



HISTORY, POLITICS, PRIMARY SOURCE STUDIES  
ისტორია, პოლიტიკა, წყაროთმცოდნეობა

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THE COLLYRIDIAN IN EARLY CHRISTIAN AND  
QURANIC TRADITION

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**Abstract**

The article explores the existence of the Collyridians (Philomarianites/Marianites) and the potential reflection of their teachings in Quran 5:116 (Surah Al-Ma'idah). The objective of the research is to determine whether the aforementioned Ayah represents merely a polemical, hyperbolic formulation or if it responds to a specific historical-religious group that attributed divine status to Mary and performed sacrifices in her name.

The analysis is based on Greek and Arabic sources spanning the 4th to 14th centuries. Primary importance is assigned to the Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis (d. 403 AD), in which Collyridian doctrine is described as a practice expressed through the offering of small cakes (bread) to Mary. Additionally, the study examines accounts by John of Damascus (d. 749 AD), Eutychius of Alexandria (d. 940 AD), Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328 AD), and other authors, alongside the positions of contemporary scholars who either deny the historicity of the Collyridians or view Quran 5:116 as a result of "creative rhetoric."

The research analyzes core problems such as the scarcity of primary sources, the late nature of the accounts, the silence of early church historians, and the incomplete reconstruction of the religious environment of the Arabian Peninsula. Based on deductive research method, it is demonstrated that the data regarding the Collyridians are mutually reinforcing and reflect a real dogmatic phenomenon.

The study concludes that Quran 5:116 responds to a specific dogmatic passage, and its content may be linked to Collyridian doctrine. The theoretical significance of the research lies in the clarification of the history of Christian-Muslim polemics, while its practical value lies in the development of a more precise historical model for interpreting the Quranic verse within its Christian context.

**Keywords:** Collyridians, Quran, Epiphanius of Salamis, Panarion, Comparative Religion.

## **Introduction**

In a 4th-century Greek source, one of the most obscure and hitherto understudied sects of Christianity appears, known as the Collyridians. Alongside the hypostases of the Holy Trinity—God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ—they designated the Virgin Mary as a

deity, offered her sacrifices (in the form of small cakes), and worshipped her. This denomination is observed on the Arabian Peninsula (Lobzhanidze, 2004: 37), where in the 7th century, a new monotheistic religion—Islam—emerged. We posit that its founder, the Prophet Muhammad (570–632 AD), would have had oral reports and direct interaction with representatives of this teaching. The result and response to his acquaintance with their doctrine is likely reflected in Quran 5:116 in which we read: “And ‘on Judgment Day’ Allah will say, “O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you ever ask the people to worship you and your mother as gods besides Allah?” He will answer, “Glory be to You! How could I ever say what I had no right to say? If I had said such a thing, you would have certainly known it. You know what is ‘hidden’ within me, but I do not know what is within You. Indeed, You ‘alone’ are the Knower of all unseen”. Consequently, it can be argued that Collyridian teaching is reflected in the holy book of Muslims.

However, numerous obstacles stand in the way of proving and comprehending this proposed historical picture. We categorize these hindering circumstances into six main parts: 1) The absence of primary sources, the general scarcity of sources, the late origin of the majority of them, and the ambiguity of the information they provide; 2) The pessimism of certain scholars and researchers who altogether deny the existence of such a sect; 3) The introduction of the so-called "creative rhetoric" of the Quran into scientific literature, and the subsequent denial of Collyridian influence on the Quranic warnings based on this concept; 4) Claims asserting that the accusation against Christians regarding the "election of Mary as God" refers to her general veneration rather than literal deification, which also precludes the identification of the sect's doctrines we are interested in; 5) The ambiguity of the religious landscape of the Near East, particularly that

of the Arabian Peninsula; 6) The lack of direct evidence to determine the exact creed of those figures whom the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, might have encountered.

