Routledge Studies in the Qur'an

THE QUR'AN'S REFORMATION OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

RETURN TO THE ORIGINS

Edited by
Holger M. Zellentin

ROUTLEDGE

The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity

This volume explores the relationship between the Qur'an and the Jewish and Christian traditions, considering aspects of continuity and reform. The chapters examine the Qur'an's retelling of biblical narratives, as well as its reaction to a wide array of topics that mark Late Antique religious discourse, including eschatology and gentile purity, prophetology and paganism, and heresiology and Christology.

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The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity offers new insight into the Islamic Scripture as a whole and into recent methodological developments, providing a compelling snapshot of the burgeoning field of Qur'anic studies. It is a key resource for students and scholars interested in religion, Islam, and Middle Eastern Studies.

Holger M. Zellentin teaches Judaism at the University of Cambridge. His research interests include Talmudic culture and Qur'anic law; his publications include *Rabbinic Parodies of Jewish and Christian Literature* (2011) and *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* (2013).

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1 The Qur'an and the reformation of Judaism and Christianity

Holger M. Zellentin

Over the past decades, the Qur'an has moved closer towards the canon of the discursive space we conceive of as the West: no longer just the Scripture of an important minority, the Qur'an has become the focus of intense societal attention and is slowly being included in the curricula of schools and universities.[1] This movement coincides with a double realignment of, first, the way in which we position the Qur'an vis-à-vis its historical context, and second, how we, as Western scholars of the Qur'an, position ourselves towards the text within our own historical context. On the one hand, we have come to recognize that the Scripture of Islam should be understood not only as the foundational document of the Islamic community but also in dialogue with the world of Late Antiquity, whose transition into the Middle Ages was expedited by the rise of the Islamic community itself.[2] On the other hand, the process of the Qur'an's Western canonization has coincided with a methodological shift, leading to a long-overdue "linguistic turn" in the study of the Qur'an, which allowed for a reconsideration of the methodologies we employ and thereby for a more sophisticated self-reflection of how our own context determines our approaches.[3]

A key figure in translating the continental attention to hermeneutics into a more pragmatic world of Anglo-American historiography, and into the debate surrounding the Western canon, was Dominick LaCapra. In 1983, LaCapra sought to define the two parallel relationships between, on the one hand, a canonical "text" and its historical "context" and, on the other hand, between the historian and her own present world.[4] LaCapra's insights remain highly relevant to the rapidly evolving field of the academic study of the Qur'an, since they guide us on "a way that engages us as interpreters in a particularly compelling conversation with the past."[5] He set apart ordinary texts from canonical ones, which he defined precisely not in terms of the status they already had acquired but in terms of their merit as those texts that "often or even typically engage in processes that both employ or refer to ordinary assumptions and contest them, at times radically."[6] Regarding such texts, he stated the following:

> Rather [such] texts should be seen to address us in more subtle and challenging ways, and they should be carried into the present – with implications for the future – in a "dialogical" fashion. . . . [Such a] text is a network of

resistances, and a dialogue is a two-way affair; a good reader is also an attentive and patient listener. Questions are necessary to focus interest in an investigation, but a fact may be pertinent to a frame of reference by contesting or even contradicting it. An interest in what does not fit a model and an openness to what one does not expect to hear from the past may even help to transform the very questions one poses to the past.[7]

Recognizing the Qur'an's value as a canonical text, in the sense that it resists common assumptions, allows for an especially compelling conversation with the Islamic Scripture. When approaching the Qur'an as scholars, we must embrace the reality that the questions we ask are determined by our own present context. Yet at the same time, the quality of our scholarship will be determined by how we react to the innumerable moments of resistances to these questions that we encounter when carefully *listening* to the Qur'an's message.[8]

The chapters collected in this volume seek a more nuanced understanding of a very timely question, namely how to understand the Qur'an in its Jewish and Christian context. This question is by no means a new one, but has been of central importance at least three times in the course of history. The Qur'an itself evokes the experiences and the fate of the "Sons of Israel" (*banī ʾisrāʾīl*, see e.g. Q 2:40), that of the "People of the Scripture" (*ʾahl al-kitāb*, see e.g. Q 29:46), as well as, in its Medinan suras, more specifically the presence of "the Jews and the Christians" (*al-yahūd wa-l-naṣārā*, Q 5:51) as central points of reference.[9] Likewise, the earliest Muslim commentators – as well as many non-Muslim critics of Islam throughout the Middle Ages and beyond – have time and again turned to the evidence provided by their own Jewish and Christian contemporaries in order to contextualize the Qur'an's often-elliptical utterances.[10] The Western academic study of the Qur'an, finally, also began precisely with a new attempt to read the Qur'an as a historical document in light of Jewish and Christian sources.[11] Yet the way in which the authors of the following chapters, along with other contemporary scholars, seek to contextualize the Qur'an is reflective of contemporary concerns and is markedly different from that of their predecessors in various ways.

In contrast to the comparative efforts of religious polemicists of past and present, many contemporary scholars have largely digested the lessons of postcolonialism in as far as they tend not to seek to establish the superiority of any one tradition over any other.[12] More acutely, in line with the lessons learned in the study of religion, and in contrast with those traditional exegetes – and even in contrast with some contemporary scholars – the following chapters tend not to compare the Qur'an – leave alone "Islam" – to an essentialized, and thereby ahistorical, view of "Judaism" or "Christianity." Rather, they seek to gain a nuanced understanding of those particular types of Judaism and Christianity at the turn of the seventh century, whose adherents may have been in dialogue with – or would even, at least occasionally, have constituted part of – the Qur'an's audience.[13] Moreover, in distinction especially from the early representatives of the Western academic study of the Qur'an, the chapters here collected do not seek to trace the "influence" of the Jewish and Christian tradition upon the Islamic Scripture, but

rather tend to problematize this very concept, often taking established affinities as the backdrop of the shared discursive world *within which* and *against which* scholars should attentively, patiently, and in particular, openly, understand the Qur'an's message.

