*JIQSA* 3 (2018): 25–41

# WHY DOES THE QUR'ĀN NEED THE MECCAN SANCTUARY? RESPONSE TO PROFESSOR GERALD HAWTING'S 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

SEAN W. ANTHONY

Abstract

In this response to Prof. Hawting's Presidential Address, I offer my views on the centrality of the Meccan sanctuary to the message of the Qur'ān in the Meccan period, its subsequent salience in the Medinan period, and the evidence for its continued importance for the Muslims of the seventh century. Reverence for the Meccan sanctuary, I argue, was pivotal to the early community's self-understanding as a discrete community, both distinct from the "People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*) and as a successor community with a shared biblical lineage. I contend, moreover, that reverence for a sanctuary in Mecca and its attendant rites was regarded as a touchstone feature of the religiosity of the newly hegemonic conquerors from Arabia by the earliest contemporary observers of the conquests and their aftermath.

I would like to begin my response to Prof. Hawting's excellent address by taking us somewhat far afield—beyond the Ḥijāz at least—to consider briefly a passage from the ecclesiastical history of Sozomen, a historian from the Gaza region writing in the middle of the fifth century CE. Sozomen describes in this passage a famous pilgrimage site in Roman Palestine called the Oak of Mamre, located approximately fifteen stadia north of Hebron, as it existed in the early fourth century CE prior the Christianization of the region by emperor Constantine I (r. 306/312–337). I single out Sozomen's description of the Oak of Mamre because, much like the "Inviolable Place of Worship" (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*) described in the Qur'ān, this site was connected to the biblical patriarch Abraham and was the focal point of veneration by the local population and a multitude of outsiders drawn into its orbit. Of this village called Mamre, Sozomen writes (*Hist. eccl.* 2.4):[1]

1. Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene*

doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.31441/jiqsa.3.2018.a002

> Here the inhabitants of the country, and of the regions around Palestine, the Phoenicians and the Arabians, assemble annually during the summer season to keep a brilliant feast; and many others, both buyers and sellers, resort thither on account of the fair (*panēgyris*). Indeed this feast is diligently frequented by all nations: by the Jews, because they boast of their descent from the patriarch Abraham; by the pagans [lit. Greeks], because angels there appeared to men; and by Christians, because He who, for the salvation of mankind, was born of a virgin, there manifested himself to the pious man.
>
> This place was moreover honored fittingly with religious exercises. Here some pray to the God of all; some call upon the angels, pour out wine, or burn incense, or offer an ox, or he-goat, a sheep or a cock … The place is open country and arable and without houses, with the exception of the buildings around Abraham's oak and the well he prepared. No one during the time of the feast drew water from that well; for according to pagan usage, some placed burning lamps near it; some poured wine, or cast in cakes; and others, coins, myrrh or incense.

Sozomen's description of the cult associated with the site demonstrates how the significance of Mamre's cult was seen through the lens of biblical lore—even for "pagan" pilgrims who revered the angels who appeared to Abraham there—and much of his account finds confirmation in the accounts of other historians, such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Socrates Scholasticus. Indeed, Mamre appears in Genesis three times in total: as a place where Abraham settled and constructed an altar (13:18), as his residence (14:13), and as a location where YHWH and His angels appeared to him and promised him and Sarah a son (18:1). Parabiblical traditions amplify the importance of the site, too. The *Testament of Abraham* purports that Mamre became the patriarch's final resting place;[2] and as early as the first century CE, Flavius Josephus declared that the tree revered at Mamre had stood there since the creation of the world (*J.W.* 4:533; cf. *Ant.* 1.186).[3]

---

*Fathers, Second Series*, vol. 2: *Socrates, Sozomenus: Church Histories* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995), 261; cited in Aryeh Kofsky, "Mamre: A Case of a Regional Cult?," in Arieh Kofsky and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1998), 19–30, 25–26.

2. Dale C. Allison, *Testament of Abraham* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 70; Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in 2 Baruch* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 156–158.

3. Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 227. Hebron subsequently displaces Mamre, called "al-Rāmah/Rāmat al-Khalīl," in the Islamic period as a site of pilgrimage; see Amikam Elad, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage to Hebron (al-Khalīl) during the Early Muslim Period (638?-1099)," in B. F. Le Beau and M. Mor (eds.), *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land* (Omaha: Creighton University Press, 1996), 21–62, 23–24. On the Herodian origins

Mamre interests me for my response to Prof. Hawting's thought-provoking address because, unlike the Kaʿbah and its *ḥaram* in the seventh century, Mamre offers a striking example of a House *without* a "Book"—or, at least, a House without its *own* Book. Although Mamre could boast a significance steeped in biblical lore, the site was not a place that demarcated clear boundaries between biblical and non-biblical confessional communities. Rather, Sozomen depicts Mamre as a site of multi-religious comingling, where there flourished a ritual symbiosis between communities of Jews, Christians, and pagans from multiple adjacent regions. Prayers, invocations, and sacrifices were offered by pagan, Jew, and Christian alike. To visit and worship there did not demand one to abandon one's religious community or to cast off deeply held allegiances any more than did the act of buying and selling goods at its fairs.[4]

Not surprisingly, Sozomen's account of the cult of Mamre has inspired more than a few modern historians to posit that the pre-Constantinian cult at Mamre shared much in common with the pre-Islamic cult of Mecca. Elizabeth Fowden, for instance, has stated that, "Mamre was a classic *ḥaram*, a sanctuary where pilgrims converged at a source of water and shade in an ungenerous landscape."[5] Indeed, Mamre had its *panēgyris* and Mecca its fairs; both housed a sacred well and altars that hosted the sacrifices of pilgrims, whose behavior was likewise governed by discrete rites and taboos. What, then, is the fundamental difference between the cult that flourished at the Oak of Mamre and the cult at the Kaʿbah in Mecca? Professor Hawting's talk put his finger directly on it—Mamre was a House that, unlike Mecca, never produced a Book. But why the diverging paths?

One might attempt to address this question by turning the query on its head: If Muḥammad's community had a Book, the community did not necessarily *need* a "House" to venerate, so why did the Book cling to a House? When Muḥammad absconded from Mecca and alighted in Yathrib, Mecca might as well have been left in the dust—abandoned and consigned to the cultural memory of the community, much as the biblical Israelites abandoned Egypt. But such a rupture did not occur. The centrality of Mecca and its

---

of the cult at Mamre, see Achim Lichtenberger, "Juden, Idumäer, und 'Heiden': Die herodianischen Bauten in Hebron und Mamre," in Linda-Marie Günther (ed.), *Herodes und Rom* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007), 59–116.

4. Cf. Nicole Belayche, *Iudaea-Palaestina: The Pagan Cults in Roman Palestine (Second to Fourth Century)* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2001), 104.

5. Elizabeth Key Fowden, "Sharing Holy Places," *Common Knowledge* 8 (2002): 124–146, 126; also, eadem, "Rural Converters among the Arabs," in Arietta Papaconstantinou with Neil McLynn and Daniel Schwartz (eds.), *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 175–196, 181–182.

pilgrimage rites persisted, and continue to persist, unabated. So, why did the early community not bid Mecca farewell for good?

The answer, in my view, must be found in how the early preaching of the Qur'ān commits to, and accepts as fundamental, the sacrality of its messenger's hometown (*balad*)—a sacrality that, once accepted, could not be cast away lightly. The idea of the sacral status of the House (*al-bayt*), the Meccan sanctuary (*ḥaram*) as well as its caretakers, comes in dribs and drabs in early Meccan *sūrah*s. Arguably, its earliest manifestation occurs with reference to the divine favor given to Quraysh, who are exhorted to "worship the Lord of this House / who fed and spared them from hunger and gave them security from fear (*fa'l-ya'budū rabba hādhā 'l-bayt / alladhī aṭ'amahum min jū'in wa-āmanahum min khawf*)" (Q Quraysh 106:3–4). Two concepts mentioned here—provision and security for Quraysh, who must worship the Lord of a specific House—provide a key conceptual link that appears again and again in subsequent passages that emphasize the sanctity of the Messenger's city. Hence, in the opening oaths of Q al-Tīn 95, the divine voice swears not merely by "Mount Sinai" but also "by this secured town (*wa-hādhā 'l-baladi 'l-amīn*)," and thus unmistakably places the town on par with the sacred mountain of Moses.[6]

