 51-60.

Christian Terminology, God's Names and Attributes in 'Ammār al-Baṣrī's Kitāb al-Masā'il wa-'l-Ağwiba (in the press; to be published in the volume of the 25th congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants (UEAI 25))

The Concept of 'Aql: Interaction of Philosophy and Kalām in Early Arab Christian Apologetics (in the press; to be published in the volume containing the contributions of the workshop “*Falsafah between Christianity and Islam: Inter-Religious Philosophical Encounters and Exchanges during the Classical Period of Islam*”)

Intellect and Ethics in 9th-century Arab Christian Apology = Ed. URVOY, M-Th., *Liberté religieuse et éthique civique*, Paris, 2012. pp. 149-164.

Part of book (in Hungarian)

Arab keresztény terminológia a 9. században – Incarnatio és emberré válás
(in the press; to be published in the Hungarian volume in tribute to Prof. Maróth Miklós)

Review

The Encounter of Eastern Christianity With Early Islam = *Keletkutatás*, 2011
(3) pp. 132-136.