To give but one example of the many ways in which the Qur'an, as the Scripture of the "youngest" of the three major traditions that lay claim to the biblical heritage, resists our preconceptions is the way in which it often situates itself as the representative of the "oldest" of these traditions, seeking to push back against perceived Jewish and Christian innovation. Resisting our sense of historical cause and effect, of earlier and later, and of the self-evident antiquity of Judaism and novelty of Islam, the Qur'an sees itself as reinstituting the original, unspoiled, and pure form of worship that had been established in the mythical past. When stating that the Torah and the Gospel "were not sent down until after him" (*wa-mā ʾunzilati . . . ʾillā min baʿdihī*, Q 3:65), i.e. after Abraham, and deducing that Abraham "was not a Jew and not a Christian" (*mā kāna ʾibrāhīmu yahūdiyyan wa-lā naṣrāniyyan*, Q 3:67), the Qur'an in effect offers something surprising. Its argument here resists our preconceptions of it as a premodern text in as far as it parallels that of modern historical criticism of Christianity and Judaism, which have emphasized the ahistorical nature of the claim that Church fathers and rabbis have laid on Abraham.[14]

We should not, of course, project a Western historical consciousness onto the Qur'an. As is well known, the passage under discussion then goes on to depict Abraham as a *ḥanīf muslim* (Q 3: 67), as submitting to God in His absolute oneness in a manner that is peculiar to the Qur'an alone. Likewise, in the Qur'an's sacred history, which comes into ever sharper focus throughout its protean yet detectable chronological development, true submission to God – *islām* (see e.g. Q 3:19) – has been practiced throughout the history of humankind and predates the giving of the Torah to Moses.[15] Such an essentialized view of the one true religion has understandably inspired generations of Muslims to claim Abraham as a Muslim in the same way that Jews and Christians have claimed him as one of their own. A projection of the present onto the past, in turn, conforms better to our view of Late Ancient religious claims, showing that the Qur'an here can helpfully be described as one of those canonical texts that "both employ or refer to ordinary assumptions and contest them, at times radically," just as LaCapra has it: to view Abraham as one's own is shared by many Late Antique traditions, yet to challenge such a claim on historiographical grounds is a radical contestation of the same assumption.

There are, then, many ways in which the Qur'an does not neatly align with the ordinary assumptions we hold about Late Antiquity, and even moments when the Qur'an helps us challenge contemporary scholarly assumptions about Judaism and Christianity. In the view of many, for example, Judaism stands for obedience to the law and Christianity for its abrogation, and Islam simply seeks to replace both. The chapters in this volume show a more nuanced relationship, which can often be described as the Qur'an's attempt to reform rather than to replace the religion of the Jews and the Christians of its time. In the Qur'an's narrative of sacred

history, namely, only part of the laws given to the Israelites are seen as eternal, while others are presented as contingent on the people's transgressions, as a temporary and punitive law (see Q 4:160–1). In this narrative, Jesus came to abrogate the punitive parts of God's law alone (see Q 3:48–50), leading to the split between those Israelites who rejected and those who accepted Jesus, i.e. between the Jews and the Christians (see Q 61:14).[16] While the latter are described as more open to God's message than the former, they are, in turn, portrayed as having corrupted the true religion in another manner, especially so by compromising God's unity.[17]

The Qur'an, then, presents a two-fold message. On the one hand, and especially in its earlier suras, it offers a message of a new revelation, seeking to end the practices of the Meccans, of which it perceives in terms of "associating" angelic and other beings with God (see e.g. Q 53:19–23).[18] On the other hand, from early on yet with increasing emphasis, the Qur'an offers a message of a religious *reformation* to the Jews and the Christians of its own time: it exhorts them to *return* to the ways of Abraham as a pre-Israelite monotheist and to the posited *original* absolute monotheism.[19] The Qur'an, in other words, increasingly seeks to replace aspects of perceived Jewish and Christian particularism – such as the fulfillment of the "punitive" parts of the law despite their abrogation, or the worship of Jesus – with its own teachings, just as a Western historian would expect. Yet the Qur'an's process of formulating its own position in dialogue with the Jews and Christians of its time is the result of a complex and nuanced development that occurred over the entirety of the period of the Qur'an's promulgation. An understanding of this process requires us to listen very carefully and to show "[a]n interest in what does not fit a model and an openness to what one does not expect to hear from the past," which in turn may even help us "to transform the very questions one poses to the past," as LaCapra put it. Sometimes, in order to grasp the Qur'an's response to Judaism and Christianity, we need to use the Islamic Scripture as a guide not for answering, but for asking the right questions to all three traditions and to allow our views of Late Antiquity to be challenged by the way this period gave way to the Middle Ages.

In seeking to pay due attention to the Qur'an's particular ways of resisting to explicit or tacit preconceptions that we bring to it, the present volume does not set out a coherent theory of the Qur'an's self-image as confirming to the original religion, or even of its many attempts to reform what it sees as the aberrations in its times' Judaism and Christianity. Instead, the following case studies offer a glimpse of the *status questionis* of major trends in Qur'anic studies, reflecting a variety of different approaches that touch on many of the most important methodological, historical, literary, and philological questions which need to be answered before a more comprehensive thesis can be sketched. Six of the twelve contributions to this volume have been developed based on presentations given at a conference titled "Return to the Origins: The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity," which I convened in 2013 with the generous support of the Arts and Humanities Research Council; the six remaining ones have been submitted separately.[20] The volume comprises four parts reflecting the different emphases which we can see highlighted in each of the chapters: Part I is titled *The Qur'an, the Bible, and the Islamic Tradition*, Part II *The Qur'an and the Bible*; Part III *The Qur'an and Judaism*, and Part IV *The Qur'an and Christianity*. The overlap of these four parts is evident, and it is clear that nearly all the chapters engage, at times in substantial ways, in issues spread across all parts of the volume. Yet one of these four emphases arguably takes a leading role in each of the chapters, while each of the four emphases, in turn, has been the intense focus of recent scholarly activity. The following summary of the chapters will therefore briefly introduce key aspects of scholarship on the four topics and then sketch the way in which each of the chapters advances the discussion.

Part I: The Qur'an, the Bible, and the Islamic tradition

The four chapters in the first part of the volume pay close attention to the role which the Islamic tradition itself can play in forming the questions we pose to the Qur'an. This tradition has preserved the Qur'an's text – the *muṣḥaf* – and it offers its students many ways of understanding its message, especially by preserving cultural memories about the Qur'an's concrete Arabian historical context, along with a comprehensive lexicon, a grammar, and even a precise order of revelation for each sura (or for parts thereof).[21] While traditional scholars – with noteworthy exceptions – have largely remained within the framework created by the many tools that Medieval and Modern Islamic scholarship have offered for an understanding of the Qur'an, Western academics have made various attempts at escaping its limits. A brief reflection on three of the most important of these attempted flights, and on what we have learned from them, allows us better to understand the significance of the contributions within the first part of this volume, as well as methodological assumptions displayed throughout all of its chapters.[22]

The most comprehensive of the attempts to leave the Islamic tradition behind occurred in the second half of the twentieth century, and can be found especially in the work of John Wansbrough and his students, Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, who had sought to reject the entire traditional framework that places the Qur'an in a seventh-century Hejazi context. This attempt was pursued with scholarly integrity and imaginativeness. It rightfully pointed to the circularity of the scholarship of their day, which relied on the Islamic tradition in its very effort to corroborate it. Moreover, while many or even most of their results proved untenable and both Cook and Crone themselves eventually disowned much of their earlier research, their findings contributed much to the scholarship of the Qur'an by their very need to be disproven with rigor.[23] Even before the discovery of early manuscripts of the Qur'an that now strongly suggests the closure of the Qur'an's canon before the end of the seventh century, Wansbrough's radical questioning has eventually helped the case for the plausibility of locating the Qur'an in a Meccan and Medinan context.[24] While each of the claims of traditional Islamic historiography needs to be evaluated on its own, and many do often reflect the concerns of much later circumstances, the attempts by scholars to defend the plausibility of both an early and an Arabian context of the Qur'an has led to a

flurry of insights linking the Islamic Scripture to the history of Arabia and to the very origins of the Islamic community.[25]