Elsewhere, one learns of how this divine favor of "security" (*al-amn*) distinguishes the town's denizens over those of other towns. Q al-'Ankabūt 29:67 asks the townspeople to ponder, "And did they not see that We created a secure sanctuary (*ḥaraman āminan*), while the people around them are taken captive and plundered (*wa-yutakhaṭṭafu 'l-nāsu min ḥawlihim*)?" Other people, the Messenger thus declares, have not enjoyed the vaunted security of this town's inhabitants. This tacit presupposition seems to be one shared between the Messenger and his audience alike. When the theme of security appears in Q al-Qaṣaṣ 28:57, it occurs within a fascinating dialog between the two parties. The Messenger's pagan audience protests, "Were we to follow the guidance with you, then we would be taken captive from our land (*nutakhaṭṭaf min arḍinā*)!"—apparently, the Messenger's audience fears that to abandon their ancestral cult would nullify the protection their settlement enjoys. The divine voice responds through the Messenger, "Have We not firmly established for them a secure sanctuary (*a-wa-lam numakkin lahum ḥaraman āminan*) to which produce of all kinds is brought as a provision from Us?" God's clarion response demands that they recognize that it is only He who provides for the security and provision of their town and thus only He whom they ought to fear.

6. Angelika Neuwirth, *Der Koran*, vol. 1: *Frühmekkanische Suren: Poetische Prophetie* (Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2011), 189.

Safety and provision for and through worship is thus a key early theme in the oldest stratum of Meccan *sūrah*s. Indeed, the notion of a cultic city that enjoys the special protection of a deity is not particularly biblical but, rather, a widely attested idea in the Near East associated, most famously perhaps, with Hatra and its cult, which briefly flourished in Upper Mesopotamia from the first century CE until its capture by the Sasanids in 240 CE.[7] However, in the Meccan case one finds something unheard of in the case of Hatra: the lore undergirding the sanctity of the Meccan *ḥaram* becomes imbued with biblical lore and rooted in the biblical past. The clearest statement to this effect from the Meccan period[8] appears in Q Ibrāhīm 14:35–41, which reads:

> [35] And when Abraham said, "Lord, make this town safe (*āminan*)! Preserve me and my descendants (*baniyya*) from worshipping idols (*an na'buda 'l-aṣnām*).
>
> [36] Lord, they have led many people astray! Anyone who follows me is from me (*minnī*), but as for anyone who disobeys me—You are surely forgiving, merciful.
>
> [37] Our Lord, I settled some of my progeny (*dhurriyyatī*) in an uncultivated valley, near Your Inviolable House (*ʿinda baytika 'l-muḥarram*), Lord, so that they may maintain the prayers. Cause the hearts of people to turn towards them, and provide them with produce, so perhaps they may be thankful.
>
> [38] Our Lord, You know well what we conceal and what we reveal: nothing at all is hidden from God on earth or in heaven.
>
> [39] Praise be to God, who has granted me Ishmael and Isaac in my old age: my Lord hears all requests!
>
> [40] Lord, grant that I and my offspring may maintain the prayers. Our Lord, accept my request.
>
> [41] Our Lord, forgive me, my parents, and the believers on the Day of Reckoning."

This passage presents us with many of the key concepts highlighted above;[9] however, here the *sūrah* expands their significance by connecting them

7. Lucinda Dirven, "Hatra: A 'Pre-Islamic Mecca' in the Eastern Jazirah," *Aram* 18–19 (2006–2007): 363–380, 369–371.

8. Christiaan Snouck Hurgonje attempted to demonstrate that the passage is a Medinan interpolation, but his objections fail to convince; see Nicolai Sinai, *Fortschreibung und Auslegung: Studien zur frühen Koraninterpretation* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 106–112.

9. Sinai, *Fortschreibung und Auslegung*, 133.

to the biblical patriarch Abraham, who acts as the founder of the town and its cult and the ancestor of its people. The town (*al-balad*), the *sūrah* declares, received its divine guarantee of safety thanks to the prayers of Abraham; moreover, its denizens are revealed to be his children, who are charged with eschewing idolatry like their patriarch. Abraham's prayer also establishes the covenantal terms of their settlement near the Sacred House: as the biblical patriarch's progeny, the town's inhabitants must maintain the prayers, and in return God will turn the hearts of the people to their precarious settlement in an uncultivated valley and provide them with means and sustenance.

