An Historical Evaluation of the Covenants of the Prophet Muhammad and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib in the Matenadaran

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Abstract: This article analyzes the manuscripts in the Matenadaran in Yerevan, Armenia that are ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib and their translations into Farsi and Armenian. These important manuscripts have until now been neglected by scholars, and so we will here provide a general overview of them and how they were received by the Armenian Apostolic Church. I herein demonstrate how these documents were recognized by Muslim authorities, shedding light on how Muslim rulers managed the affairs of their Christian subjects. These documents, it would seem, also influenced the decrees of Muslim rulers to the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Keywords: covenant; Prophet Muhammad; Ali ibn Abi Talib; Matenadaran; Armenia; Armenian Apostolic Church

1. Introduction

The Matenadaran, which is officially known as the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, is the world’s largest repository of Armenian manuscripts. Situated in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, the Matenadaran was established in 1959 CE during the Soviet era, having incorporated the collection of manuscripts that was held by the Armenian Church in Etchmiadzin. It is therefore of great significance that we find within its archives copies of covenants ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib to the Christian communities of their time. These documents were translated from their original Arabic into Ottoman Turkish, Farsi, and Armenian, indicating that they were regarded as authoritative by the Sunni and Shī’a authorities who were ruling the affairs of their Christian subjects.

Since 301 CE, when Christianity was proclaimed as the state religion of Armenia, the Armenian Apostolic Church has played a major role in the external and internal life of the country as the Armenian Catholicos often took over the reins of the head of state. In the early days of their conquests, the Arabs were tolerant of non-Christian populations, granting them freedom of life, property, and religion, on the condition that they pay them a tribute.

The tradition of formulating treaties with non-Muslim communities appears to have been based on a precedent set by the Prophet Muhammad which subsequently guided the official policy of future Muslim Caliphs and generals. Sebeos (writing circa 41 AH/661 CE) records how Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān made a treaty with the Armenian prince, T’eodoros, the lord of ˙Rshtunik’, in around 652-653 CE/32 AH (Sebeos 1999). The Arab historian al-Baladhuri reports the Capitulation Treaty of Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah, which he issued to the people of Dvin (Dabīl), the then capital of Armenia, during the Caliphate of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (r. 644 CE/23 AH–656 CE/35 AH):

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This is a writ from Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah to the Christians of Dvin, along with its Magian and Jewish populations, those who are present and those who are
absent (shāhidahum wa ghā’ibahum). I have granted you security over your persons, wealth, churches, places of worship, and city wall (‘alā anfusikum wa amwalikum wa kana’isikum wa bay’ikum wa sūr madīnatikum). You are now secure and we are bound to honor the covenant (al-‘ahd) as long as you also fulfil it and pay the jizyah and the kharaj. Allah is a witness and sufficient is He as a witness (wa kafā bihi shahīdan).

It was sealed by Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah. (al-Baladhurī 1987)

Ḥabīb ibn Maslamah’s Capitulation Treaty shares a number of parallelisms with the Prophet’s Compact with the Christians of Najrān and other early treaties from the era of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (Zein and El-Wakil 2020a, 2020b). The phrase ‘wa kafā bihi shahīdan’ echoes its variant ‘wa kafā bi-l-Lahi shahīdan’ which we find in the covenants of the Prophet and ‘Alī, and which we will examine later in this article. These parallelisms suggest that the text recorded by al-Baladhurī is generally speaking an accurate transcription of the original document.

The Armenian historian Ghevond (ewond) who lived in the second/eighth century tells us that when Mu‘āwiya acceded to the Caliphate, he issued the following edict to the Armenians:

If you refuse to pay tribute to me, and if you do not submit unto me in servitude,
I shall bring sword and slaughter unto all. (ewond 1982)

According to Ghevond, the Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān (r. 685 CE/65 AH–705 CE/86 AH) sent his brother Muh. ammad to conquer Armenia in 701/81 AH CE. The battle near the village of Vardanakert took place in 703 CE/83 AH and ended in victory for the Armenians. Muhammad ibn Marwān subsequently prepared a counter-offensive which led the Armenian Catholics Sahak III Dzoraporetsi (677 CE/57 AH–703 CE/83 AH) “to go and meet the army of Ismael, to negotiate with its commander in peaceful terms, and appease him at the cost of servitude and submission.”1 However, upon reaching Harran, the Catholics fell ill, and feeling imminent death, he wrote an irrevocable letter that he asked to be delivered to Muḥammad ibn Marwān in which he agreed to enter into a covenant with him:

Now I swear to you in the name of the living God, and set before you this treaty of the covenant of God who offered it to Ismael, your father, promising him the whole world to be at his service and in obedience to him. [I ask you], therefore, to make peace with my people for they shall serve you and pay tribute to you, to keep your sword away from [their] blood and your hands from pillage for they shall obey you wholeheartedly.

The letter made a tremendous impact on Muḥammad ibn Marwān, who kneeling before the Catholicos’ body, took his hand and said he acknowledged his wisdom. Ghevond explains that those who had accompanied Catholicos Sahak III “secured word of oath in writing from the commander of the Ismaelites.”2 After they returned, the inhabitants of Armenia were informed of “the oath and the written promise”3 that was granted to them “and ever since submitted themselves to the Ismaelites in slavery.”4 This treaty has been known in Armenian tradition ever since as the “Little Manshūr.”

Though Sebeos and Ghevond make no reference to a covenant granted to the Armenians by the Prophet himself, the Armenian historian Samuel of Ani (d. 1185 CE/ c. a. 581 AH) does nonetheless make a passing reference to it:

Then Mahmet stayed the sword, and by the word of his instruction they subjected to themselves the greater part of the universe. With an eternal oath he sealed a deed for the land of Armenia, (that) they could freely observe Christianity. And

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1. (ewond 1982), p. 62.
2. Ibid., p. 63.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
he sold (ναῦρεια) them their faith, taking from every household four drachmas,
three bushels of xorbal, one nose-bag, one cord of hair, and one gauntlet. But from
the priests, nobles and cavalry he ordered no tax to be taken. (Thomson 1994)

Leon Arpee reports in his book, *A History of Armenian Christianity*, an observation
made by Giragos Vartabed, an Armenian writer of the second half of the 13th century,
how the Catholicos Hovhannes IV Otznetzi (r. 717 CE/99 AH–728 CE/109 AH), at the
close of his audience with either the Caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 717 CE/99 AH–720
CE/101 AH) or the Caliph Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (724 CE/105 AH–743 CE/125 AH),
obtained a threefold petition for the Armenian nation concerning their “(1) freedom
of private conscience, (2) freedom of public worship, and (3) freedom of churches and clergy
from taxation” (Arpee 1946). These rights, it would seem, were a re-affirmation of those
stipulated in the covenant allegedly given by the Prophet to the Armenian Christians. As
Arpee explains,

A tradition is repeated also by Giragos to the effect that the Prophet of Islam
granted the Armenians freedom to hold the Christian faith on the condition of a
tribute from each household of “four dirhems of money, three measures of wheat,
a saddlebag, a rope of hair, and a towel.”