A similar boon to scholarship was provided by a much less likely candidate than Wansbrough and his students, namely by the scholar writing under the pseudonym Christoph Luxenberg. While earlier revisionist scholars had largely remained indebted to the lexical and grammatical support that the Islamic tradition provides in enabling us even to read the Qur'an, Luxenberg went as far as dispensing with both grammar and lexicon and instead tried to reconceive the entire Qur'an in terms of a putative garbled Syriac lectionary, whose original Christian message the Islamic commentators had obscured. Luxenberg's work can be understood as a polemical attempt to free the Qur'an from the remaining fetters not only of the Qur'an's historical context in Arabia, but even from the insights about its very language that had been amassed by centuries of philological inquiry.[26] Needless to add, next to nothing in Luxenberg's reading has been confirmed in mainstream scholarship, and the interest which the broader public has taken in it continues to have a detrimental effects on the public – and especially the Muslim – reception of serious works of scholarship on the Qur'an.[27] Luxenberg's work, nevertheless, forced scholars to re-evaluate the difficult question of the Qur'an's early transmission history and its multifaceted relationship with the Syriac tradition, which in turn led them to corroborate earlier findings that this tradition is indeed of special importance when seeking to determine the Qur'an's sociocultural and historical context, as we will see later.

A final, more sophisticated attempt to challenge the traditional reading of the Qur'an concerns the chronology of its suras or parts thereof. While scholars ranging from Theodor Nöldeke to Angelika Neuwirth have sought to establish a scholarly framework of the Qur'an's chronology and have in turn based their entire understanding of the historical development of the nascent Islamic community on the resulting sequentiality, Gabriel Reynolds has formulated a forceful criticism of the dangers of the circularity of such an approach. While the attempts to establish objective criteria for a relative dating of the Qur'anic passage predate Reynold's criticism, scholars such as Nicolai Sinai have since redoubled their efforts to broaden and deepen our methodological arsenal for developing our understanding of the chronology of the Qur'an.[28]

We should understand the four chapters in the first part of this volume in light of previous attempts of leaving behind the confines of the Islamic tradition, and especially in light of the scholarly backlash to them. A short piece by Jon Hoover, "What Would Ibn Taymiyyah Make of Intertextual Study of the Qur'an? The Challenge of the *isrā'īliyyāt*" (25–30) serves as a programmatic introduction at the beginning of this volume, since Hoover turns the table on the methodological considerations of many of the contributions. Instead of seeking to place the Qur'an in its historical context, he offers a hypothetical contextualization of the present efforts in terms of traditional Islamic scholarship. With the example of the medieval Muslim theologian Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328/728), who showed keen interest in Christianity, Hoover points to the parallels between, on the one hand, our attempts at reading the Qur'an in dialogue with the Bible and with the Jewish and

the Christian tradition and, on the other hand, one historical antecedent to this method, namely the way in which the earliest Islamic exegetes availed themselves of the Jewish and Christian materials of their own time. While the use of such *isrā'īliyyāt*, of narrative traditions known from the Jewish and Christian tradition, has been sharply criticized in many strands of Islamic scholarship, Hoover shows that Ibn Taymiyyah was not as categorically opposed to their use as some scholars assume. Hoover examines how the medieval theologian understood a famous report that the prophet allowed to narrate such traditions, which led Ibn Taymiyyah to classify some *isrā'īliyyāt* as authentic, some as inauthentic, and some as neither verifiable nor falsifiable. Based on this understanding, Hoover shows that a sharp juxtaposition between "Western" approaches seeking to contextualize the Qur'an historically on the one hand and traditional Islamic approaches on the other does not necessarily do justice to either side of the debate.

The second contribution to the first part of this volume, Islam Dayeh's chapter titled "Prophecy and Writing in the Qur'ān, or: Why Muhammad Was Not a Scribe" (31–62), consciously and carefully allows for the Islamic tradition to guide the questions we ask of the Qur'an. Dayeh examines the Qur'an's mode of prophecy and offers a reading of the Qur'an in its Jewish and Christian context, all the while carefully listening to the lessons of the Islamic tradition. He argues against the Western tendency to construct the Qur'an's prophet in terms of the notion of an "author." Instead, Dayeh suggests understanding the Qur'an in light of the modes of prophecy put forth in the Hebrew Bible, with a special focus on the practice of "dictating" prophetic texts found there. In light of the continuities between the biblical and Qur'anic concepts of prophecy, Dayeh then revisits the traditional Islamic and Western history of scholarship on the Arabic term *ummī*. Consideration of relevant Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Greek cognates lead him to hold that the term *ummī* can denote both "Scripturally unlettered" and "gentile." The term *ummiyyūn* can therefore refer equally to the Prophet, to the Arabs, or to Jews whose scriptural knowledge is limited. The Qur'an's usage of the term in both meanings conveys a complex theological message demanding spiritual openness of the believers, a claim which Dayeh illustrates with a reading of Q 62 *Sūrat al-Jumu'ah*.

The third chapter, Angelika Neuwirth's "A 'Religious Transformation in Late Antiquity': Qur'anic Refigurations of Pagan-Arab Ideals Based on Biblical Models" (63–91), probes the "epistemic space" of the Qur'an. Neuwirth brings recent attempts to contextualize the Qur'an in Late Antiquity into dialogue with the culture of pagan Arabia, records about which have been preserved in the Islamic tradition. She shows that a separation of the Qur'an's context in either a biblical or an Arabian worldview leads to a false dichotomy. Rather, Neuwirth illustrates how the Qur'an uses biblical paradigms in order to challenge the values and customs of a tribal Arabian society, which, for example, had little regard for the afterlife. The Qur'an, Neuwirth demonstrates, thereby substitutes individual piety for the clan-based values of pre-Islamic Arabia. With a focus on the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, Neuwirth then shows on how many levels the Qur'an introduces a biblical worldview into its Arabian context, thereby

setting the stage for an argument that the Qur'an also transfers the holiness of Jerusalem and of the Temple to Mecca and its sanctuary.

The fourth and final chapter in the first part, Walid A. Saleh's "Meccan Gods, Jesus' Divinity: An Analysis of Q 43 *Sūrat al-Zukhruf*" (92–112) shows how the Meccans and their polemics against Muhammad participated in shaping the Qur'an's view of Jesus. According to Saleh, the Meccan criticism of the Prophet's message is anything but crude; instead, they were able to point to tensions within the Qur'an's doctrinal framework itself. If there be one universal God, they argued, how would His followers fall into factionalism? If Muhammad truly were a prophet, why could he not earn or even demand a revelation from God? Most importantly, how different, really, would the Meccan's worship of God's daughters be from that of a deified Christ? In each of these cases, Saleh traces how the Islamic exegetical tradition initially glossed over the Qur'an's reports of the coherent and strident criticism that the Meccans leveled against Muhammad, instead depicting them as irrational barbarians. Yet time and again, Saleh shows that parts of the tradition itself eventually identified the underlying tensions as reported by the Qur'an. Built on the insights of these exegetes, Saleh then shows how the Qur'an responded to the Meccans' criticism by formulating its view of Jesus, and its prophetology, in perceptive dialogue with its adversaries.