The discussion in our article will proceed along the following path: 1) Identifying the main sources and accounts that mention the Collyridians; 2) A relatively extensive review of 4th-century account; 3) The issue of the persecution of heretics in the Byzantine Empire; 4) The Islamic definition of the accusation regarding the establishment of Mary as a deity; 5) The unanimity of later Christian and Muslim authors who resolve the issue in favor of the Collyridians' existence and their identification as a subject of the Quran.

### **Methods**

The discussion in the presented article is based on Christian anti-heretical, theological, scientific-critical, Islamic historical, polemical, and exegetical literature. We employ a deductive research method. In the Georgian version of the article, we use Giorgi Lobzhanidze's translation of the Quran. As for English, we utilize Mustafa Khattab's translation.

### **Discussion**

The sources regarding the existence of the Collyridians are quite modest. We obtain relatively extensive and detailed information from the monumental anti-heretical work of the 4th-century figure, Saint Bishop Epiphanius—the Panarion. John of Damascus, the author of the first anti-Islamic treatises, repeats the data of the previous author and offers nothing new. After John of Damascus (750 AD), Greek sources remain silent, and the turn falls to Arabic sources: this sect is mentioned by the Dyophysite Patriarch of Alexandria, Euty-chius, based on whom the Monophysite Ibn Kabar (1324 AD) includes them in his list of heresies. These two authors refer to the followers of the heresy as "Maryamyun" (Benko, 2004: 193). Relying on the work

of the aforementioned Eastern Patriarch, the well-known Muslim polemicist Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyyah al-Harrani (13th-14th c.) also mentions the Collyridians by the name "Maryamyun," as do his disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, the famous historian of the same era al-Maqrizi, and the 11th-century Muslim scholar Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi.

Sources are available in two languages—Greek and Arabic—which circulated between the 4th and 14th centuries. Among these, the Christian author Epiphanius of Cyprus is the only one who provides primary information; all other Christian authors, including John of Damascus, rely on the Bishop of Cyprus and repeat the same accounts. Similarly, we note the later report of Patriarch Eutychius and the sources provided by Muslim polemicists and commentators based on it. In this article, we will incorporate these reports and define their appropriate place regarding both their quality for historical research and their theological significance.

The accounts of Epiphanius of Cyprus are found in his colossal polemical work, the *Panarion*, through which "the author, as a true physician, wished to provide a cure and protection for those bitten by the serpent—that is, those weary of heretical teachings; therefore, he titled the work *Panarion* or "Medicine Chest" (in scientific literature, this monument is often referred to as the "Medicine Chest" or "Box of Remedies") (Makharashvili, 2012: 371). In the treatise, the author describes 80 heresies in detail. He mentions the Collyridians in two places within the work. First, he briefly reviews the sects, placing the Collyridians separately at the 79th position; second, he describes their origin and doctrine much more extensively towards the end of the work, according to their predetermined place. We will attempt to focus on the passages that reveal information about the origin of the Collyridians and their form of worship.

We have divided the author's information into three main parts: a) Origin and location: First and foremost, the Bishop notes that this sect emerged in Thrace and Upper Scythia before migrating to Arabia (Salamis, 2012: 637); b) Composition and doctrine: Subsequently, he accuses them of the excessive glorification of Mary and identifies women as the founders of the doctrine, whom he refers to as “unstable, prone to error, and mean-spirited” (Salamis, 2012: 637). He adds: “Yes, of course Mary’s body was holy, but she was not God. Yes, the Virgin was indeed a virgin and honored as such, but she was not given us to worship” (Salamis, 2012: 640); c) Worship and sacrifice: “where has this coiled serpent come from? How are its crooked counsels renewed? Mary should be honored, but the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit should be worshiped; no one should worship Mary. There is no commandment to < offer > the Eucharist even to a man,<sup>34</sup> < as though > to God, let alone to a woman” (Salamis, 2012: 643); “Do not obey this worthless woman. Every sect is a worthless woman,<sup>35</sup> but this sect more so, which is composed of women and belongs to him who was the deceiver of the first woman” (Salamis, 2012: 644); “Whether these worthless women offer Mary the loaf as though in worship of her, or whether they mean to offer this rotten fruit on her behalf, it is altogether silly and heretical, and demon-inspired insolence and imposture” (Salamis, 2012: 645). The polemicist continues his discussion with an uncompromising, unyielding, and zealous pathos; the fiery critique directed at the Collyridians is immediately followed by scathing denunciation and ridicule.

