

The Life of Timothy of Kākhustā

Anonymous

DATE OF BIRTH 9th or 10th c.
PLACE OF BIRTH Perhaps Syria
DATE OF DEATH 9th or 10th c.
PLACE OF DEATH Perhaps Syria

BIOGRAPHY

Little is known about the authors of various recensions of the *Life of Timothy of Kākhustā*. The earliest version seems to have been written by someone attached to the monastery of the saint, following his death in the early decades of the 9th century (Lamoreaux and Cairala, *Life of Timothy*, p. 27). Later versions, in Arabic, Greek, and Georgian, were written in Antioch after Timothy's remains had been translated there, in the mid-11th century (Lamoreaux and Cairala, *Life of Timothy*, p. 26).

MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary —

Secondary

- J. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala, *The Life of Timothy of Kākhustā*, Turnhout, 2000 (*Patrologia Orientalis* 48.4), pp. 9-33
Nasrallah, *HMLEM*, p. 165
K. K'ek'elidze, *Et'iudebi dzveli kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oriidan*, 13 vols, Tbilisi, 1945-74, vi, pp. 276-311 ('Timote Ant'iokeleli (ucnobi sirieli moyvace VIII sauk'unisa)')
K. K'ek'elidze, *Geschichte der kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, ed. P.M. Tarchnišvili and J. Assfalg, Rome, 1955, p. 496
Graf, *GCAL* i, pp. 522-23, ii, p. 474

WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Sīrat al-qiddīs al-fāḍil al-nāsik Tīmāthayūs, ‘The Life of the holy and virtuous ascetic, Timothy’, ‘Life of Timothy of Kākhushṭā’DATE 9th or 10th c.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Arabic

DESCRIPTION

The Life of Timothy is set in the last decades of the 8th century and the early decades of the 9th, in the little-known villages located between Antioch and Aleppo. Timothy was a native of the otherwise unknown village of Kākhushṭā. His parents having died while he was still an infant, he was raised by his brothers and sisters. When he was seven years old, a beating at the hands of his eldest brother caused him to flee Kākhushṭā. He was taken in by the residents of the nearby village of Kafr Zūmā, where he lived until coming of age, at which point he decided to renounce the world. He traveled to Jerusalem, where he visited the holy sites and eventually received the monastic habit. In time, he returned to Kafr Zūmā, where for many years he lived the life of an enclosed hermit. When he was about 40 years old, he was required to travel to Antioch. On the way, he stopped at Kākhushṭā and was persuaded to stay. He began, once again, to live the life of a recluse. In time, his reputation for sanctity grew and he began to receive disciples. By the time Timothy died, a monastery had grown up around his hermitage.

The Life of Timothy of Kākhushṭā is extant in a number of different recensions. The earliest of these has been partially preserved in MS BNF – Ar. 259. Originally written in Arabic, it seems to have been the monks of his monastery who drew up this first account of Timothy’s life. When Timothy’s remains were translated to Antioch, in the middle decades of the 11th c., his life was rewritten, its weak Arabic being strengthened and its unadorned narrative being embellished. This recension is preserved in MS Saidnaya, Convent of Our Lady of Saidnaya – 94. This second Arabic version, or one quite similar to it, shortly thereafter served as the basis for a Greek version, now lost. This Greek version, in turn, was almost immediately translated into Georgian. Yet another version of the *Life* has recently come to light in a manuscript in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Damascus. The

relation of this recension to the other Arabic versions, as well as to the Georgian version, has yet to be determined.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Life of Timothy of Kākhushṭā sheds much light on the religious life of the Syrian countryside in the early decades of the 'Abbasid period. Blake is quite right in observing that 'le tableau que cette Vie trace de la vie religieuse en Syrie est sans pareil' (Blake, 'Littérature grecque', p. 377). (In what follows, Timothy's *Life* is cited first according to the numbering of the paragraphs of the Paris recension, where extant, followed by that of the Saidnaya recension.) Much of the *Life* is concerned with Timothy's day-to-day interactions with the faithful of his monastery, with pilgrims, and with local villagers. Occasionally his life intersected with the broader currents of his time, in particular the exile and imprisonment under Hārūn al-Rashīd of Theodoret, Patriarch of Antioch (§§ 27-28/33-34). Of particular note are Timothy's encounters with Muslims. They cross the stage of his *Life* on a number of occasions: a Muslim from Kākhushṭā, whom Timothy punishes for his sexual sins (§ 18/23); a Muslim who converts to Christianity on meeting Timothy (§ 25/31); and Muslim ghazis engaged in plunder of Byzantine territory who have a miraculous encounter with the saint (-/§ 44).