Part II: The Qur'an and the Bible

In continuation of the focus on the Jewish and Christian Scripture we already encountered in the first part, the second part of this volume comprises two chapters that offer different answers to the question in how far one can read the Qur'an in a direct dialogue with the Bible. The long history of previous Western scholarship, ranging from classical studies such as those of Karl Ahrens and Heinrich Speyer to more recent publications such as those of Angelika Neuwirth and Gabriel Reynolds, show that the Qur'an's view of what, exactly, constitutes "the Bible" is not a trivial matter, but rather a key to contextualize the Qur'an.[29] The way in which the Qur'an understands the continuity of the Torah with the Gospel and of previous Scripture with itself, namely, points to the many aspects of the Qur'an's typological approach, which should, in turn, shape the way in which we conceive of the Qur'an's biblical context.[30]

The continuity of biblical law and the Qur'an is the focus of the first chapter in the second part, Holger M. Zellentin's chapter titled "Gentile Purity Law from the Bible to the Qur'an: The Case of Sexual Purity and Illicit Intercourse" (115–215). Zellentin emphasizes that the continuity of the Qur'an and the Bible is best understood in light of the latter's long and complex reception history in Late Antique legal practice. In his longitudinal approach, Zellentin argues for a continuous reception history of Leviticus 18 as a blueprint for gentile purity law that can be traced throughout Late Antiquity and that in turn forms the Qur'an's legal point of departure for its sexual laws. The chapter examines those Levitical laws which Late Antique Jews and Christians broadly understood as prohibiting adultery, sexual intercourse during a woman's menstruation, sex between men,

and intermarriage with pagans. Pointing to the hermeneutical and legal affinities and differences between the so-called "Decree of the Apostles" and the rabbinic "Noahide Laws," Zellentin traces the largely uncontested prominence of gentile sexual purity laws throughout many forms of Late Ancient Christianity. He holds that the Qur'an's respective legislation stands in closest continuity with an expansive attitude towards gentile purity he sees as pervasive throughout Greek and West Syrian Christianity. The Medinan view of sexual purity, at the same time, promulgates a unique legal system that, on the one hand, stands in close dialogue with broad swaths of Late Antique Christian legal thought and, on the other hand, shapes legal precedent into its own coherent juridical system.

The second study in this part, Geneviève Gobillot's chapter titled "David and Solomon: Antecedents, Modalities, and Consequences of their Twinship in the Qur'an," offers a different reading of the continuity of the Bible and the Qur'an than the one put forward by Zellentin. Gobillot holds that the Qur'an seeks to lead its audience "back to the Bible" by offering interpretations of biblical stories that counter those found in previous interpretative traditions. Gobillot illustrates her point by discussing the ways in which the Qur'an depicts David and Solomon. With special attention to the depiction of these figures in the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, she shows that while parts of the Jewish and the Christian tradition perceive of the two kings of Israel in terms of their sinfulness, the Qur'an emphasizes their righteousness and either downplays their transgression or excises them altogether. In lieu of an emphasis on the kings' respective transgression, including their polygamous and polytheistic exploits, the Qur'an presents David and Solomon in a "twinned" relationship: both are portrayed in terms of their repentance, and both are promised a "good destination," both master parts of the inanimate and the animate creation, both know the speech of birds, and both are depicted as sages.

Part III: The Qur'an and Judaism

The two chapters in the third part of the volume enhance our understanding of the relationship between the Qur'an and the rabbinic tradition, which in turn should determine the way in which we construct the Qur'an's Jewish context. Since the sweeping attempts by the likes of Abraham Geiger, Charles Cutler Torrey, or, more recently and with more nuance, Gordon Newby, there have been fewer studies seeking to contextualize the Qur'an within Late Antique Judaism rather than within Late Antique Christianity (which will be treated in Part IV).[31] The noteworthy exceptions to this trend are the substantial contributions of Michael Lecker and of Christian Robin, yet the reliance of the former on traditional Islamic historiography and the focus of the latter on the archaeology of South Arabia seem to have somewhat diminished the impact of both on the work of scholars concentrating on the Qur'an.[32] The two following chapters are thus especially important in reminding us of the Qur'an's broad engagement with its contemporaries, be they Jewish, Christian, or pagan.

In the chapter titled "Pharaoh's Submission to God in the Qur'an and in Rabbinic Literature: A Case Study in Qur'anic Intertextuality" (235–260), Nicolai Sinai

discusses the repentance *in extremis* of the drowning Pharaoh in light of pre- and post-Qur'anic Christian and especially rabbinic sources. Sinai illustrates how the Qur'an's version of the story of Pharaoh's death relates to the narrative found in the Hebrew Bible and to rabbinic and Christian doctrines on repentance that build on this story, showing how clearly the Islamic Scripture rejects the validity of finding faith only when facing divine reckoning. Sinai takes his case study as an opportunity to delineate the methodological problems arising from the use of early Islamicate rabbinic literature for a contextualization of the Qur'an that had marked many classical studies. Yet rather than rejecting the use of such sources outright, Sinai establishes a more nuanced middle ground by connecting certain aspects of post-Qur'anic rabbinic literature with Late Antique antecedents, thereby allowing him to place the Qur'an in a broader web of historical references.

In the third part's second chapter, Mehdi Azaiez examines "The Eschatological Counter-Discourse in the Qur'an and in Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 90b-91a" (261–274). Azaiez, in a summary of some of his findings published in his recent French monograph *Le contre-discours coranique* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), presents an inventory of all those Qur'anic passages that present the voices of those denying the resurrection, along with the responses to them provided by the Qur'an itself. Based on these data, the chapter then compares the Qur'an's portrayal of its opponents to materials found in the Babylonian Talmud (which was edited in Mesopotamia prior to the Qur'an). Here, in tractate *Sanhedrin* 90b-91a, we equally find a list of those denying the resurrection, along with the Talmud's own answers to these characters. Azaiez compares the "eschatological counter-discourse" of both texts and uses their similarity as a starting point from which to point to the important differences between the respective portrayals of the voices of religious opponents, deriving lessons on the Qur'an's rhetoric and on its theology.