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<sup>34</sup> The Archbishop of Cyprus implies here that there had been no prior record of any heresy that celebrated the mystery of the Eucharist in honor of any male saint.

<sup>35</sup> Here, Epiphanius refers to the prostitute mentioned in the “Book of Revelation” by John the Theologian, who serves as a common archetype for various heretical movements.

We believe that the mentioned region of "Arabia" must refer to the so-called Provincia Arabia (Reynolds, 2014: 43), which at that time was under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire. Alongside the Syrian and Greco-Roman majorities, a portion of its population consisted of ethnic Arab Christians (Nanobashvili, 2025: 15-20).

The Collyridians clearly worshipped Saint Mary. It is not evident from Epiphanius's reasoning whether they considered her a hypostasis of the Trinity; however, they clearly established her as an equal to God. The sacrifice (Eucharist), which in the Christian faith is performed only toward God, was apparently performed by the Collyridians toward Mary, supplemented by an offering in the form of a sweet bread/cake called Collyris. We should also not overlook the information that Epiphanius identifies women who likely constituted the core of the movement and personally participated in the liturgy.

The main problem we encounter in determining the existence or the exact creed of the Collyridians is the total absence of any documents or independent sources produced by the denomination itself. Furthermore, we lack information regarding exactly when and on what basis this doctrine emerged. While we possess accounts dating up to the 6th century that mention the Collyridians, every one of them relies on the Panarion, written by Epiphanius in the 370s (Carroll, 1986: 44). Consequently, the observation may seem partially true that "There is no evidence that any such group ever existed" (Kateusz, 2013: 86) beyond their mention in Epiphanius's aforementioned work. This reality leads some researchers to suspect that the Collyridians were a figment of Epiphanius's imagination. For instance, Prof. Shoemaker believes that Epiphanius intended to fill his collection to exactly 80 heresies, and for this very reason, he invented a new heresy (Shoemaker, 2008: 375). However, even in this case, he does not deny that small groups of believers who were excessive in

their veneration of Mary might have existed during that period (Shoemaker, 2008: 386; Reynolds, 2014: 48; Reynolds, 2019: 318-332). Nevertheless, the author notes that similar veneration existed toward all saints at that time, and Epiphanius criticized them as well. Effectively, through these arguments, the author attempts to refute the evidence supporting the existence of the Collyridians as a formal, distinct doctrine (Shoemaker, 2008: 396).

Our goal is not to offer a definitive definition of the origin and teaching of the Collyridians themselves. This would require separate extensive research, discussion, and time, which falls outside the scope of this paper. However, we consider it appropriate to address the aforementioned views, as this allows us to clarify one of the fundamental nuances of an important issue related to our research topic.

1. We consider the argument that Epiphanius of Cyprus invented a heretical teaching just to oppose it and destroy a "wall" of his own making—solely to reach the count of 80 heresies—to be unsubstantiated. First and foremost, the sects existing during the first four centuries of the Christian Church were so numerous that they far exceeded eighty. We believe it would suffice to mention that just 50 years after the death of Epiphanius of Cyprus (403 AD), the historically documented number of Monophysite denominations alone reached sixteen (Bolotov, 2009: 453-455). This is to say nothing of the minor schisms and countless divisions both before and after Epiphanius. Thus, the Bishop certainly would not have needed to invent a new heresy to condemn.