This image of the Messenger's home as "the town made secure" (*al-balad al-amīn*) may be somewhat difficult to square with the Messenger's other proclamations about the immanent doom awaiting the Meccans, warnings that he clearly expects to be vindicated by an impending, violent cataclysm meant to punish the wicked.[10] Yet these two themes of the Meccan revelations actually converge in their disputational context. The preaching of the Meccan Qur'ān pits the Messenger first and foremost in a contest with a recalcitrant, disbelieving people who refuse the Messenger's calls to restore the purity of the Abrahamic cult, preferring instead to cling to the beliefs of their anonymous forefathers over their biblical forefather (cf. Q al-Zukhruf 43:20–23).[11] The commission of the Messenger was to deliver the pivotal decree that the time of divine forbearance had ended: "I only granted these people and their fathers respite until the truth came to them and a messenger to make things clear" (Q 43:29). The Messenger recounts to his people the decisive argument (*ḥujjah*) that God granted Abraham—ever the archetype of the Messenger's own struggle with the townsfolk. Abraham says to his own idolatrous people (Q al-Anʿām 6:81–82):

> [81] How shall I fear what you worship besides God (*wa-kayfa akhāfu mā ashraktum*), while you do not fear that you worship alongside God that for which He has not sent down to you any authority (*wa-lā takhāfūna annakum ashraktum bi'llāhi mā lam yunazzil bihi ʿalaykum sulṭānan*)? Which of the two factions are more deserving of safety (*fa-ayyu 'l-farīqayn aḥaqqu bi'l-amn*)?
>
> [82] Those who believe and do not mix their faith with wrongdoing (*ẓulm*)—they are the ones who shall have safety (*al-amn*), and they are guided.

Hence, God's promise of safety (*al-amn*) to the inhabitants of the town demands that they relinquish the vain cult of their unnamed forefathers and

10. Walid Saleh, "The Preacher of the Meccan Qur'an: Deuteronomistic History and Confessionalism in Muḥammad's Early Preaching," *JQS* 20.2 (2018): 74–111, 85.

11. Cf. Saleh, "The Preacher of the Meccan Qur'an," 91–92.

embrace, instead, the original cult of a primeval forefather, who was pure in his worship of God alone. Only those who cling to the model of this biblical father, Abraham, shall find safety.

All of these Meccan themes remain salient in the Medinan Qur'ān; however, the biblicizing of the Meccan cult and the calls for its purification become even more plainly expressed. In addition, the ideological importance of Mecca for the Messenger's community increases as a means for distinguishing them from Christians and, especially, Jews. This simultaneous biblicization and "Jerusalemization" of Mecca is crucial to how the Medinan Qur'ān situates the Prophet and his community in God's plan for human history.[12] Q al-Baqarah 2:125–129 provides the most fully articulated declaration of the place of the House in the Qur'ān's reformulation of the biblical *Heilsgeschichte*:

> [125] And [remember] when We made the House a place of return and safety for the people (*mathābatan li'l-nāsi wa-amnan*), and [when] they adopted[13] the place where Abraham stood as a place of prayer and [when] We made a covenant with Abraham and Ishmael, [saying,] "Purify My House for those who circumambulate [it] and cleave [to it] and those who bow and prostrate in worship."
>
> [126] And when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a safe town (*āminan*) and provide its people with produce, those among them who believe in God and the Last Day." He [God] said, "And whosoever disbelieves, I will grant brief enjoyment of this life; then I will cast him into the torment of the inferno—a wretched end."
>
> [127] And [remember] when Abraham was erecting the foundations of the House, and Ishmael, [saying,] "Our Lord, accept this from us, for You are the hearing, the knowing.
>
> [128] Our Lord, make us submit to You and make a community from our descendants (*dhurriyyatinā*) a community submissive to you. Show us our sacred rites (*manāsikanā*) and accept our repentance. You are ever merciful, accepting of repentance."

In the Medinan period, therefore, the House remains a place of return and safety provided with produce, a place of prayer and worship erected and purified by Abraham and Ishmael. Beyond pilgrimage, the Medinan period

12. Josef J. Rivlin, *Gesetz im Koran: Kultus und Ritus* (Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrman, 1934), 24–27; Sinai, *Fortschreibung und Auslegung*, 141–143; idem, *The Qur'ān: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 205–206.

13. Reading with Nāfiʿ and Ibn ʿĀmir *wa'ttakhadhū*, rather than *wa'ttakhidhū*.

emphasizes the unmitigated importance of the rites of the Meccan cult as well, including prayer (Q 8:35, 14:37, 22:26); circumambulation (Q 2:158, 22:26.29); and the ritual slaughter of animals (Q 2:196, 22:32–33, 36–37).