When the ʿAbbāsids acceded to power, the tolerant attitude of the Umayyads toward
their subjects changed significantly. Ghevond recalls how under the Caliphate of ʿAbū
Jaʿfar al-Mansūr (754 CE/136 AH–775 CE/158 AH) “the imposition of taxes upon our land
of Armenia weighed extremely heavy.” Al-Mansūr oppressed his subjects so much that
they, having nothing else to pay, dug up the graves of their dead relatives hoping to find
something valuable there as the Arabs collected taxes not only from the living, but also
from the deceased. From the eighth century onward, the Arabs, began to confiscate and
appropriate lands belonging to the Armenian Apostolic Church, as evidenced by Armenian
historiography. Notwithstanding some of the difficulties which the Armenian nation faced
throughout their history, it does on the whole appear unlikely for the Armenian Apostolic
Church to have survived all of these centuries without some sort of legal precedent that
they could invoke and which was recognized as authoritative by their Muslim rulers.

### 2. First Contact with the Armenian Apostolic Church

The Armenian Apostolic Church in Jerusalem maintains a tradition that Patriarch
Abraham I (d. 669 CE/49 AH) received an *Edict* from the Prophet Muhammad in which
he offered the Armenians protection for their lives, property, and churches. In an article
published in *The California Courier* on 11 September 2018, and whose title reads “Prophet
Muhammad’s Rarely-Known Decree to the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem,” Harut
Sassounian explains,

Two months ago, I read a fascinating article published in the Armenian newspa-
paper Aztag in Beirut, Lebanon, by Dr. Garbis Harboyan of Montreal, Canada, who
had uncovered the details of the communication between Prophet Muhammad
and the then Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem and their successors.

Dr. Harboyan mentioned his sources as: Gregory Krikorian’s, “Through the eye of
an Armenian needle,” published by the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia in 2002.
Krikorian had stated that his book was the summary and English translation of
“History of Jerusalem,” a two-volume, 1385-page book by Dikran Sayalanians,
published by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1931. Dr. Harboyan
also mentioned that he had recently seen the book, “Armenian Art Treasures of
Jerusalem,” by Bezalel Narkiss, Michael E. Stone, and Avedis Sanjian, published
in New York, in 1979, which included a copy of Prophet Muhammad’s decree to
the Armenian Patriarchate. (Sassounian 2018)

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5 (eword 1982).
6 Ibid. pp. 127–28.
According to Krikorian, “Patriarch Abraham and his 40 or so followers swore on behalf of those referred to in the charter to pay all proper dues and to recognize no other governors than the Moslem ones.” Whether these 40 men were part of the delegation from Najrān that visited the Prophet or whether they were conflated with them is not known (Scher 1983). Whatever be the case, Krikorian provides us with an English translation of the Prophet’s Edict which reads as follows:

I Muhammad, son of Abdullah, Prophet and servant of the Lord give honour to Patriarch Abraham, the archbishops, bishops and priests in Jerusalem, Damascus and elsewhere in the boundaries of Arabia, and those people subject to them in Jerusalem that is to say the Ethiopians, the Copts and the Assyrians and recognise their monasteries, churches, schools, properties and their lands. I Muhammad, Prophet with the witness of the Lord and those men and women around me in their mercy grant to the Armenians the churches found in Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre, the great church of S. Hagop (called Mar Jacob), the monastery of the prison of Jesus, the church of Bethlehem and the chapels of S. John and those in Samaria (Nablus) and the rear places of prayer in the Holy Sepulchre and all Golgotha with its upper story and the tomb of Christ where they maintain light. Further I grant them all the places of pilgrimage, and the hills, valleys, and land and revenues thereof, as witnessed by God and his Prophet and all Moslem faithful. (Krikorian 2002; Also see Kashishyân 2009; Yevadian 2010)

It is said that the Prophet’s Edict to the Armenian Patriarch Abraham I was later affirmed by the second Caliph of Islam, ‘Umar ibn al-Khatṭāb (Tchamkerten 2006). The Armenian Patriarchate also holds a recension of ‘Umar’s Capitulation Treaty with the Christians of Jerusalem, which reads slightly differently to the text found in al-Ṭabarī, a copy of ‘Umar’s Covenant with the Christians of Jerusalem reproduced on a certificate issued by a Muslim judge early in the 20th century (Akyüz 2002); a copy of a covenant of the Prophet scribed by Mu‘awiyah (Ghazarian 2008; Nersessian 2001) and finally copy of the covenant of ‘Ali. The edicts and covenants of the Prophet, ‘Umar and ‘Ali were later confirmed by S. al-Din al-Ayyūbī (d. 1193 CE/589 AH) in his own fermān whose opening reads as follows:

This [writ] is granted by S. al-Din Ibn Muẓaffar: Glory be to God who allowed me to open the gates of the Holy City and cleansed its temples of the idols. We address greetings and blessings to Muhammad Ibn Abdallah, who went through hardship in order to bring peace upon humanity, greetings to his associates too. This is what Muhammad wrote and the same was reconfirmed by the prince of the magnificent temple, the Sultan Salah ed-Din (may God extend the days of his rule to eternity and bestow upon him all that is good and blissful in afterlife). As our lord ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may God be pleased at him and increase his glory) bowed to the will of Muhammad, we too must obey and follow his path. Among the Christian peoples, they [Muḥammad and ‘Umar] decided to designate the Armenians and their co-religionists the Ethiopians, Copts and Syrian Christians, as subjects of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). ‘Umar Ibn Khaṭṭāb and ‘Ali Ibn Abt Tālib (may God be pleased with them) followed his decision. (Dadoyan 2013)

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn’s fermān was issued on the 20th of Rajab 582 AH/5 October AD 1186 though it was not the only decree from a Muslim ruler that recognized the rights of the Armenians. As Sassounian explains,

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7 Yevadian reproduced the French translation of R. P. Paylaguian. Though Kashisheyan reported the text in Arabic, the original manuscript which he transcribed and which Krikorian and Paylaguian relied upon is unknown.
8 I was personally able to get a copy of this Capitulation Treaty. An Arabic transcript can be consulted in Kashishyân (2009, pp. 36–37).
9 Nersessian’s entries 75 and 76 seem to allude to two copies of the covenant of the Prophet.
10 (Ghazarian 2008, p. 68).
In 1517 AD, Ottoman Sultan Selim occupied Jerusalem and issued his decree which confirmed the privileges bestowed upon the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem by Prophet Muhammad, Khalif Omar, and Salahuddin. Sultan Selim’s successor, Sultan Suleiman, issued his own decree reconfirming the Armenian rights in Jerusalem. Subsequent Sultans also issued decrees, such as Mehmed IV in 1659 AD, Sultan Mahmud I in 1735 AD, and Sultan Abdulmejid I in 1853 AD. (Sassounian 2018)

The presence of copies of edicts and covenants attributed to the Prophet, ‘Umar, and ‘Ali in church archives, from the Middle Ages onward, illustrates that these were replicated and issued to Christian communities that were officially recognized by Muslim authorities. The copies of the Prophet and ‘Ali’s covenants in the Matenadaran thus symbolize the renewal of the Muslims’ protection of Armenian Christians. These covenants have thus been invoked throughout the centuries, having been attested by the highest judicial Muslim authorities again and again for the benefit of the Armenian nation. Muslim rulers would consequently issue their own decrees in line with that tradition, though their terms and conditions would vary to accommodate the socio-political needs of their day. These edicts were in turn accepted by the Armenian community as legitimate in defining the relationship between Muslims and Christians.