2. If we assume that Epiphanius might have been criticizing only a specific group for excessive veneration of Mary rather than an established doctrine, we inevitably encounter a logical contradiction: the veneration of the Mother of God cannot be equated with the veneration of other saints, not only from an Orthodox perspective but

from a specifically Collyridian one as well. Epiphanius states directly and unambiguously that they offered a sacrificial Collyris (sweet bread) in Mary's name for the purpose of worshipping her (Salamis, 2012: 645), and it was for this very reason that they were condemned as heretics (Henry, 1897: 64). It is true that there exist pre-4th-century apocryphal texts in which Mary is presented as a leader, a head, and a mentor to the apostles (Kateusz, 2013: 75-92); however, if the issue were merely one of general veneration, there would have been no need to single out the cult of Mary, because the people who identified as Orthodox been rendering similar "worship" to other saints. Yet, in this case, we are dealing with the issue of sacrifice. As noted above, the offering of gifts and the Eucharist must be conducted solely in the name of God; otherwise, this religious practice devolves into blatant idolatry and polytheism, which is precisely what the Cypriot scholar criticizes.

3. It is evident that the author has not taken into account the stance of Islamic sources regarding the issue of worship. This is understandable, as his article reviews the Christian understanding of veneration rather than the similarities, differences, or potential influences of a Christian sect's teachings on the Muslim creed. Therefore, utilizing this pivotal position, we argue: if the Collyridians did not actually perceive Mary as a deity but merely rendered her excessive honor—conspicuous to a monotheist—which manifested in performing sacrifices in her name, this would be perceived in Islam as associating or equating a creature (المخلوق) with the True Creator God (الخالق) and establishing a partner for Him (شرك). The region where Islam emerged certainly did not lack female deities during the second half of the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th century (Al-Rassim, 2009: 110). Consequently, the Islamic faith would easily identify such tendencies of deviating from monotheism and would record them, as we believe

it did in Surah 5:116. Thus, we consider the total or partial (i.e., as an organized group) denial of the Collyridians' existence to be groundless.

Based on the evidence discussed above, we maintain that the accounts of Epiphanius of Cyprus are credible, despite the polemical nature of his source.

Questions nevertheless remain. Not a single ecclesiastical source—including the renowned commentator on heresies, Irenaeus of Lyons (130–203 AD), or the chroniclers of the early Church such as the "Father of Church History" Eusebius of Caesarea (263–340 AD), Socrates Scholasticus (380–439 AD), Sozomen (400–450 AD), and Theodoret of Cyrus (393–446 AD)—makes even a passing mention of a sect that deified Mary in any form. We believe the reason for this is the concentration of these authors on the Christological disputes of their time and their focus on describing the lives of Christians residing within the Roman Empire or its immediate vicinities. On the other hand, Roman and later Byzantine Christian authors lacked sufficient information regarding sects existing beyond the empire's borders. To substantiate this fact, we offer the reader a brief historical excursion which, through general examples, will lead us to the visibility of the Collyridians' existence on the Arabian Peninsula and its neighboring territories.

First and foremost, it should be noted that the borders of the Pentarchy (the patriarchal jurisdictions of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem) seemingly could not properly extend beyond Syria (الشام). Consequently, various movements excommunicated from the Church found refuge in non-Christian environments, especially after the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). For instance, denominations persecuted by Justinian the Great (527–565 AD) primarily took shelter in the bordering puppet kingdoms of

the Ghassanids and Lakhmids, in Zoroastrian Sassanid Persia—the political-religious rival of the Byzantine Empire—and particularly on the pagan Arabian Peninsula, where the reach of the Orthodox faith was limited. What can be said about the Arabian lands, which were religiously and politically unknown to the Empire, when even Egypt and Syria, under Byzantine rule, were adopting a Monophysite course? (Damsteegt, 2017: 52). In the acts issued by Justinian between 538 and 541, movements separated from the Orthodox Church and their representatives were punished with death, persecution, and exile for openly declaring their faith (Damsteegt, 2017: 60–61). Between 546 and 554, Montanists, Manichaeans, Monophysites, Jews, Samaritans, and pagans faced empire-wide persecution (Bury, 1923: 364–366). This culminated in the expulsion of Monophysites and Nestorians from the Byzantine Empire and their establishment in Persia, the Lakhmid state, the Hijaz, and Southern Arabia (Nanobashvili, 2025: 15–20).

