



DEYLAM, JOHN OF

DEYLAMJOHN OF (Yoḥannān Daylomāyā, d. 120/738), Eastern Syrian saint and founder of monasteries in Fārs. In addition to the brief details of his life given by the 9th-century Syriac writers Thomas of Margā and Īšōʿdnaḥ of Baṣra, there are two complete biographies in Syriac, one in prose (edited and translated by Brock), of which an Arabic version is also known, and one in the form of an extended verse panegyric. The account of John of Deylam in the Ethiopian synaxary (Budge, pp. 168-70) is related to the latter; although abbreviated, it contains a few additional details (Brock, p. 179 n. 84; for summaries of later Arabic traditions, see Fiey). On a Sogdian version, see below.

According to the Syriac sources, John was born in Ḥdattā on the Tigris and entered the monastery of Bēt ʿĀbē while still a child. After living for a time as an anchorite he was captured by raiders from Deylam, who took him to their own land. There he spent many years performing numerous miracles and converting many of the Deylamites. Subsequently, under the protection of the caliph ʿAbd-al-Malek b. Marwān (65-86/685-705) and his governor of Iraq, Ḥajjāj, John traveled to Arrajān in Fārs, where he founded several monasteries; two of them were assigned to Persian- and Syriac-speaking monks respectively, so that neither community should be forced to celebrate services in a foreign language. Despite some chronological confusion and the legendary accretions typical of Syriac hagiographical literature, there is no reason to doubt the essential historicity of this biography (cf. Brock, pp. 131-33, 178-81).



Numerous fragments of a Sogdian version of the life of John are preserved in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin (Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung); they belong to manuscript C3, found at [Bulayïq](#), which also contains the life of Serapion. Two of these fragments have been described by Olaf Hansen (pp. 97 bottom, 98-99) and by Werner Sundermann, who corrects Hansen's erroneous identifications of one of them as the conclusion of a work by (rather than about) John of Deylam and of the other as part of a history of the church in Central Asia. Until the Sogdian text is published it is difficult to comment on its affinities, but it is clearly derived from a Syriac life much more detailed than the text published by S. P. Brock.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(For abbreviations cited here, see "Short References.") S. P. Brock, "A Syriac Life of John of Dailam," *Parole de l'Orient* 10, 1981-82, pp. 123-89.

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