3. Copies of the Prophet’s Covenant in the Matenadaran

Muslim sources and Armenian tradition agree that the Prophet issued documents of protection to the Christian communities of his time to guarantee their rights and status as protected people. Hakob Anasian tells us that, during the Arab, Persian, and Turkish rule over Armenia, the Armenian nation requested that they be granted documents of protection based on the covenant of the Prophet (Anasian 1987). Anasian took particular care to index and classify copies of these covenants, and though their language may be in Arabic, Farsi, or Turkish, all of them are written in Arabic script.

The most important document in the Matenadaran is MS 358, which is an Arabic copy of the Prophet’s Covenant with the Christians of the World with a Farsi translation superimposed on it and which, it seems, stems from the 17th century. Though this document was copied and distributed to different churches, it also appears to have made its way to the archives of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The covenant translated by Arpee in his work, A History of Armenian Christianity: From the Beginning to Our Own Time, is also another recension of it, which we can tell from its date. It has merely been modified to suit Shi’a leanings by allowing temporary marriages, recognizing the Imam as the head of state, and by removing Mu’awiyah’s name as scribe (Arpee 1946; Minasyan 1984).

My colleagues Ibrahim Zein and Ahmed El-Wakil from Hamad Bin Khalifa University brought to my attention a manuscript housed in the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, which Father Tatul Anushyan graciously allowed them to photograph, and which appears to be yet another copy of the Prophet’s Covenant with the Christians of the World. Though I have not been able to examine the copies of the covenant of the Prophet scribed by Mu’awiyah in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, it would come to me as no surprise if they averred themselves to be additional copies the Prophet’s Covenant with the Christians of the World.

The first Armenian translation of the Prophet’s Covenant with the Christians of the World in the Matenadaran is MS 6984, which was made from an unknown Farsi manuscript. Though the list of witnesses has been preserved along with the year date of 4 AH, the name of the scribe is missing. The second manuscript, MS 2622, which is also an Armenian translation of another Farsi manuscript, has the following introduction: “A translation into Farsi of a great scroll, also known as the covenant, and which the Prophet Muhammad

11 Arpee 1946, pp. 356–60). Levon Minasyan may have referred to this same copy in his work. Like Arpee’s text, the copy recorded by Minasyan has the date preserved but has the scribe’s name missing.
contracted with the Christians.” Of great importance is that the scribe, rather than being Mu‘awiyah, is said to have been ‘Al¯ı ibn Ab¯ı T.¯alib, even though the date is Monday in the last day of the fourth month of the fourth year of the Hijra. It was translated into Armenian by Bishop Tadius Beknazaryan, who noted that the original was written in the Kufic script, and that its Farsi translation resides in the All Saviour’s Cathedral Archive in New Julfa in Iran. Importantly, Beknazaryan noted that the document was recognized as authoritative by the Muslim religious scholars of Persia. (Ter Hovhaniants 1880–1881, p. 153).

The third manuscript, MS 2826, is an Armenian translation of the Prophet’s Covenant with the Armenian Christians from a Farsi manuscript. This same covenant was documented by Muhammad Hamidullah in his book Majmu‘at al-Wathiq al-Siyasiyyah li-l-‘ahd al-Nabawi wa-l-Khilafat al-Rashidah (Hamidullah 1987). It bears at the end of it the witnesses names, but interestingly, unlike the copy documented by Hamidullah that was written “on a Monday in the sacred month of Dhū al-Ḥijja in the second year of the noble Hijra,” it is instead written on the Monday in the last day of the fourth month of the fourth year of the Hijra by Mu‘awiyah.12

MS 272, which was scribed by Muhammad ‘Ali Tabrizi and is dated to Sha‘ban 1296 AH/21 July–19 August 1879 CE, is said to have been copied from an old scroll. It currently resides in the Archives of the Divan of the Catholics of All Armenians in the Matenadaran. This copy of the covenant does not have the scribe’s name or the names of witnesses. The amount stipulated as jizyah is 4 dinars and 12 dirhams (Kostikyan 2017), but this is most certainly a mistake in translation as it differs from MS 358 and other Arabic copies of the covenants, which stipulate a rate of 4 dirhams for the ordinary folk and 12 dirhams for the rich.

The Arabic text of MS 35813 has been transcribed in Appendix A, and what follows is an English translation based on the reconstructed Master Template done by Ahmed El-Wakil and Walaa Nasrallah (El-Wakil and Nasrallah 2017). Readers should note that there is a lacuna at the start of the manuscript and that whenever the Arabic transcription suffered from some deficiencies, the Master Template was consulted to get a better sense of the original meaning. Finally, it should be noted that despite differences in language and length, MSs 6984, 2826, 2622, 272, and 358 are all very similar to one another in terms of their content. This consistency implies that they have roots in some original Arabic text that was copied and disseminated to different Christian communities living under Muslim rule.

4. Translation of MS 358

1 . . . Christian [religion], in the Eastern Arab lands and in the Western lands, those who are foreign, near and far, be they known or unknown—a writ which constitutes an authoritative covenant, a definitive decree, and a testament from him so that justice may prevail and for it to stand as an inviolable pact of protection.

2 He who observes it holds to the religion of Islam and is worthy of it. As for he who jeopardizes and violates the covenant by opposing and transgressing what I have commanded therein, then he has broken the covenant of God, denied its attestation, forsaken his protection, and made himself subject to the divine curse, regardless of whether he be one embedded with authority or anyone else from among the believers and the Muslims.

3 I begin by granting them the covenants and attestations which they have requested from me and from all those who follow my creed from among the Muslims so that I give them the covenant of God and His attestation, as well as His protection and the protection of His prophets, messengers, chosen ones and saints from among the believers and the Muslims and that it be binding among the first and the last of them.

4 My protection and attestation are the most stringent that God has taken from a prophet who has been sent or from an angel who is stationed near [the divine throne], rendering the obligations due to the covenant of God mandatory, as well as obedience and adherence to it.

12 (Anasian 1987, p. 629).
13 (Kostikyan 2017, p. 144, entry 198).
5 I protect their communities within my frontiers with all my power, horses, men, weapons, strength, the logistics at my disposal, and my followers from among the believers in every region where the enemy lies, whether they be close or far, and in times of peace and war.

6 I protect their heartlands and I remove all harm that may reach them or their churches, places of worship, monasteries, and pilgrimage places wherever they may be—in the mountains, valleys, deserts, inhabited regions, plains, rugged terrains, isolated regions, or inside buildings.

7 I place their religion and property under my protection wherever they may be on land or at sea, in the East or in the West, as I protect myself, those who are close to me, and those who follow my creed from among the believers and the Muslims. I have taken them under my protection and granted them security from all harm, mischief, retributions, and harmful repercussions. I defend them from all enemies who wish them harm along with myself, my followers, helpers, and the people of my creed. This is because they are my subjects and people to whom I have granted my protection.

8 It is my duty, as I extend my governance over them, to care for them and protect them from all harm so that it does not reach them unless it first reaches me and my Companions who with me defend the heartlands of Islam.

9 I remove from them all mischief that subjects of a covenant have to bear of supplies which they give as loaned goods and as land taxes except for what they voluntarily consent to. They should not be forced or compelled in this matter.

10 It is not permitted to remove a bishop from his bishopric, a monk from his monastic life, a Christian from his Christianity, an ascetic from his hermitage, or a pilgrim from his pilgrimage. Nor is it permitted to destroy any part of their churches or to take parts of their buildings to construct mosques or the homes of Muslims. Whoever does such a thing will have violated the covenant of God, opposed His messenger, and betrayed the protection granted to him by God.