By all this, we intend to argue that by the years 570–610, a solid foundation must have been prepared for pre-Islamic Arabs to become accustomed to various Christian movements both on the Arabian Peninsula and in its vicinity. Among these, we consider the Collyridian sect of interest to us. Unfortunately, we lack direct evidence to declare without hesitation that representatives of this or that denomination preached and functioned at this specific time and place. However, based on the aforementioned, we find it entirely plausible to include the Collyridians among them, with whom the Prophet of Islam might have had some connection. Furthermore, it is no secret in either Islamic or scientific literature that such encounters with various Christian movements and correspondences with them were a very natural occurrence.

A second thought-provoking theory, proposed by Professor Reynolds, altogether rejects the influence of Christian heretical sects' teachings within the Quran. According to this view, if the Quran criticizes Orthodox or heretical branches of Christianity in any way, it does so not through information received from "outside," but rather through its own original "creative rhetoric" (Reynolds, 2014: 47-54; Reynolds, 2019: 318-332). This perspective sounds compelling, as the author focuses on both Christian and Islamic materials, utilizing both sides in scientific discourse to prove that the Quran 5:116 is not appealing to a specific sect with the accusation of worshipping Jesus and Mary as gods. Instead, he attributes this to the aforementioned "creative rhetoric" of the Muslim holy scripture, which hyperbolically refers to the excessive honor and reverence Christians show toward Mary as an act of associating partners with God.

While comparing the verses of the Quran concerning the worship and appointment of protectors besides the Creator, Reynolds remarks: "Another case of the Qur'ān's creative rhetoric is found in *al-Tawba* (Q: 9) 31a: "They have taken their scribes and their monks as lords besides Allah, and also Christ, Mary's son." Now if we were to examine this verse with a concern to find historical communities that influenced the Qur'ān's material on Christianity we should begin to search for some Christian heretics who worshipped their scribes and monks as gods. We might call them Sacerdolators. Perhaps the Sacerdolators had fled into the Arabian desert where they could worship their monks in peace, far away from the cruel and rigid Byzantine keepers of orthodoxy. Or, alternatively, we could recognize here a case of hyperbole, that in the Qur'ān's milieu no heretical sect of monk-worshippers existed. We could thus recognize that the Qur'ān has a rather skillful way of painting caricatures of its opponents" (Reynolds, 2014: 49). He extends this view to the Collyridians

as well and, consequently, challenges the theory of Collyridian influence regarding the deification of Mary in the Quran with a rhetorical question: “could it be that the Qur’ān is taunting Christians by intentionally exaggerating their devotion to Mary? Could this verse be more about the Qur’ān’s creative rhetoric and less about the Collyridians?” He concludes by stating: “The Qur’anic material on Christianity is a testament to this creativity, and not to the influence of Christian heretics” (Reynolds, 2014: 54). This final statement requires a separate study. Therefore, we deem it appropriate to comment specifically on the remark concerning the Collyridians, as leaving this viewpoint unaddressed and untouched would be tantamount to acknowledging the absence of Collyridian influence in the Quran.

First and foremost, an equation cannot be drawn between Quran 9:31 and 5:116; while the former (At-Tawbah) declares a general prohibition of worship [of others], the latter (Al-Ma'idah) deals with a specific context.