The Medinan Qurʾān also begins to depict the Meccan cult as not merely for Abraham's descendants (*banūn*, Q 14:35) and progeny (*dhurriyyah*, Q 14:37) but also, in a broader sense, for "the people/humankind" (*al-nās*). Hence, Q al-Māʾidah 5:97 proclaims, "God caused the Kaʿbah, the Inviolable House, to be established for the people/humankind (*liʾl-nās*) as well as the Inviolable Month and the animals to be sacrificed and their garlands." When viewed overall, the following themes seem, in my view, to be salient to the cumulative qurʾānic discourse about the House:

> (1) Mecca is the site of the *first* house dedicated to the Abrahamic cult of primordial monotheistic worship—"the mother of cities (*umm al-qurā*)" (Q al-Shūrā 42:7)—and is prior even to Mt. Moriah/Zion/Jerusalem. The intertextual bases for the qurʾānic depiction of Mecca as possessing primacy as the first Abrahamic sanctuary may be parascriptural rather than biblical, but within its conceptual universe, the revelatory authority of the Qurʾān surpasses that of any intertext and thus renders this distinction moot. More importantly, unlike a late antique apocryphon, the Qurʾān wishes not merely to recapitulate and reinterpret canonical scripture; it aims to eclipse it.[14]

14. Jubilees 22:24 makes explicit mention of "the House of Abraham" (Gəʿəz ቤተ አብርሃም, *bēt Abərəham*) and thus seems to me the most relevant parascriptural antecedent (*BEQ*, 162). However, the connection between the House of Abraham in Jubilees and the qurʾānic House has been rejected in an influential article by Joseph Witztum, "The Foundations of the House (Q 2:127)," *BSOAS* 72 (2009): 25–40, 28, who takes the building of the "House of Abraham" to either be a metaphor for Abraham's family or for the land. In support of Witztum, one may cite no less of an authority than James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees 2: A Commentary on the Book of Jubilees 22-33*, ed. S. W. Crawford (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018), 667. However, against this metaphorical reading, one should note that "the house of Abraham" appears once again in Jubilees 32:22, where the house is obviously an actual place; indeed, the Latin version even glosses it as a "tower." See J. C. VanderKam (trans.), *The Book of Jubilees* (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 214, 356; cf. Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae* (6 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997–2017), 5.5–6 on *Bayt Ibrāhīm* and *Masjid Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl* as names for Hebron. The Qurʾān might have conceived of Mecca along similar lines as Jubilees conceived of Hebron—founded as a place of worship prior to and independently of the altar where Abraham attempted to sacrifice his son. The Qurʾān certainly does not specify that the sacrifice of the unnamed *ghulām ḥalīm* transpired in Mecca (Q al-Ṣāffāt 37:100–108, but cf. Witzum, "The Foundations of the House," 37–38). Moreover, early Muslims authorities offer a cacophony of discordant views on not just which son of Abraham was the sacrifice (Isaac or Ishmael?) but also its location. While many early scholarly authorities did indeed place the event near Mecca—usually at either Minā or Mt. Thābir—this position is far from

> (2) Mecca is not merely the birthplace but also the axis of *millat Ibrāhīm*, the cultic community of Abraham's progeny, whom Abraham charged with maintaining the House, keeping it pure by eschewing idolatry, upholding the prayers, and performing the rites of pilgrimage. Even in Medina, its pilgrimage rites (*manāsik*) remain incumbent on Muḥammad's community just as the sanctuary's liberation from the Meccan pagans becomes imperative after they leave the town fleeing persecution.
>
> (3) Mecca is, lastly, the epicenter of the Meccans' claim to Abrahamic descent via Ishmael and their claim to the "majestic patrimony" (*mulkan ʿaẓīman*) as Abraham's family (Q al-Nisāʾ 4:54; cf. Jubilees 22:14). With subsequent triumphs of the community, Mecca's centerpiece, the Kaʿbah, eventually becomes an icon of early Islamic triumphalism and, in quite a literal sense, a store of treasures and trophies acquired with the spread of the dominion of the Muslim *ummah*.[15]