11 It is not permitted to impose the jizyah or any kind of land tax on monks, bishops, and those hermits who by devotion wear woolen clothing or live alone in the mountains or in other regions secluded from human habitation.

12 As for those Christians who have not consecrated their lives to monasticism and who are neither monks nor clergymen, the jizyah that is prescribed on them will either be at a rate of 4 dirhams per year or the provision of a decorated garment made of cotton or a valuable textile from Yemen to support the Muslims and strengthen the Treasury. If it is too difficult for them to provide a garment, or the amount prescribed on them, then they should provide whatever they can, and this should only be done if they willingly consent.

13 The jizyah shall not surpass more than twelve dirhams per year for large businesses at sea and at deep-sea which exploit mines for precious stones, gold and silver, including those who are wealthy and powerful among those who have professed the Christian religion so long as they are inhabitants and residents of the land.

14 The traveler who is not a resident in the land and he who is a foreigner will not have to pay the land-tax or the jizyah except if he has inherited land over which the one who commands authority has a monetary right. He must pay as others do without being charged in excess of what has been stipulated and he should not be made to bear what is beyond his strength or means in the cultivation, development, and harvest of the land. He should not be taxed excessively above the limit that has been set for landowners who are inhabitants of the land.

15 The people under our protection will not be obliged to go to war with the Muslims or take part in combat and face their enemies. The people under our protection are not to engage in war and it is precisely for this reason that we have given them our protection so that they be discharged from this obligation.

16 The Muslims shall be responsible for their safety and protection. The Christians will not be obliged to equip the Muslims for any of their wars against their enemies by means of weapons and horses unless they freely decide to contribute. Whoever does so will be the object of praise and gratitude, his help shall not be forgotten and he shall be rewarded.

17 No one who follows the Christian creed will be forced to enter into the religion Islam. And dispute not with the People of the Book except with means that are better [reference to Qur’an 29:46]. They must be covered by the wing of mercy. All mischief and harm that could reach them must be repelled, wherever they may find themselves and wherever they may be.
If a Christian were to commit a crime or an offense, the Muslims must stand by his side, help him, and support him by paying the penalty of his offense. They should encourage reconciliation between him and the victim either through a ransom or by negotiating a pardon.

The Christians must not be abandoned and left without help and assistance. This is because I have given them the covenant of God to ensure that they have the same rights and obligations as the Muslims. Furthermore, the Muslims have an obligation toward them with respect to the covenant to guarantee their right of protection and to prevent all bloodshed. The Muslims have accepted that every mischief be removed from them and the Christians have agreed to be bound to the Muslims so that they and the Muslims become partners with one another in the mutual rights and obligations that they both share.

Christians must not be subject to suffer abuse on the subject of marriages except for what they themselves consent to. Christian families should not be compelled to marry off their girls to Muslims and they should not be subject to any maltreatment if they decline a suitor or refuse a marriage proposal. Such marriages should only take place if they desire them and with their approval and consent.

If a Muslim man takes a Christian woman as his wife, he must respect her Christian beliefs. He must support her religious aspirations so that she may receive religious instruction from her clerical authorities, and he must allow her to fulfill her religious obligations. He must never prevent her from doing this. He must also not force her to act contrary to her religion or abuse her so that she eventually leaves it. If he does this, and forces her, then he has broken the covenant of God and violated its attestation which has been given to the Christians by the Messenger of God, and in the sight of God he is among the liars.

The Christians hold the right to request assistance from the Muslims to help them repair their churches, monasteries or for any other matter pertaining to their religious affairs. If they do so, then the Muslims must help them without the aim of receiving any compensation. On the contrary, they should aim to restore that religion out of faithfulness to the covenant of the Messenger of God as a donation and gift to them from God and His messenger. This is because they have been granted the protection of God, as well as the protection of His messenger (dhimmat Allāh wa dhimmat rasūl Allāh).

In matters of war between them and their enemies, the Muslims shall not force any Christian to be a messenger, guide, helper, informant, or to be involved in any other duty of war. Whoever obliges any one of them to do such a thing will have committed an injustice, disobeyed the Messenger of God and become free of his protection except he who upholds the stipulations which Muhammad the Messenger of God has issued in favor of those who follow the Christian creed.

He has also placed conditions in their religion concerning their pact of protection which they must abide by as part of the covenant which they have contracted with him. Among other things, none of them are to support an enemy of war against the Muslims, either openly or covertly. None of them are to shelter the enemies of the Muslims in their homes from which they could await the moment to launch an attack. These enemies [of the Muslims] should never be allowed to halt in the regions, villages, places of worship, or in any other place belonging to their co-religionists.

They must not provide any assistance to the Muslims’ enemies by furnishing them with weapons, horses, men or other logistics. They must not allow them to deposit any of their wealth with them and they must not exchange any correspondence. They are not to host them as guests except that it should be in a monastery where they are seeking refuge for their lives and protection for their religion.

The Christians must host the Muslims along with their mounts for three days and three nights when they halt among them. They must offer them, wherever they are found, and wherever they are stationed, the same food to that which they consume. They are not obliged to do any more, for in fulfilling this obligation they have removed all harm and mischief that may reach the Muslims.

If one of the Muslims needs to hide in one of their homes or in one of their places of worship, they must grant him hospitality, help him, and stand by his side so long as the Muslims remain in hiding. They must conceal him from the enemy, not disclose his whereabouts, and accommodate for all of his needs.
28 Whoever contravenes any of these conditions or transgresses them by altering them has freed himself of the protection of God and that of His messenger (dhhimmat Allâh wa dhimmât rasûlíhî). The Christians possess the covenants and attestations which I took from their religious scholars, monks and other Christians among the People of the Book. It is the most stringent trust that God and His prophet have placed on his community so that they may abide by what the Prophet himself has decreed on them and on all Muslims. It is to ensure their protection and as a recognition of the covenant until the Hour arrives and the world comes to an end.

29 The witnesses to this writ which Muhammad the Messenger of God wrote between himself and the Christians are:

30 [1] Abû Bakr al-Siddîq;
[2] 'Umar ibn al-Khattâb;
[3] 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân;
[4] 'Ali ibn Abî Tâlib;
[5] Mu‘âwiyyah ibn Abî Suﬁyân;
[6] Abû al-Dardâ;
[7] Abû Hurayrah;
[8] 'Abdullâh ibn Maṣ‘ûd;
[9] 'Abdullâh ibn al-‘Abbâs;
[10] Ťumâaz ibn ‘Abd al-Muţţalib;
Al-Fadl ibn al-‘Abbâs;
[12] Al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwâm;
[13] Tâhâh ibn ‘Abdullâh;
[14] Sa‘d ibn Mu‘âdh;
[15] Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubâdah;
[16] Thâbit ibn Qays;
[17] Zayd ibn Thâbit;
[18] ‘Abdullâh ibn Yazîd;
[19] Ṣarqûz ibn Zuhayr;
[20] Zayd ibn Arqam;
[21] Usâmah ibn Zayd;
[22] Sahl ibn Baydâ;
[23] ‘Ummân ibn Maţ‘ûn;
[24] Khûwân ibn Jubayr;
[25] Abû al-‘âliyâh;
[26] ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘âs;
[27] Abû Hudhayfah ibn ‘Ubâh ibn Rabî‘ah;
[28] ‘Ammâr ibn Yâsîr;
[29] Ḥâshim ibn ‘Ubâh ibn Abî Waqqâs;
[30] Hassân ibn Thâbit;
[31] Ka‘b ibn Mâlik;
[32] ‘Abdullâh ibn Rawâhah; and
[33] Ja‘far ibn Abî Tâlib.