Part IV: The Qur'an and Christianity

The fourth and final part of this volume presents four chapters that reflect the close attention recent scholarship pays to the value of the Christian tradition for the understanding of the Qur'an. Again, scholars are increasingly allowing for the Qur'an itself to shape the image of Christianity that they in turn employ in their attempts historically to contextualize the Islamic Scripture. The focus on Christianity highlighted by these studies, in and of itself, is not new: figures such as Tor Andrae and Alphonse Mingana had long emphasized the importance of the Christian and especially the Syriac Christian tradition for the Qur'an, and several of the contributors to the present volume have themselves previously furthered this approach in contributing to what has previously been described as the "Syriac turn" in Qur'anic studies.[33] This part's five chapters, like many recent studies, continue to offer a nuanced way in which to place the Islamic Scripture more carefully into a Christian context than some of their predecessors. Importantly, they offer not only new insights regarding specific passages but also present us with important broader methodological considerations.

The first study, Joseph Witztum's chapter titled "Thrice Upon a Time: Abraham's Guests and the Study of Intra-Qur'anic Parallels" (277–302) shows how an analysis of the Qur'an's relationship to the Christian tradition can guide our understanding of the Qur'an's own chronological developments, a key issue in current scholarship as noted earlier. Witztum begins with a presentation of the three Qur'anic versions of the story of Abraham's mysterious guests and the good tidings of an expected son they bring, as first reported in Genesis 18. Witztum determines the relationship of the three versions to each other and seeks to determine how each of them relates to the biblical narrative and to its Late Antique interpretation, especially in the Syriac tradition. Witztum then challenges various previous attempts of determining the sequence of the three passages and contests the universal validity of the common assumption that later Qur'anic passages would always show more rather than fewer traces of an engagement with the biblical text. Witztum does not reject the assumption outright, but shows that the case of Abraham's guests points precisely in the opposite direction, namely to a diminution of biblical echoes in the later passages, illustrating once more that we must remain especially perceptive to the ways in which the Qur'an resists our preconceived models.

Gerald Hawting, in his chapter " 'Killing the Prophets and Stoning the Messengers': Two Themes in the Qur'an and Their Background" (303–317), revisits the accusation the Qur'an levels against the Israelites, namely that they caused harm to God's apostles. Hawting traces the development of this theme, which is relevant but rather marginal in the Hebrew Bible, yet gains prominence in the Christian and Jewish tradition and becomes firmly established in the Qur'an. Hawting suggests that the notion of the persecution and especially the stoning of the prophets first emerged within Judaism itself before it was eagerly taken over by Christians, all the while continuing to resonate in the rabbinic tradition. Hawting ultimately points to the importance of the Christian over the rabbinic attestation when trying to determine to which tradition the Qur'an responds. However, the complex and variegated reception history allows Hawting to caution against overly emphasizing the Syriac transmission history of certain themes into the Qur'an's milieu, since topics such as the accusation to have killed or stoned the prophets are widely reported in the Eastern and Western Christian tradition.

In the third study in the fourth part, Gabriel Said Reynolds, in "On the Qur'an and Christian Heresies" (318–332), takes another case study in order to evaluate the methodologies that are typically applied to the Qur'an. Reynolds focuses on the notion of "influence" that is often used in depicting the relationship of the Qur'an to its Christian context, and in turn examines the uncritical way in which some scholars have taken the Qur'an's testimony of religious opponents at face value. Taking the ways in which the Qur'an portrays several aspects of Christianity, such as Trinitarian belief and church hierarchy, as an example, Reynolds challenges the common method of using such depictions in order to connect the Christians in the Qur'an's milieu to patristic descriptions of various heresies. Instead, Reynolds argues that we should see many of the Qur'an's statements about Christianity as evidence not of Christian belief and practice, but first and foremost as evidence

of Qur'anic rhetoric. This, in turn, allows Reynolds to construct a more nuanced understanding first of the Qur'an's own message and only second of the teachings of its Christian adversaries.

The final chapter of this volume, Mary B. Cunningham's "Reflections on the Qur'an, Christianity and Intertextuality" (333–343), stands in lieu of a conclusion. Cunningham revisits the findings of a number of contributions, with a special focus on those of Azaiez, Hawting, Neuwirth, Reynolds, Sinai, and Zellentin, and grapples with the lessons a scholar from a different discipline – and especially a historian of Late Antique Christianity – can draw from the present volume. Cunningham emphasizes the contacts between Muslims, Christians, and Jews towards the end of Late Antiquity, a period she describes as a "transitional age." With a special focus on the topics of identity, views of Jesus and Mary, and eschatology, Cunningham illustrates how relevant the study of the Qur'an is for students of Christianity and for historians of Late Antique religions more broadly.

Further afield

The present volume emphasises the Qur'an's Arabian, Biblical, Jewish, and Christian context and its attempt to return its contemporaries to the idealized religious origins connected with Abraham. The volume thus addresses a specific juncture in the development of the study of the Qur'an. Future studies will surely enhance our knowledge by including more historical data in their consideration. The importance of the Mandaean, Manichean, and Zoroastrian tradition for our reconstruction of the Qur'an's context, which remained on the sidelines in this volume, should by no means be negated, but rather promises to provide further valuable insights.[34] The recent redating of the Garima gospels, which may lead to a much earlier timeline for further parts of the extant Ethiopic Christian literature, may or may not, in due course, supplement or even supplant the current emphasis on the Syriac tradition.[35] Furthermore, recent aerial findings throughout Saudi Arabia, made possible by technologies such as Google Earth, crowdsourcing, LIDAR, and the use of drones, especially if enhanced by ground-penetrating radar, may one day enhance our contextualization of the Qur'an, as does the recent work on early Safaitic and Qur'anic graffiti.[36] The work on the variants of some early manuscripts of the Qur'an and a methodological appreciation of the various traditional reading variants (*aḥruf* and *qirāʾāt*) will further advance our appreciation of the text's nuances and its earliest transmission history.[37] Finally, we should eagerly be awaiting the work of emerging scholars of the Qur'an who will have received thorough training both in the critical study of Late Antique religions and in the Islamic tradition. They may be able to give us a better sense of which parts of the *sīra*, the life of the prophet, can be confirmed by critical historical approaches to be of special relevance for our understanding of the development of the nascent Islamic community, and which aspects of *tafsīr*, of traditional Islamic exegesis, may prove especially valid for a reading of the Qur'an in its Late Antique historical context. Yet no matter what future findings may bring, the present volume is a testimony to an emerging consensus in Qur'anic studies that place the Islamic

Scripture's nuanced and pointed engagement with specific forms of Late Antique Judaism and Christianity in a prominent position.

Notes

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1 Recent data on the state of Islamic and Qur'anic studies is yet to be published, yet the trend more prominently to include the teaching of Islam in the curriculum of schools and universities throughout the Western world has clearly vitalized the study of the Qur'an. Likewise, the establishment of the British Association of Islamic Studies (BRAIS) in 2014, of the International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA) in 2012, and the rise of Islamic theology in German universities since 2010 has provided new focal points for the field. Much work, of course, remains to be done in order to achieve the full recognition of Islamic studies within the world of the Western academy, as well as the establishment of Qur'anic studies as a free-standing discipline within Islamic studies.