As a Book, the Qur'ān confirmed *and* superseded its scriptural predecessors (Q 5:48); but as a House, the Kaʿbah and al-Masjid al-Ḥarām do not supersede *per se*, they possess primacy. A reorientation of human salvation history with Mecca, not Jerusalem, as its axis depends on the recognition of this primacy and, thus, the restoration of its unrivaled claim on human devotion. As Q Āl ʿImrān 3:96–97 declares:

> [96] The first House established for the people/humanity (*li'l-nās*) was the one in *bakkah*, a blessing and source of guidance for the worlds (*mubārakan wa-hudan li'l-ʿālamīn*).
>
> [97] It contains clear signs: the place where Abraham stood and whoever entered it found safety (*āminan*). People who are able to find a way owe to God pilgrimage to the House …

By citing this last passage, I invoke the current consensus that *bakkah* does indeed equal Mecca, rather than some hitherto unidentified place.[16] However, the case for this identification is considerably strengthened by the overlapping

---

unanimous. Indeed, no less of an authority the early Qurashī scholar Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) placed Abraham's sacrifice of his son in Palestine (al-Shām), citing the opinion of the Abū Bakr's grandson al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. *ca.* 101–102/719–721). See Suliman Bashear, "Abraham's Sacrifice of His Son and Related Issues," *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 243–277, 258 and passim.

15. Avinoam Shalem, "Made for Show: The Medieval Treasury of the Kaʿba in Mecca," in Bernard O'Kane (ed.), *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 269–283, 275–277.

16. Sinai, *Qur'an*, 57, n. 51.

themes associated with *bakkah* (safety, a House, Abraham, pilgrimage, etc.). The toponym *bakkah* was, moreover, unambiguously identified with Mecca at least as early as 137/754, and most likely far earlier than that: included among the expansions of the Sacred Mosque undertaken by the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775) was a long inscription of black and gilded mosaic tiles that bore the entirety of Q 3:96–97.[17] Otherwise, our earliest inscription to mention "the Inviolable Place of Worship" (*al-masjid al-ḥarām*) dates to the year 78 AH (697–698 CE).[18] In addition to historical inscriptions, the tradition speaks of legendary inscriptions at quite an early date, which effectively posit the same connection. Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742) relates the claim—hearsay already in his day—that three slabs were unearthed near the Maqām Ibrāhīm bearing inscriptions, two of which began, "I am God, master of *bakkah* (*anā 'llāh dhū bakkah*)."[19] His student, Ibn

17. Abū l-Walīd al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makkah wa-mā jā'a fīhā min al-āthār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Duhaysh (Mecca: Maktabat al-Asadī, 2003), 601–602; Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makkah fī qadīm al-dahr wa-ḥadīthihi*, ed. ʿAbd al-Malik Duhaysh (6 vols.; Beirut: Dār Khiḍr, 1994), 2.164–165. Cf. Oleg Grabar, "Upon Reading al-Azraqi," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 1–7, 5, who mistakenly identified the responsible caliph with al-Ma'mūn.

18. Nāṣir al-Ḥārithī, "Naqsh kitāb nādir yu'arrikhu ʿimārat al-khalīfah al-umawī ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān li'l-Masjid al-Ḥarām ʿām 78 AH," *ʿĀlam al-Makhṭūṭāt wa'l-Nawādir* 12 (2007): 533–543, 535. For the earliest references to the Kaʿbah itself, see *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, ed. É. Combe, J. Sauvaget, G. Wiet *et al.* (18 vols.; Cairo: Publications de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1931–1991), vol. 1, no. 44 (159/775–776) and no. 50 (167/783–784); and more recently, Saʿd al-Rāshid, *al-Ṣuwaydirah (al-Ṭaraf qadīman): āthāruhā wa-nuqūshuhā al-islāmiyyah* (Riyadh: Layan Cultural Foundation, 2019), 179–184 for two undated graffiti by individuals who each call themselves "the servant of the Kaʿbah (*khādim al-ka'bah*)." Paleographically, the inscriptions seem to date between the late second and third centuries AH.

19. Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-Aʿẓamī (11 vols.; Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1970–1972), 5.149–150 and 11.114, from the *Kitāb al-Jāmiʿ* of Maʿmar b. Rāshid, al-Zuhrī's student; Abū Bakr al-Firyābī, *Kitāb al-Qadr*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh al-Manṣūr (Riyadh: Aḍwā' al-Salaf, 1997), 236. Cf. the purported discovery of the inscription by the counter-caliph ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr beneath the Maqām Ibrāhīm recounted in Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* (8 vols.; Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyyah, n.d.), 4(2).150; Abū Bakr al-Kharā'iṭī, *Masāwi' al-akhlāq wa-madhmūmuhā*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Shalabī (Jeddah: Maktabat al-Sawādī, 1992), 134. Other traditions place the inscription on the *ḥijr* or the roof of the Kaʿbah and place its discovery during the reconstruction of the Kaʿbah during Muḥammad's youth; cf. ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 5.149 (Ibn Jurayj) and Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaf fī 'l-aḥādīth wa'l-āthār*, ed. Kamāl Yūsuf al-Ḥūt (7 vols.; Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1989), 3.269–270.

Isḥāq (d. 150/767), adds the flourish that the inscription was written in Syriac (*al-suryāniyyah*) and had to be deciphered by a Jew.[20]

Such is one take on Prof. Hawting's talk that draws from the qur'ānic material. However, one might also address the question of the importance of "the House" from another angle by posing a different sort of question: How soon did outsiders—i.e., the conquered rather than the conquerors—begin to take notice that the Arabian tribesmen who ruled over them were a "people of a House"? Prof. Hawting has duly noted some of the earliest notices already. Some of these I will mention again; others I will add to his list.

Earliest of all is a famous passage from the *Khūzistān Chronicle*, written in Syriac ca. 660 CE, that mentions a certain "tent/tabernacle of Abraham" (*qwbth d-'brhm*) associated with the Ishmaelite conquerors who had defeated the armies of the Romans and Persians. Although I translate the word *qūbtā* as "tent," scholars usually render it as "dome," with some even postulating that it arises from a garbling of the Arabic word "*ka'bah*."[21] However, I think there are reasons to reject this rendering as well as the hypothesis that *qūbtā* is a garbled version of *ka'bah*. The Syriac *qūbtā* means not only "dome" but also a "tent" or "tabernacle" (cf. the Arabic *qubbah*, which likewise can mean "tent" or "dome").[22] Rendering *qūbtā* as either "tent" or "tabernacle" strikes me as the most suitable reading of this passage insofar as it is strongly supported by the prevalence of "the tent of Abraham" in scriptural, exegetical, and iconic traditions associated with the biblical patriarch in Late Antiquity.[23] Moreover, the chronicler is neither the only nor the last author to refer to the Meccan sanctuary as the site of "the tabernacle of Abraham."[24] The Khūzistān

20. Yūnus b. Bukayr, *Kitāb al-Siyar wa'l-maghāzī*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978), 106; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā, Ibrāhīm al-Ibyārī, and 'Abd al-Ḥafīẓ al-Shalabī (2 vols.; Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1955), 1.196 (reading instead *dhū Makkah*); Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Khaythamah, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, ed. Ṣalāḥ Fatḥī Halal (4 vols.; Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadītah, 2004), 1.140.

21. E.g., Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 176, n. 49; Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997), 187, n. 46; Michael P. Penn, *When Christians First Met Muslims: A Sourcebook of the Earliest Syriac Writings on Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 52–53.

22. The famous tent fashioned from red leather that Khālid b. al-Walīd gifts to the Byzantine commander at Yarmūk is thus called a *qubbah*; see Abū Ismā'īl al-Azdī, *Futūḥ al-Shām*, ed. 'Iṣām 'Uqlah and Yūsuf Banī Yāsīn (Irbid: Mu'assasat Ḥamādah, 2004), 295.

23. Allison, *Testament of Abraham*, 69–70 provides copious documentation.

24. A Byzantine work of dream interpretation, the *Oneirocrticion of Achmet*, includes a dream of the caliph al-Ma'mūn in which, "he found himself in the most holy shrine in Mecca, that is the tent of Abraham (σκηνή του Αβραάμ)." See Maria Mavroudi,

chronicler's description of the Abrahamic sanctuary as a tabernacle is not entirely incompatible with the Islamic tradition either—the early Meccan scholar Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767) describes the earliest Kaʿbah as being a tabernacle-like structure (Ar. *ʿarīsh*),[25] akin to the tabernacle of Moses.[26] The chronicler states that he struggled to acquire further information about the Ishmaelites' sanctuary, clearly indicating that its existence is new information to him. What additional information the chronicler does pass on is still rather extraordinary for its accuracy. He reports that the Arabian conquerors believed that Abraham, after becoming rich, sought to withdraw from the envious Canaanites to the distant desert where he "built that place for the worship (*sgdt'*) of God and for the offering of sacrifices (*qwrbn' d-dbḥ'*)." He also adds that "it is not new for the Arabs to worship there," but that the Arabs had done so "from long ago, ... paying honor to the father and head of their people."[27] Hence, the chronicler of Khūzistān accurately apprises us that the Arabian conquerors have a sanctuary where they worship and conduct sacrifices and, moreover, that they do so to honor their ancestor Abraham.