31 It was written by Mu‘âwiyyah ibn Abû Suﬁyân, dictated to him by the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, on Monday at the end of the fourth month of the fourth year of the Hijrah in Madînah. And sufficient is God as a witness to this writ (wa kafâ bi-l-Lahi shahi'dan!)

32 It was written at the request of Kalsûy Dardami.

33 Whoever changes it, then the curse of God is upon him. God knows best and is Most Wise!

5. Copies of ‘Alî’s Covenant with the Christians in the Matendaran

The Matendaran possesses two copies of a covenant that ‘Alî granted to the Christians of his time, reiterating the main terms and conditions stipulated by the Prophet to Christians. The first copy is catalogue as MS 357 and is dated to 2 Shawwâl 1105 AH/28 May 1694 CE. It is written in Farsi, but its script is very faint, which makes it very difficult to be deciphered. According to Anasian, ‘Alî’s Covenant with the Christians is in fact a renewal of

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14 Ibid., pp. 143–42, entry 197.
the Prophet’s Covenant with the Christians of the World, which he believed ‘Alī had written on behalf of his master in 4 AH.\(^\text{15}\)

A copy of ‘Alī’s Covenant with the Christians is said to exist on the island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni in Venice, home to the Armenian Catholic Monastery of the Mekhitarists.\(^\text{16}\) The Armenian scholar Kalust Shermazanyan also reported that he found a Farsi copy of ‘Alī’s Covenant with the Christians in Ardabil bearing numerous official stamps. It is said to have been requested by Armenian dignitaries, among them well-respected clergymen, a copy of which was thereafter sent to Etchmiadzin.\(^\text{17}\)

Three copies of ‘Alī’s Covenant with the Christians whose contents are more or less identical to MS 357 have been documented by Levon Minasyan. The first manuscript he found was in Echmiadzin, the second in New Julfa, and the third in the Chehel Sotoon Palace in Isfahan. The text from New Julfa which Minasyan transcribed\(^\text{18}\) is more less identical to that documented by Johannes Avdall who commented that the copy he had come across

was first translated into Armenian by Gregor Campan, on 15 January 1767 in Astrachan and afterward by M. Saragian, authenticated by Joakim Gregor Bagratuni of Constantinople in the year 1804. I was in possession of a copy of the original document, written in Cufic characters, which I lent some years ago to the late Henry Torrens, Esq., Vice-President of the Asiatic Society, for translation and insertion in the Journal. It appears that this rare piece of antiquity was lost or mislaid among his unpublished papers. The following is a correct and faithful version from the Armenian translation of the Edict or Covenant of the Caliph ‘Alī. (Avdall 1870)

The covenant documented by Minasyan begins by explaining that the original Arabic copy was written in Kūfic script by “Hishām ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abī Waqāṣ” at the behest of ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib. The Armenian translation which Avdall used to make his own English translation was thus reliant on a Farsi translation of an Arabic manuscript. The English translation of the introduction of ‘Alī’s Covenant with the Christians reported by Avdall therefore reads as follows:

“Praise and thanksgiving to the Creator of the universe, and blessings upon the great chief and benign Muhammad and his sacred tribe.

“After all this, it is the purport of the translation [i.e., from Arabic to Farsi] of the Covenant, which was written by Háshim, the son of Athap [‘Utbah], the son of Valas [Waqāṣ], according to the command of the blessed chief of the Arabians, and of the Lion of God, of the holy of the holies, of Ali, the grandson of Abūtālib, the exalted, in Cufic character, in the celebrated domicile of Kharanthala, in the magnificent palace [a reference to the Monastery of Dhū al-Kifl, who is the Prophet Ezekiel according to MS 8855], in the month of Çafar, in the fortieth year of Hijrah.\(^\text{19}\)

The second copy of ‘Alī’s Covenant with the Christians in the Matenadran is catalogued as MS 130 in the Archives of the Divan of the Catholicos of All Armenians. It is written on red buffalo skin, with parts of it being burned and the introductory text missing, but it is virtually identical to all Persian copies. As it is difficult to read because the full text is missing, I was fortunate enough to locate an Arabic copy of ‘Alī’s Covenant with the Christians at the National Library in Tehran, which is catalogued there as MS 8855. Just like the Prophet’s Exordium to the Covenant with the Christians of Najrān,\(^\text{20}\) this copy states that a delegation of 40 Christian dignitaries visited ‘Alī. What is more, their names are the same

\(^{15}\) (Anasian 1987, p. 631).

\(^{16}\) Ibid.

\(^{17}\) Ibid.

\(^{18}\) (Minasyan 1984, pp. 14–20).

\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) (Minasyan 1984, p. 45). Also see (Scher 1983 pp. 602–10 [282–90]).
as in the *Exordium*, which could perhaps indicate that the Christians of Najrān, now located in Iraq, continued to foster diplomatic ties between different Christian denominations and the newly established Caliphate. It should be noted that though the texts documented by Minasyan and Avdall also mention the Christian delegates’ names, unlike MS 8855, they do not specify the amount that should be paid as *jizyah*.

The Arabic text of MS 8855 appears to be virtually identical to the copy of Ali’s *Covenant with the Christians* that is housed in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. What follows is a translation of MS 8855 based on the translation of Avdall. The Arabic typescript may be consulted in Appendix B. The English translation has incorporated the Arabic corrections made to MS 8855 based on MS 358 and the Prophet’s *Exordium* to the Christians of Najrān.

6. **Translation of MS 8855**

1. In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
2. This is a copy of the covenant which was written in the Monastery of Ezekiel (Dhū al-Kifl), peace be upon him. We praise God Most High and His servant [Muhammad].
3. Whereas certain Christian men of erudition, God-fearing and honoured for their loyalty, namely the ‘āqib, Sayyid, ‘Abd al-Yashū’, Ibn Hajn, Abraham the monk, and the bishop ‘Īsā, who forty in number and being men of distinction from among the Christians, communicated with me that they wished to enact this covenant. They knew my right and agreed to uphold what we had agreed upon after our meeting. They rendered every assistance in their power to our agents whom we had sent at the frontiers.
4. After their departure they earned my trust and loyalty, abiding to the covenant which I solicited with them as well as on behalf of all the followers of Islam in the East and in the West. To this end they are under my fostering care and protection for as long as I live, and even after my death, as long as the religion of Islam and the true faith shall prevail.
5. It shall be the duty of all potentates, princes, and Muslims, to carry out my covenant which has now been attested. So long as the sea shall be capable of wetting the shores, rain shall descend from heaven, grass shall grow from the earth, stars shall give light, and the dawn shall rise upon the traveler, no man shall dare violate or alter my covenant, nor increase and decrease or change the same, because he that increases violates my covenant and decreases my signs.
6. And those who alter this covenant shall be considered infringers of that which I have bestowed on them, and in league with those who do not profess loyalty to me from among the followers of my religion. They have transgressed the covenant of God, may His name be glorified, violated its binding authority, and incurred just indignation from God. And God is sufficient as a witness (*wa kaf¯a bi-l-Lahi shah¯ıdan*)!
7. The Sayyid, the bishop and those whose names have been mentioned before of the men of distinction among the Christians, have received a covenant and a binding authority for all their co-religionists living under the shadow of Islam. By virtue of this covenant there shall be perpetual peace and tranquility between Christians and Muslims. The contents of this covenant are forever binding, and I have given it to them of my own accord based on what I have solicited with them, and with a cheerful countenance. I shall abide by the covenant of protection and act according to it so long as they shall be faithful to me and continue in their loyalty to my government and take no part in opposing me and the people who follow my way. By remaining steadfast in the observance of this covenant they shall resemble the Muslims while the Muslims shall have no choice but to abide by it.