2 On the relationship between the Qur'an and the Islamic tradition see Part I of this volume (pages 23–112). The notion of Late Antiquity, situated between Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages, was first introduced by Peter Brown with a focus on the Western world. See idem, *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150–750* (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1971). In the realm of Persia, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, this period roughly coincides with the Sasanian Empire, which lasted from the early third century to the Muslim Arab conquests in the middle of the seventh century CE, a period which witnessed the Christianization of the Roman Empire and the Battle of Yarmouk in 636 CE that introduced the end of the Christian dominance of Palestine (see Brown's brief remarks in ibid., 20 and 201, as well as more recently Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014]). The view perceiving Late Antiquity with a focus on Latin and Greek Christendom has further been broadened by studies that also include Syriac Christianity, see e.g. Richard E. Payne, *A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015).

3 Classical studies of the Qur'an, such as those of Theodor Nöldeke and others (more on this later), saw the Qur'an primarily as a historical artifact and employed philology in order to support their historical arguments; see idem, *Geschichte des Qorāns* (Göttingen: Verlag der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung, 1860; a later edition has now been translated as Theodor Nöldeke, Friedrich Schwally, Gotthelf Bergsträßer, and Otto Pretzl, *The History of the Qur'ān* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013]). Recent studies, in contrast, perhaps best epitomized by Angelika Neuwirth, pay closer attention to their own epistemological framework and seek to recognize the Qur'an first and foremost as a literary phenomenon, therefore insisting on grasping its literary qualities before drawing any historical conclusions; see eadem, *Scripture, Poetry and the Making of a Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), and see now also Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University

Press, 2017). The developments in the field – which should be understood in terms of a gradual shift of emphases rather in terms of total alterity – closely parallel those that have occurred in the study of Late Antiquity itself, a development which has been described by Elizabeth A. Clark in eadem, *History, Theory, Text: Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

4 See Dominick LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts," *History and Theory* 19 (1980): 248. For a recent analysis of the enduring value of LaCapra's article see Clark, *History, Theory, Text*, esp. 126–129 and 141–152; see also James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), passim.

5 LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History," 248.

6 LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History," 249.

7 LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History," 274–275.

8 On the Qur'an's nature as both a written and an oral text see esp. Islam Dayeh, "Prophecy and Writing in the Qur'ān, or: Why Muhammad Was Not a Scribe," 31–62, later. It goes without saying that the Qur'an sees itself as "canonical" in the sense that it constitutes part of divine Scripture, along with the Torah and the Gospel, see e.g. Daniel Madigan, *The Qur'ān's Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); for a recent assessment of the Qur'an self-image as both text and Scripture and its relationship to previous revelation see Mohsen Goudarzi Taghanaki, *The Second Coming of the Book: Rethinking Qur'anic Scripturology and Prophetology* (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 2018) and Anne-Sylvie Boisliveau, *Le Coran par lui-même: Vocabulaire et argumentation du discours coranique autoréférentiel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013).

9 A precise definition of the "Sons of Israel" and the "People of the Scripture," and their relationship to the nascent Islamic community, remains much debated; see e.g. Mehdy Shaddel, "Qur'ānic *ummī*: Genealogy, Ethnicity, and the Foundation of a New Community," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 43 (2016): 1–60. It seems increasingly clear that Qur'an, just as much of the Syriac tradition, sees the Christian community along with the Jewish one as successor to the Israelites; see Holger M. Zellentin, "Gentile Purity Law from the Bible to the Qur'an: The Case of Sexual Purity and Illicit Intercourse," p. 153, and cf. Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1999).

10 On the use of the Jewish and Christian tradition in traditional Islamic exegesis see Jon Hoover, "What Would Ibn Taymiyyah Make of Intertextual Study of the Qur'an? The Challenge of the *isrā'īliyyāt*" 25–30, later. Reading the Qur'an in dialogue with the Bible and the Christian tradition was, of course, also the response of the earliest Jews and Christians who responded to the rise of Islam; see e.g. Michael Philip Penn, *Envisioning Islam: Syriac Christians and the Early Muslim World* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) and Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1998).

11 Representative early Western studies of reading the Qur'an in light of Jewish and Christian sources are the works of Abraham Geiger, *Was Hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume Aufgenommen?* (Bonn: F. Baaden, 1833, translated as idem., *Judaism and Islam*, trans. by F. M. Young. Madras: M. D. C. S. P. K. Press, 1898); Henri Lammens, *L'Arabie occidentale avant l'Hégire: Chrétiens et juifs à la mecque à la veille de l'Hégire* (Paris: Dar Byblion, 2006 [1928]; Tor Andrae, *Mohammed, Sein Leben und Sein Glaube* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1932); and Joseph Horovitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1926).

12 The lessons of Edward W. Said, spelled out in idem, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), have been heeded by many scholars of the Qur'an; see e.g. Dirk Hartwig, et al. (eds.) *"Im vollen Licht der Geschichte" – Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der Koranforschung* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2008). Yet at the same time, we should note that Qur'anic studies still has not managed to tackle the central task of defining a consensus on how to integrate the evidence of the Islamic tradition into its methodological framework, as becomes quite evident, for example, in Walid Saleh's, "Review Article: *Muḥammad Is Not the Father of Any of Your Men: The Making of the Last Prophet*, by David S. Powers," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 6 (2010): 251–264; the four studies comprising the first part of this volume equally address the issue of integrating the lessons learned from the Islamic tradition with an attempt to understand the Qur'an in its Late Antique context.

13 On this issue see especially Nicolai Sinai, "Pharaoh's Submission to God in the Qur'an and in Rabbinic Literature: A Case Study in Qur'anic Intertextuality," 235–260, later; we should note that the past decades have seen a dramatic improvement in our ability to more reliably date rabbinic sources, a development which has excluded many late rabbinic collections from consideration as directly reflective of Late Antique Judaism. On respective developments in the study and dating of Syriac texts see e.g. Sebastian P. Brock, *An Introduction to Syriac Studies* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2016).

14 The role of Abraham in the Jewish and the Christian tradition, as well as in the Qur'an, is one of the topics discussed by Angelika Neuwirth in "A 'Religious Transformation in Late Antiquity': Qur'anic Refigurations of Pagan-Arab Ideals Based on Biblical Models," 63–91 later, as well as by Joseph Witztum, "Thrice Upon a Time: Abraham's Guests and the Study of Intra-Qur'anic Parallels," 277–302 later. See also the insightful pieces by Reuven Firestone, "Abraham and Authenticity," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions*, ed. Adam Silverstein and Guy G. Stroumsa (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 3–21.

15 The question when Islam began to see itself as a religion separate from Judaism and Christianity is fiercely contested; while I myself would argue for a clear Islamic self-identity already with the formulation of a distinct law code in the Medinan suras, other scholars date the parting of the ways much later, see e.g. Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2012).

16 The Qur'an portrays itself as confirming Jesus' mission to abrogate the punitive parts of the Torah, see e.g. Q 5:48. For an interpretation of the Qur'an's teaching on the partial abrogation of the law (and for parallels in the West Syrian tradition) see Holger M. Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 127–174.