Initially, we clarify that in Islam, placing one's hope in any creature other than God—whether a representative of the visible or invisible world—is considered shirk (شرك), that is, associating partners with the true Deity (Kutsia, 1999: 213). Accordingly, from the Muslim perspective based on traditional Tawhid, whether one offers prayer (إقامة الصلاة) or makes a supplication (دعاء) to a creature, this act falls under the category of shirk and the title of a true believer (مؤمن) vanishes. For instance, Sheikh Muhammad at-Tamimi (1703-1792), who fought against the cult of saints, unequivocally states: “Whoever directs any form of worship toward anyone other than God is a polytheist and, thus, an infidel” (at-Tamimi, 2015: 9).

Let us note that the choosing of Isa ibn Maryam, his mother (5:116), and the monks and scholars (9:31) as lords is expressed in both Surah At-Tawbah and Surah Al-Ma'idah using the Form VIII

verb ittakhadha (أَتَّخَذَ). The difference lies in the fact that the latter employs the second-person plural imperative form addressed to Jesus Christ and Mary, while the 9th Surah uses the third-person plural perfective form of the same verb. The meaning of the verb itself is polysemous and signifies: “to take”, “to carry away”, “to lead”, “to appropriate”, “to acquire”, “to make/render”, “to transform”, or “to use” (Tsereteli, 1951: 9). Islam emphasizes the prohibition of the general glorification of any creature, and this truly stems from the nature of the religion rather than the assumption that some Christians actually deified monks and scholars. For instance, the renowned Muslim theologian and polemicist Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, from a strict position of Tawhid, accuses Christians of deifying the cross and directly labels them “cross-worshippers” (عباد الصليب) (الدمشقي 1063-1064). Moreover, authentic hadith testifies to the destruction of the cross as a symbol of worship by Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus Christ) upon his second coming (502:2015 البخاري). However, this does not mean that the Christian creed regards the cross as a deity. The key point we wish to emphasize here is that the institution of scholar-monks, icons, or other objects of veneration is criticized from the general perspective of Tawhid, whereas the scene presented in the aforementioned passage of Al-Ma'idah is condemned both from a general standpoint and as a result of reasoning derived from observing a specific theological-eschatological context, as we shall demonstrate below by citing the commentaries of several great Muslim mufasssirs.

The Quranic accusation against Christians regarding the recognition of Jesus and Mary as deities will be revealed on the Day of Judgment, when Allah asks Jesus Christ whether he told Christians to take him and his mother as gods besides Allah. The negative answer to this question will serve as the final confirmation of Islam's truth for Christians, coming from the very Lord they acknowledge. This is how

this ayah is interpreted in the works of Quranic commentators: Ibn Jarir at-Tabari's (839-923) *Jami' al-Bayan* (الطبري, n.d.: 161-163), al-Mahalli's (1389-1460) and as-Suyuti's (1445-1505) *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (المحلى, السيوطي, n.d.: 185), and Ibn Kathir's (1300-1373) *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* (ابن كثير, n.d.: 113). Unlike the general argument concerning the worship and glorification of scholars and monks, here we are dealing with a specific situation (during the Day of Judgment) and a specific accusation (deification), which, according to some commentators, applies to all Christians, while according to others, only to a specific group.

Thus, we consider it incorrect to claim that the Quranic critique of the doctrines of various Christian sects is hyperbolized or merely a product of Quranic creative rhetoric, rather than a reflection of the reality in which the Quran itself was revealed.

The only Christian author active during the early Islamic period who places and mentions both the Collyridians and Islam within a single work is John of Damascus. His primary philosophical and theological work is *The Fount of Knowledge*. In the second part of this composition, *On Heresies* (*De Haeresibus*), Islam is discussed in the 101st paragraph as one of the heresies. It addresses the origins of Islam, its "false prophet" Muhammad, the Quran, and Muslim doctrine and practice (Japaridze, 1999: 88). He very briefly recounts various heresies, most of which repeat the 80 heresies discussed in Epiphanius of Cyprus's *Panarion*, to which he, in turn, adds 20 more (Makharashvili, 2012: 49-50). The Collyridians are no exception in this regard. Like the Cypriot figure, the polemicist places them in the 79th position and adds: "Collyridians: on a certain fixed day of each year, these heretics bring forth some bread as an offering in the name of the Ever-Virgin Mary, from which we have derived their name" (Damascene, 1992: 134). As we can see, the author provides no new

information regarding the aforementioned denomination. His source of reliance is Epiphanius of Cyprus; therefore, we do not deem it appropriate to consider his work as a substantively independent source when discussing the Collyridians.