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21. (Ghazarian 2008, p. 68). A comparison of the image of Ali’s *Covenant with the Christians* reproduced by Ghazarian to MS 8855 appears to reveal that we are dealing with two recensions of the same text.
Moreover, I have convened together the grandees of the Muslims and my leading Companions, and in their presence, I have established the covenant which the Christians requested of me. I have written down and recorded for them conditions and stipulations, which are hereafter to stand firm and remain in force. Should in future any person of rank and authority oppress them and treat them with cruelty, they are to present this record of my covenant, because it is incumbent on all persons of rank and authority and on all Muslims to act according to our behests. Those in rank and authority need to comply with our mandates and obey our will in conformity with the covenant of protection which I have made and established with them by remaining loyal to it. There shall be no disobedience or opposition to my commands and wishes. Moreover, it is politic and expedient not to molest and oppress the Christians, so that by the adoption of a conciliatory course, they might be induced to comply with the stipulations contained in my covenant and be considered among my helpers.

Thus my covenant is a burden and obligation to its recipients, and wearisome and irksome to maliciously disposed and evil-minded persons. I desire that there be no contention by the Christians against the followers of the religion of Islam so that the latter not act against what I have written concerning the Christians who have proved themselves worthy of my favor and benevolence. My covenant inspires grace and acts of goodness to save the Christians from troubles and vexations, God willing.

I begin my covenant by giving them the attestations which they requested from me and all of my followers (jamī' ahl shī'atī) among the Muslims, that I give them the covenant of God and its attestation, along with my protection and that of God’s prophets, chosen ones, and of all holy men, be they believers or Muslims, the first and the last one of them. My covenant and attestation are the most stringent that God has revealed to a divinely sent prophet or an angel in proximity [to the divine throne], requiring obedience to its stipulations. Faithfulness to the covenant of God is therefore an obligation because the Christians under my authority are my subjects, and I am ruler over them. It is as such my duty to have a benevolent eye over them and to protect them from all evil and troubles, and that these never reach them unless they first reach my Companions and I who together protect the Islamic heartlands.

I remove from them burdensome taxations which subjects are customarily accustomed to. No demand should be made from them beyond what is written down and sanctioned. The bishops should not be removed from their bishopric. The monks and hermits should not be disturbed in their solitudes nor removed from their monasteries. The Christians should not be converted from their Christianity and no pilgrim should be prevented from making his pilgrimage. Their churches and monasteries should not be destroyed by the Muslims and taken for their homes or mosques. Nobody should remove or pull down the bells from the steeples of their churches.

The ‘āqib, the Sayyid, ‘Abd al-Yashū’, Ibn Ḥajn, Abraham the monk, and the bishop ‘Isā have agreed that the jizya which will be levied on every Christian shall be 33 dirhams and a third in silver. This is what I have stipulated for them as an authoritative written decree and covenant, and as a practice which must be observed.

Whoever observes the covenant holds strongly to the religion of Islam and the good that is therein, while he who fails to uphold the stipulations which I have made or changes them, opposing what I have commanded, has violated the covenant of God and its attestation. Therefore, let no crowned head or man of authority of the Muslims or believers compel the Christians to profess the religion of Islam and dispute with them except in a kindly manner [reference to Qur’ān 29:46].

The Muslims must take the Christians under the shadow of their mercy and clemency, protect them from all sorts of oppression and tribulations wherever they may be found and wherever they may reside. And if the Christian people be in want of money or in need of pecuniary help for the building of churches and monasteries, or for matters pertaining to their religion, then the Muslims ought to assist them and supply them with the necessary means. This should be provided to them as a gift from God and His messenger as part of the pact of protection that is owed to them, not as a debt which they will incur.
If anyone should infringe the contents of my covenant, then he is a wrongdoer and disobedient to the Messenger of God, and he will assuredly be deprived of his protection. The stipulations which were made by the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālīb, need to be piously observed as he has made them binding on himself and all of the Muslims. They are dutybound to carry out his orders by succoring and commiserating them at all times, so long as this world shall last and God will rule over us.

It was written by Hishām ibn ‘Utbah ibn al-Waqāṣ in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālīb, in the Monastery of Ezekiel, peace be upon him, in the month of Ṣafar, in the fortieth year of the Hijrah. Glory be to God who is exalted!

7. Conclusions

The Arabic and Farsi manuscripts of the covenants of the Prophet Muhammad and of ‘Alī copied between the 15th and 19th centuries appear to be linked to covenants that were originally issued during the early conquests. Islamic scholars have reported how the Prophet and the Rightly-Guided Caliphs wrote numerous political documents during their time. Of particular importance is the Prophet’s Treaty with the Christians of Najrān, which has been documented in Islamic sources and The Chronicle of Seert. The similarities of content, language, and structure indicate that both recensions were either derived or influenced from one or more some source document issued by the Prophet.

Overall, the covenants of the Prophet and ‘Alī have intrigued a number of Armenian scholars. The very fact that these were copied out, translated, issued, renewed, and acknowledged by Muslim authorities indicates their authoritativeness. As more studies continue to be done on the covenants, and more manuscripts come to be available, it is hoped that their historicity and how they influenced Muslim policy throughout the centuries will be better understood. Needless to say, the very fact that they were recognized as legitimate by Muslim authorities and the Armenian Apostolic Church sets a significant precedent for the forging of harmonious relations between Muslims and Christians.

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Appendix A Transcript of MS 358

1... انصرافية في شرق أرض العرب وغربها وأعجبوها وقريباها وبيديها وموقعها وهويتها كتبنا جعله لهم عهداً مريعاً وصيحاً منشوراً وصية

2 من راهنا كان بالإسلام متمسكاً وله فيه من خير مستعفياً ومن ضيماً وكث الهد الذي فيها وخلافه إلى غيره وتعديه فيه ما أمرت به

3 فيدأت فيه بإعطاء العهود على نفسي والواليت التي سألوا عني ومن جميع أهل مليتي من مسلمين 22 بأعطهم عهد الله وبيافنا وذمتنا

4 وذمتني وميثاني أشد ما أخذ الله على نبي مرسى أو ملك مقرب من حق الطاعة وإيذاء الفريضة وإواكفا بعده الله

5 أن أحاط قبائس في طوري جزيلي ورجللي ونجله وفقيه وعدي وعوامي وأتباع من المؤمنين في كل ناحية من نواحي العدو بعيداً