17 On the Qur'an's response to Christianity see esp. Walid Saleh, "Meccan Gods, Jesus' Divinity: An Analysis of Q 43 *Sūrat al-Zukhruf*," esp. 98–108, later, and Gabriel Said Reynolds, "On the Qur'an and Christian Heresies," 318–332, later.

18 On the religion of the Meccans according to the Qur'an see Neuwirth, "A 'Religious Transformation in Late Antiquity,' esp. 84 as well as Saleh, "Meccan Gods, Jesus' Divinity," 92–112, later.

19 The concept of the Qur'an's "return to the origins," as reflected in the title of this volume, is partially based on the concept of constitutional originalism put forward with increasing vehemence in the jurisprudential discourse of the United States. I have traced this phenomenon from its first-century Jewish sources into the Jesus Movement (in Holger M. Zellentin, "Jesus and the Tradition of the Elders: Originalism and Traditionalism in Early Judean Legal Theory," in *Beyond the Gnostic Gospels: Studies Building on the Work of Elaine H. Pagels*, ed. L. Jenott, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 379–403) and have recently suggested that the hermeneutical tension between legal originalism and its opposite – traditionalism – has shaped Jewish, Christian, and Islamic thoughts ever since; see my presentations "Legal Hermeneutics and the Birth of Islam, Christianity and Judaism," given on 12 March 2018 at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies at the University of Helsinki, and "Originalism

and Traditionalism: Innovating Sacred Law in Late Antiquity and Beyond," given on 18 October 2017 at the American Academy of Rome; I hope to be able to publish both studies in due course.

20 The conference "Return to the Origins: The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity" took place from 20–21 January 2013 at the University of Nottingham, in the United Kingdom. The chapters of Mehdi Azaiez, Mary Cunningham, Gerald Hawting, Jon Hoover, Gabriel Said Reynolds, and Nicolai Sinai are based on conference presentations, while those of Islam Dayeh, Geneviève Gobillot, Angelika Neuwirth, Walid Saleh, Joseph Witztum, and Holger M. Zellentin have been submitted separately. I may be speaking for all contributors if claiming that the events of the years since the conference – the political turmoil in the United States, in Europe, and in the Near and Middle East, accompanied by religiously and racially motivated violence and by the rise of Islamophobic or, respectively, anti-Western political voices – have left an imprint on our persona and on our scholarship. Explaining the Qur'an's coherent and intelligible message to its contemporaries in historical terms, and examining its nuanced and often surprising views of Judaism and Christianity, is not likely to solve any immediate political problems, yet a better historical comprehension of Islam and of its Scripture remain preconditions for the functioning of multicultural and multireligious societies worldwide.

21 For the importance of the preserved text and its relationship to the Qur'an's interaction with the nascent Islamic community see Angelika Neuwirth, "Two Faces of the Qur'ān: *Qur'ān* and *Muṣḥaf*," *Oral Tradition* 25 (2010): 141–156.

22 A good summary of the development of the field has been offered by Devin Stewart in idem, "Reflections on the State of the Art in Western Qur'anic Studies," in *Islam and Its Past: Jahiliyya, Late Antiquity, and the Qur'an*, ed. Carol Bakhos and Michael Cook (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 4–68; I am equally indebted to the concepts of "revisionists," "skeptics," and "neo-traditionalists" offered in the programmatic introduction to the article by Behnam Sadeghi and Mohsen Goudarzi, "Ṣanʿā' 1 and the Origins of the Qurʾān," *Der Islam* 87 (2012): 3–4.

23 Key works are John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), idem, *The Sectarian Milieu: Contents and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) and Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); for the reception of these works see e.g. Stewart, "Reflections on the State of the Art in Western Qur'anic Studies," 18–29. A good reflection of Cook's later position can be found in idem, *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); as for Crone, it is mainly the historicity of the Qur'an's messenger and his relationship to the text that she increasingly affirmed, see e.g. eadem, "What Do We Actually Know About Mohammed," in *Open Democracy*, posted 10 June 2008 see <www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/mohammed_3866.jsp> (accessed June 14, 2018). It goes without saying that not all scholars have rejected all of Cook's and Crone's findings; a noteworthy exception is Stephen J. Shoemaker, see e.g. idem, *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

24 A strong case for the plausibility of the Qur'an's Meccan and Medinan context has been made by Nicolai Sinai in idem, *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction*, esp. 40–80. A good summary of recent findings about the Qur'an's early manuscript is François Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads: A First Overview* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2013); see now also Asma Hilali, *The Sanaa Palimpsest: The Transmission of the Qur'an in the First Centuries AH* (Oxford: Oxford University Press and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2017) and Sadeghi and Goudarzi, "Ṣanʿā' 1 and the Origins of the Qurʾān."

25 See especially Neuwirth, *Scripture, Poetry and the Making of a Community*, and cf. Aziz Al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and His People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

26 See Christoph Luxenberg, *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran* (Berlin: Hans Schiler, 2007 [2000]). We should note that the pen name Christoph Luxenberg, whose constituent parts are real names, is perhaps meant to be understood as a tri-lingual Greek, Latin, and German pun that self-consciously highlights the book's Christian apologetic and polemical message. The first name is an obvious reference to Saint Christopher, the third-century martyr, whose name denotes the "bearer of Christ" (Greek: χριστόφορος). One need not be familiar with the saying of Matthew 5:14–15 in order to understand the image of the bearer of Christ, in conjunction with that of "light" (Latin: lux) and "mountain" (German: Berg), as readily evoking the "light" of Christian faith which is placed on the "mountain" in order to enlighten humanity. Similar imagery evoking "enlightenment" is also evident in the naming of the Inârah-Institute, an organization with close links to Luxenberg, cf. Markus Groß and Karl-Heinz Ohlig, "Zum Echo auf die Veröffentlichungen von Inârah in Presse und Fachwelt (II)," *imprimatur* 2 (2011) <www.imprimatur-trier.de/2011/imp110209.html> (accessed 7 June 2018).

27 For the extremely critical reception of Luxenberg's work see Stewart, "Reflections on the State of the Art in Western Qur'anic Studies," 19–24; see also Dayeh, "Prophecy and Writing in the Qur'ān, or: Why Muhammad Was Not a Scribe," 31 later. We should note that while none of Luxenberg's findings have been confirmed (to the best of my knowledge), a few scholars find the method of reconstituting words based on the Qur'anic *rasm* (i.e. the consonantal skeleton of the Qur'an, without *iʿjām* pointing) a worthwhile exercise, see e.g. Munther Younes, "Blessing, Clinging, Familiarity, Custom – or Ship? A New Reading of the Word *Īlāf* in Q 106," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 62 (2017): 181–189 and idem, "Charging Steeds or Maidens Doing Good Deeds: A Re-Interpretation of Qur'an 100 (*Al-ʿAadiyaat*)," *Arabica* 55 (2008): 362–386.