The final accounts belong to Eutychius, the Patriarch of the Chalcedonian Church of Alexandria (also known as Sa'id ibn Batriq, 933-944), mentioned at the beginning, who refers to the Collyridians as "Mariamites", in his work *Nazm al-Jawhar*. Stephen Benko, reviewing the pagan roots of the Collyridians, adds: "If we can believe the Patriarch Eutychius, certain Marianites were condemned as early as the Council of Nicea (325) for teaching that besides the supreme God there were two other gods, Christ and his mother, Mary. Eutychius was a patriarch between 933-944, so his report is open to some doubt" (Benko, 2004: 193). Indeed, apart from the 20 canons established at the Council of Nicaea and the works of church historians from the 4th-6th centuries, almost no early sources have survived. We do not possess the protocol of the Council's proceedings. Consequently, this is a highly unexpected statement. If we are to believe it, it would imply that the Collyridians already existed at least by the beginning of the 4th century, which would make Epiphanius of Cyprus's accounts from the 370s appear more credible in this case. However, it is impossible to say with certainty how or in what sequence all of this occurred, as more than five centuries separate Epiphanius and Eutychius; furthermore, we do not know what sources the Patriarch relied upon.

Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), in his work *Al-Jawab as-Sahih li-man baddala dina-l Masih* cites Eutychius regarding those who deified Mary: "Sa'id ibn al-Batriq related that among them is a sect called the Mariamites (مريميون), who say: Mary and Isa are gods" (الحراني, 1999: 15-14). This fact is also cited by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya in *Hidayat*

al-Hayara, Al-Maqrizi in *Al-Mawa'iz wa-l-I'tibar* and Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi in *Al-Fasl fi-l-Milal* (2014, المنجد). These accounts are eclectic and derive from a single source. Consequently, they cannot serve as primary historical sources. However, they are highly noteworthy as they show that Muslim theologians recognized the existence of this sect—the Collyridians—referring to them as Mariamites (مريميون) and attributing the revelation of Ayah 5:116 specifically to the phenomenon of responding to them. Proving this objective was the primary goal of our article.

In conclusion, it should be noted that in this work, we have attempted to prove the existence of the Christian sect of the Collyridians (Philomariamites, Mariamites) and the reflection of its teachings in Quran 5:116. Our discussion followed the sequence set out in the introduction, specifically: we identified the primary sources that mention the Collyridians; we examined the accounts of Bishop Epiphanius of Cyprus from the *Panarion*, deemed them credible, and in this light, responded the opinions of certain scholars regarding the author's reliability and the very existence of the Collyridians; we clarified why other early church historians or figures do not mention the Collyridians and, simultaneously, provided the reader with the trajectory of the Collyridians' arrival on the Arabian Peninsula; we evaluated accounts of St. John of Damascus, which we did not interpret independently of the *Panarion*, as his source on the Collyridians relies precisely on the work of Epiphanius; furthermore, through reasoned argument and method, utilizing general and specific examples, Christian and Muslim materials, and critical scientific literature, we responded the theory which, by citing the Quran's creative rhetoric as an argument, seeks to deny the reflection of the critique of Collyridian teachings in the Holy Book of Islam; and finally, we briefly

touched upon the uniform accounts of later Muslim scholars (11th-14th centuries) in which the Collyridians are mentioned.

We hope that this article will stimulate interest in the scientific community toward deepening research in this direction.

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