6 أن أحياهم بيضت عليهم وسعت عليهم ومن كان منهم وبيهم وبوت صلواتهم وموضوع الرحاب منهم ومواطنة السباحة حيث كانوا من جبل أو وادي أو مقاها أو عرمان أو جبل أو حزن أو رمل أو بناء
وأن أحوط دينهم وملتهم حيث كانوا وأين كانوا من ير وجر في غرق أو غرب بما أحوط به نفس وحماتي 24 وأهل ملتهم من المؤمنين والمسلمين وأن أخلصوا في أمتي وأمني من كل دابة 25 أو مكوك أو موؤة أو عزة وأن أكون دابة عنهم كل عدو بريدي وإياهم نفسى وأتابكي وأعوائي وأهل ملتي لأحتم ريحي وأهل دمتي

وانا نستسط على هذال وبعب على رعايتهم وحفظهم من كل مكوك وأن لا يعلم إلئه حتى يصل إليه و إلى أصحابي والذين عن بيعة الإسلام معي

وأن أعلق عنهم الأذى في الموج الذي يعله أهل العهد من الصارم والخرج إلا ما طأط في أرضهم ليس عليهم جيد ولا إكراء علي شيء من ذلك

ولا تطأاف 26 أسقف عن أسقفهم ولا راهب عن رهبانه ولا نصراني آين نصراني عن نصرانيتة ولا راهب عن صومعته ولا ساحب عن سبحة ولا يهمد بيت من بيوتهم ولا يدخل شيء من بيوتهم في بناء المساجد ومنازل المسلمين من فعل ذلك فقد نكث عهد الله وخلق رسول الله وحنا ذمة الله

وأن لا يعمل الرهبان ولا الأساقفة 27 وتعبد منهم وتأمل بناس الصوف المتولد في الجبال والمواقع المتباينة عن الأSFارات شيئا من الحبزة والخرج

وأن ليس عليهم من النصرانين من هو ليس بتمطبع ولا راهب ولا ساحب من الحبزة إلا أربعة دراوهم في كل عام أو ثوب حبيبة أو عصب الدين 28 إنشاء للملسنين وقوة في بيت المال فإن لم يسفع عليهم الثوب لم يلوها منه إلا أن تطأع بذلك أنفسهم

وأن لا بهاء في الحبزة على أصحاب التجارب العظام في البحر والغوص واستخراج معادي الجوهر والذهب والوقفة وذوي الأموال الفائقة والقوة من أنحل النصرانية أكثر من أحد عشر درهما في كل عام المحلة إذا كانوا للموضع قاطنين وهم مقيمين

وإنه ليس يعترض سبل ليس من قاطني البلد ولا أهل اجتياز حتى لا يعرف موضوع الخراج ولا حبزة إلا أن يكون في بدء موات من موامات الأشياء من رجح عليه مال المسلمين من حق فؤدنا ذلك هو ما يؤدي مله ولا يجري عليه ولا يعمل منه إلا قدر طاقة وقوته على حكو ذلك الأرض وعمارية وإقبال مرها لا يكلف شكطنا ولا يجري به أحد أصحاب الخراج من نظراته

ولا يكشف أهل الدمة الخرج مع المسلمين إلى عدوهم للغلال الحب ومكاسبة الأفراد لأنه ليس على أهل الدمة فيرئا عندنا إذا كانوا للموضع قاطنين وهم مقيمين

أعطوا الدمة على أن يكشفوا

وأن لا 29 يكون المسلمون ذواما عليهم وحرزا من دونهم ولا يركون على سبيل أحد من المسلمين إلى الحرب التي يلقون فيها عدوهم بقوة من سلاح ولا خيال إلا أن جنر إليهم فيهم على ذلك من تبرع به وعرف له ذلك وكوكب عليه

ولا يحير أحد من كان على سنة النصرانية على الإسلام كرهما ولا يجادلوا إلا بانثى فيه إحساس و خفف لهم جناح الرحمه ويكف عنهم

وإن جز أحد من الكلمة التصريحة على الإسلام كرهما ولا يجادلوا إلا بانثى ه في بيان رحمه ويكف عنهم

وإن جز أحد من الكلمة التصريحة على الإسلام كرهما ولا يجادلوا إلا بانثى ه في بيان رحمه ويكف عنهم

من أسباب وما من الله يا وما فداء بقدية به

ولا يحذروا ولا يفرضوا ولا يركون هملا على أن يعلموه عهد الله على أن لهم ما للملسنين ومعيهم ما على المسلمين وهم لن المسلمين وللمسلمين ما لهم

وعلى المسلمين ما عليهم بالعده الذي استوجوا به حقن الدماء والذين عن الحبزة به استوجوا بهذين إذن كل مكوك ويدخل لهم في كل مرفق حتى يكون للملسنين تركا فيما لهم فيما عليهم
وعليهم أن لا يجشيا من أمر النكاح فقطًا لا يراودونهم ولا يكره الأهل البيت منهم على تزويج المسلم ولا يضاروا في ذلك إن معنا خاصًا وأيضاً تزويج وإن ذلك لا يكون إلا بطبع أنفسهم ومساحة أحوالهم فإن أحدهم ورضوا به و إذا صارت النصرانية عند المسلم فعليه أن يرضي نصراته ويتبعها سواء في الدنيا من الانتقاد برسالتها والأدح تعامل دينها لا يتعمهما ذلك ولا يكرهها على ترك ولا يضارها في رفض دينها فإن فعل ذلك و أكرهها عليه فقد خالف عبد الله و عصا ميثاق رسول الله وهو عند الله من الكافرين

ولهم إن اختبأوا إلى مرسى كنائهم أو صواعمهم و شيء من مصلحة دينهم إلى رفع من المسلمين أو معونة على مرسى أن يردوا على ذلك ويغاوتوا و يبردوا ولا يكون ذلك عليهم على مصلحة دينهم و واف، لهم لعدم رسول الله هبة موهوبة لهم ذمة الله ودعا رسول الله عليهم

وله كاهد منهم أن يكون في الحرب بين المسلمين عدوهم رسولًا ولا دليلًا ولا عونًا ولا متسخراً في شيء، ما بين من الحرب فإن فعل ذلك كان ظالماً ورسول الله عاصياً ومن وصيته متخالفة هذه الشروط التي شرط محمد رسول الله لأهل ملة النصرانية

وانتظروا عليهم في دينهم أن يتسع فيهم التمسك بها ووفاء بما عاهدوا عليه من أن يكون أحد منهم عنيًا لأحدهم من أهل الحرب والمسلمين في عد لا علانية ولا يروا في منازلهم عدوًا للمسلمين يريدون به وضعية وشدة وفاة الرابط ولا يزلوا أوطانهم ولا شيء من مساكن عبادتهم ولا عزمهم من أهل الملة

وله يرددوا أحد من أهل الحرب بين المسلمين بقوة عجيبة السلاح ولا حيل ولا الرجال ولا يستدوعوا لهم مالًا ولا حمًا ولا يمنعونهم بلسنج ولا يعد ولا يمتعونهم ولا يفقوهم إلا أن يكونوا في دار تقبيل يدعون فيها عن أنفسهم و يدرون عن دمائها ورغبتهما فيهم

وله يتعون أحد من المسلمين قامة ثلاثة أيام و ولياً بأفضلهم أولًا ودؤاً من حيث كنا و نحن أرادوا و مبدلون لهم القري الذي منه يذكرون و لا يكتفوا سوى ذلك فيحملوا الأذية عليهم و الكروه