28 See Nicolai Sinai, "Inner-Qur'anic Chronology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Muhammad Abdel Haleem und Mustafa Shah (Oxford: Oxford University Press), forthcoming. For an assessment of Qur'anic chronology and further references see also Hoover, "What Would Ibn Taymiyyah Make of Intertextual Study of the Qur'an?" 25, later; Sinai, "Pharaoh's Submission to God in the Qur'an and in Rabbinic Literature," 235, later, and Zellentin, "Gentile Purity Law from the Bible to the Qur'an," 117, later. Witztum's chapter "Thrice Upon a Time," 277–302, later, offers a detailed exploration of the difficulties to establish the relative chronology in three parallel accounts; Neuwirth's chapter, "A 'Religious Transformation in Late Antiquity,' " 63–91, later, by contrast, illustrates a reading based on the chronology she herself has established in her earlier works. For Reynolds criticism see idem, "Le problème de la chronologie du Coran," *Arabica* 58 (2011): 477–502; for a previous alternative approach see Behnam Sadeghi, "The Chronology of the Qur'ān: A Stylometric Research Program," *Arabica* 58 (2011): 210–299.

29 See for example Karl Ahrens, "Christliches im Qoran. Eine Nachlese," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 84 (1930): 148–190; Heinrich Speyer, *Biblische Erzählungen im Qoran* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1988) [originally published sometime between 1937 and 1939 in Breslau]); Angelika Neuwirth, *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike: Ein europäischer Zugang* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2010); Gabriel S. Reynolds, *The Qur'ān and its Biblical Subtext* (London: Routledge, 2010); and idem, *The Qur'an and the Bible: Text and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). The work of Speyer remains foundational, and a group of scholars is currently working on combining Speyer's findings with more recent scholarship. The planned outcome of this effort is a volume edited by Marianna Klar, Gabriel S. Reynolds, Nicolai Sinai, and Holger M. Zellentin, which will appear under the title *Biblical Traditions in the Qur'ān* with Princeton University Press.

30 The Qur'an's typology is equally addressed by Angelika Neuwirth in "A 'Religious Transformation in Late Antiquity,' " see 14–19, later. The centrality of typological readings has recently been emphasized by Sidney Griffith in idem, *The Bible in Arabic:*

The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 54–96, as well as in Devin Stewart, "Understanding the Quran in English: Notes on Translation, Form, and Prophetic Typology," in *Diversity in Language: Contrastive Studies in English and Arabic Theoretical and Applied Linguistics*, ed. Zeinab Ibrahim et al. (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 31–48. Angelika Neuwirth and Islam Dayeh are currently editing a volume dedicated to understanding the role of typology for the Qur'an, which will be submitted to Routledge Studies in the Qur'an.

31 Among the important early works placing the Qur'an in the Jewish tradition are Geiger, *Was Hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?*; Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam* (New York: The Jewish Institute of Religion Press and Bloch Publishing, 1933); Shelomo Dov Goitein, "Who Were Muḥammad's Chief Teachers?" *Tarbiz* 23 (1953): 146–159 [Hebrew]; idem, *Ha-islam shel Muhammad: ketsad hithavta dat hadasha be-tsel ha-Yahadut* (Jerusalem: Aqademon, 1956); and more recently Gordon D. Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia: From Ancient Times to Their Eclipse Under Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988).

32 Among Michael Lecker's many publications see esp. idem, *Jews and Arabs in Pre- and Early Islamic Arabia* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), for Christian J. Robin, see now idem, "Quel judaïsme en Arabie?" in *Le Judaïsme de l'Arabie antique*, ed. idem (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 15–195. Other scholars placing special emphasis on the Qur'an's Jewish context are Hamza M. Zafer, see idem, *Quranic Communalism in Scripture and in Early Historiography* (PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 2014); and Michael Pregill, see e.g. idem, "The Hebrew Bible and the Quran: The Problem of the Jewish 'Influence' on Islam," *Religion Compass* 1 (2007): 643–659, cf. also the work of Carlos A. Segovia, *The Quranic Noah and the Making of the Islamic Prophet: A Study of Intertextuality and Religious Identity Formation in Late Antiquity* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015); and of Haggai Mazuz, *The Religious and Spiritual Life of the Jews of Medina* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2014), but see my review of Mazuz' monograph in *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 54 (2017): 220–222.

33 Previous studies that have placed special emphasis on the Qur'an's Syriac context include Alphonse Mingana, "Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur'ān," *Bulletin of The John Rylands Library* 11 (1927): 77–98; Andrae, *Mohammed, Sein Leben und Sein Glaube*; Reynolds, *The Qur'an's Biblical Subtext*; Joseph Witztum, *The Syriac Milieu of the Quran: The Recasting of Biblical Narratives* (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 2010); and Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture*. I have previously advocated for recognizing a "Syriac Turn" in Qur'anic studies (see e.g. Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture*, 35–36) and for broadening this tendency to become a more inclusive "Aramaic Turn" (see my remarks in Mehdi Azaiez, et al. (eds.), *The Qur'an Seminar Commentary: A Collaborative Study of 50 Qur'anic Passages* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 45–46); Stewart, by contrast, emphasizes the continuities of recent tendencies with those of the last century and categorizes the same movement as that of a "New Biblicism," see idem, "Reflections on the State of the Art in Western Qur'anic Studies," 24. On the question of the Qur'an's relationship to the notion of "Jewish-" or "Judaeo-Christianity" see now Francisco del Río Sánchez (ed.), *Jewish Christianity and the Origins of Islam* (Turnout: Brepols, 2018), as well as Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture*, esp. 175–202.

34 For an attempt at paying closer attention to the Qur'an's Manichean context see e.g. François de Blois, "Elchasai – Manes – Muḥammad: Manichäismus und Islam in religionshistorischem Vergleich," *Der Islam* 81 (2004): 31–48.

35 For a popular summary of the redating of the Garima gospels and its likely impact of the relative dating of the Ethiopic tradition see Alessandro Bausi, "The 'True Story' of the Abba Gärima Gospels," *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Newsletter* 1 (2011): 17–19. One scholar paying close attention to the Qur'an's Ethiopic context is Guillaume Dye, see e.g. idem, "Traces of Bilingualism/Multilingualism in Qur'ānic Arabic," in *Arabic in Context*, ed. Ahmad al-Jallad (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2017), 337–371.

36 See for example Frédéric Imbert, "L'islam des pierres: Expression de la foi dans les graffiti arabes des premiers siècles," *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 129 (2011): 57–77.

37 See, e.g. Hilali, *The Sanaa Palimpsest*; Sadeghi and Goudarzi, "Ṣan'ā' 1 and the Origins of the Qur'ān;" Déroche, *Qur'ans of the Umayyads*; and Ramon Harvey, "The Legal Epistemology of Qur'anic Variants: The Readings of Ibn Mas'ūd in Kufan *fiqh* and the Ḥanafī *madhhab*," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 19 (2017): 72–101.

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Part I

The Qur'an, the Bible, and the Islamic tradition

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