MANUSCRIPTS

MS Saidnaya, Convent of Our Lady of Saidnaya – 94, fols 129v-154v (1396)

MS BNF – Ar. 259, fols 104v-150v (14th c.)

MS Damascus, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate – 394, pp. 79-122 (18th c.)

MS Saidnaya, Convent of Our Lady of Saidnaya – 63, one folio in length, about ten folios from the end of the otherwise unfoliated and undated MS (a fragment of the recension witnessed by Saidnaya 94).

For a list of the Georgian MSS containing the *Life*, see K'ekelidze, *Geschichte der kirchlichen Georgischen Literatur*, p. 496.

EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Lamoreaux and Cairala, *The Life of Timothy of Kākhushṭā*, pp. 38-183 (edition of the Arabic versions found in the Paris and Saidnaya MSS, with English trans.)

- K. K'ek'elidze, *Et'iudebi dzveli kartuli lit'erat'uris ist'oriidan*, vi, pp. 311-413 (edition of the Georgian version); reprinted from his 'T'imote Ant'ioke'li (ucnobi sirieli moyvace VIII sauk'unisa)', *Enis, ist'oriisa da mat'erialuri k'ult'uris inst'it'ut'i akad. N. Maris sax.* 7 (1940) 1-150

STUDIES

- C. Foss, 'Byzantine saints in early Islamic Syria', *AB* 125 (2007) 93-119
 Lamoreaux and Cairala, *The Life of Timothy of Kākhushṭā*, pp. 9-33
 Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 113-15, 719-20
- B. Tūmā, *Siyar al-qiddīsīn wa-sā'ir al-a'yād fī l-kanīsa l-urthūdhuksiyya (al-Sīnaksār)*, 2 vols, Dūmā, 1992-97, ii, pp. 370-78
- B. Tūmā, *al-Qiddīsūn al-mansiyyūn fī l-turāth al-Anṭākī*, Beirut, 1995, pp. 201-23
- J.-M. Sauget, *Premières recherches sur l'origine et les caractéristiques des synaxaires melkites (XIe-XVIIe siècles)*, Brussels, 1969, pp. 334-37
- R. Blake, 'Littérature grecque en Palestine au VIIIe siècle', *Le Muséon* 78 (1965) 367-80, p. 377
- G. Garitte, 'Bibliographie de K. Kekelidze († 1962)', *Le Muséon* 76 (1963) 443-80, p. 457, no. 81, and 472, no. 140q
- G. Garitte, 'La passion de S. Élien de Philadelphie ('Amman)', *AB* 79 (1961) 412-46, p. 412
- G. Garitte, *Le calendrier palestino-géorgien du Sinaiticus 34 (Xe siècle)*, Brussels, 1958, p. 272
- M. Tarchnišvili, 'Kurzer Überblick über den Stand der georgischen Literaturforschung', *OC* 37 (1953) 89-99, p. 97
- P. Peeters, *Le tréfonds oriental de l'hagiographie byzantine*, Brussels, 1950, p. 22
- R. Blake, 'Deux lacunes comblées dans la *Passio XX monachorum sabaitarum*', *AB* 68 (1950) 27-43, p. 28 n. 3
- P. Peeters, 'La vie géorgienne de Saint Porphyre de Gaza', *AB* 59 (1941) 65-216, pp. 68-69
- V. Beneshevich, 'Bibliographische Notizen und Nachrichten', *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher* 8 (1931) 429-30
- H. Delehaye, *Les saints stylites*, Brussels, 1923, p. cxxv
- P. Peeters, 'S. Hilarion d'Ibérie', *AB* 32 (1913) 236-69, p. 240

John C. Lamoreaux 2007