وإن احتج إلى اختفاء أحد من المسلمين في منزلهم ومواطن أعمالهم أن يذوقهم و يردوا ويوسوهم فيما عاشوا به ما كانوا مفتونين إذا كنا عليهم و لم يظهروا العدو على عورتهم و لم يبخوا بحيتي من الواجب عليهم في ذلك

فمن نكت منهم شيئًا من هذه الشروط و تعتماها إلى غرق فهو برًا من دُعُوته و واعدوه بذلك المجد والموثوق الذي أخذت على الأرجاع والประสง والمصالح من أهل الكتاب بأمًا ما أخذ نبي على أمته من الأعلى لوجهها بذلك أن كنا و كنا و رددنا لهم الفوائد ما جعلوا لهم على نفسه وعلى المسلمين رعاية ذلك لهم و معرفتهم به و استفادتهم إليه أبداً حتى تقوم الساعة و تقضي

وشهد هذا الكتاب الذي كتبه محمد رسول الله بينه وبين التسادي والتي أشرف على عظيمه وكتب لهم هذا المعهد لنا

أبو بكر الصديق
وجهر بن الخطاب
وخطب بن عفان
و علي بن أبي طالب
ومعاوية بن أبي سفيان
وأبو الدرداء
وأبو هريرة
وعبد الله بن مساعد
وعبد الله بن العباس
وحمرة بن عبد المطلب
والفضل بن العباس
والزبير بن العوام
وطهارة بن عبد الله
وسعد بن معاذ
وسعد بن عبادة
وثابت بن قيس
وزيد بن ثابت
وعبد الله بن يزيد
وهرودس بن زهير
وزيد بن أرقم
واسمه بن زيد
وحبل بن ببسا
وعمرون بن مطعون
وجون بن حبیر
وأبو العالية
وعبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص
وأبو حذيفة بن عتبة بن ربيعة
ومعمر بن ياسر
وهمام بن عتبة بن أبي وقاص
وحسان بن ثابت
وكعب بن مالك
Appendix B Transcript of MS 8855

1. Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

2. This book is attributed to Ibn Shihab, a scholar of the city of Madinah, according to the book.

3. The book on the second issue of God's prophet's authority and his appointment of the caliphs.

4. It is not known if the caliphs are appointed by God or by the people.

5. For example, the caliph Zainab bint Abi Sufyan.

6. There is no definite article in the text, it should read: Allah's servants.

7. The verb should be read: أُعْلِمُوا

8. The pronoun is missing.

9. The text should be read: مُعَلَّمًا.
وأتخذ ذلك رؤساء المسلمين وأفضل أدفعهم وركبتهم على فتح الدموع الذي تلوها وأرتدي كما كنت ليمررت يكون عند أعيادهم إذا تأكدت أحد المسلمين ليوه فتح الدموع من كان منهم سلطانًا أو غير سلطان، وأن على污泥 إنشاؤهم ما أمرت به لتنكيم موقعية الروح والتحلي إلى إلهي والجحث، 33 فتح الدموع الذي أعيده من فتح لنكون الحجة عليه خلافة أمرك وعلي المسلمين واجب أن يذكرون أن يكون لهم العهد الذي جمعت له ليدخلوا في باب الفوفا وليكوا لي أمناً على الحف الركح كافت به من فتح منجعل ذلك عناوين على الدخول وغيباً لأهل الكذبة والدكش ونلا يكون الحجة لأحد من فألف الدعاء على أحد من يتحلى دين الإسلام بتفحص ما وصفت في هذا الكتاب والوفاء لهم بما استوجبة عنا وإستحثوا وكان ذلك يدعو إلى استماع المعروف ويجب إلى مكارم الأخلاق وأيمر بالحسن ونبي في السمو فيها إتباع الصدق وإفان الحق أن شاء الله تعالى فيأت في بإخطاء العهد على نفسه والواقفين في ستة عن جميع أهل شيعتي من المسلمين بأن أعطيهم عند الله ويبقى ودعتهم أبناءه وأحفاده وأولئك من المولدين والملسمين في الأمم الأخرى وعديد وميامي، وأتيب 35 لما أخذ الله على نبي مرس أو ملك مقرب من حق الطاعة وإفان الفرضية والوفاء بعده أنهم يحب وأهل دنيا إيرادهم ودوعهم للبلطتهم على رغبهم وحفظهم من كل مكره ولا يصل الأداة إليه حتى يصل ذلك إلى أصحبه الداينين عن بيتها الإسلام ووافق العلاق السعيد وعبد الفتاح أبو تخنوش وابن الخير الأزهري وعيسى السلف أن يد 39 أية الجزيرة عن كل دعاء كله مبلغ ثلاث وثلاثين درهماً وثلاثة فجر وجه ذلك ذلك مقاطعة وشرط ويعد ما بس العدد ملناً ومجلد مبهر وسنة محسوة أوله من دعاها كان بالإسلام نمتلئاً ولا فيه من الجد مسألاً وفمن ضع هذا الشرط الذي كتبه وخلاف إلى غبره وتحديده ما أمرت كان لهم الله ناكاً وليته ناقله وقيده مسألاً وعنة مستوجاً سلطان كان أم غيره من المؤمنين والملسمين ولا ينوي أحد كان على حين التماس جزرة على السلام وهيجاب إلى الأحساء وحفظهم 40 جنات الرحمة ويكف عنهم أيدي الكروه حيث وجدوا وأين كانوا أولهم أن يحشدوا في مؤتى ييبقى ومسلمة ديارتهم وصوامهم أو غبر في مسلمة دينهم إلى رفف من الدعائم وتقوا لهم على دينه من رفف على ربة 41 وأن تعبوا 42 ولا يكون ذلك علىهم ديناً بل تقوا على مصلتهم وهمومهم وهمجة موهوبة لهم ومنه ورسوله عليهم وممن خالف هذا الشرط كان طالما ورسول الله عصياً ومن ذمنه مختلاً ولا يسمع إلا الإذن والقوة لهم بهذا الشرايط الذين شرطت لهم وعلى أمير المؤمنين على أبي طالب طالب الوفاء له ما جعل لهم على نفسه وعلى المسلمين رعاية ذلك وحفظهم وإفانها، إنه أبداً حتى تقوم الساعة ويفضي الله بها وكتبه 44 هشام بن عتبة بن الوقاص بحضره أمير المؤمنين على أبي طالب وذلك في دير حنفي الذي الكف على السلام في صغر سنة أربعين للهجرة والخضد له تعالى

30 The text should read جامع
31 The text should read أصول
32 The text should read أصل
33 The text should read 33
34 The text should read 34
35 The text should read 35
36 The text should read 36
37 The text should read 37
38 The text should read 38
39 The text should read 39
40 The text should read 40
41 The text should read 41
42 The text should read 42
43 The text should read 43
44 The text should read 44

See Arabic transcript of MS 358, sections 4 and 28.
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36 The text should read يلَأ ذَا السَّلْطَة.
37 The text should read المَارِيَة. See Arabic transcript of MS 358, section 9.
38 The text should read مَرْضِيَّة.
39 The text should read يؤَؤَوْ يَا.
40 The word is missing.
41 The text should read مرَة.
42 The text should read يعَاوَوْ يَا.
43 The text should read بهذه الشروط.
44 The text should read وُكْيِه.