Close to the same period, the Armenian scholar Ananias of Shirak (*ca.* 610–685 CE) seems to have acquired similar information, as he likewise notes the connection between the conquerors and a revered Arabian sanctuary. In the long recension of his *Geography* (*Ašxarhacʿoycʿ*), Ananias comments that in Rocky Arabia is the region of "Pharanitis, where the town of Pharan [is located], which I think the Arabs call Mecca." Writing slightly later, and perhaps with more information at his disposal, Ananias adds in the shorter recension of the *Geography* that Pharanitis, "is foolishly called the house of Abraham."[28]

---

*A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation: The Oneirocriticon of Achmet and Its Arabic Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 376–378. Likewise the Armenian chronicler Movsēs Dasxurancʿi (written in the tenth century CE) writes in *The History of the Caucasian Albanians*, trans. C. J. F. Dowsett (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 187: "The sites of their fire-temples and altars [Muḥammad] named the tent of Abraham and the place where God had walked, and [he] commanded them to worship there. He named his army the army of Abraham and commanded them to pray to a square altar, and he had a stone column erected to be kissed in the name of Abraham."

25. ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 5.98.

26. See the argument of Uri Rubin, "The Kaʿba: Aspect of Its Ritual Functions and Position in Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Times," *JSAI* 8 (1986): 97–131, 98–99.

27. Ignacio Guidi (ed.), *Chronica Minora I* (Leuven: Peeters, 1960), 38.

28. Robert H. Hewsen (trans.), *The Geography of Ananias of Širak* (*Ašxarhacʿoycʿ*)*: The Long and Short Recensions* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1992), 71 (§25), 71A (§25). On him, see Tim Greenwood, "Ananias of Shirak," *EIr*, s.v. and Theo van Lint, "Ananias of Shirak," in Oliver Nicholson (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1.68. The conflation of "Pharan" (Arm. *Pʿarʿan*) and the biblical toponym "Paran" (Heb. *Pārān*), referring to the territory settled by Ishmael (see Gen 21:21), is common among late antique authors. Indeed,

However, among the early observers in the east, John bar Penkāyē (wr. ca. 687 CE) offers us our first actual appeal to an Arabian sanctuary as a means to explain the motivations of the new conquerors. Bar Penkāyē provides, for the most part, a cogent description of the beginning of the Zubayrids' efforts to topple the Umayyads in the 680s CE, observing that "al-Zubayr" rose up against the Umayyads—whom he calls "the Westerners"—out of zeal for "the House of God (*byt 'lh'*)"[29] and that, after entering into open revolt, he went to the south and dwelled at their "house of worship (*byt sgdt'*)."[30]

Most of the aforementioned testimonies derive from the eastern half of the empire; however, observers from the western territories offer important testimonies as well. Hence, in the apocalyptic phantasy of the anonymous author of the Syriac *Edessene Apocalypse* (written ca. 690s), the eschatological King of the Greeks pursues the Ishmaelites to their final refuge in "the city of Mecca [where] their dominion shall end"[31]—in other words, he sends them back to whence they came. Among the most important, and hitherto most neglected, authors to comment on these matters is the Christian monastic Anastasius of Sinai (ca. 630–700 CE), who directly references the

---

the Armenian historian Ps.-Sebeos, a contemporary of Ananias, also connects the "Ishmaelite" conquerors with the biblical Paran. See R. W. Thomson, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 96 (ch. 42). Pharan, however, is located in Sinai. Cf. Walter D. Ward, *Mirage of the Saracen: Christians and Nomads in the Sinai Peninsula in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 52ff., 76ff. Paran later becomes associated with Mecca in Arabo-Islamic literature as well; however, to the best of my knowledge, the earliest Arabic text to do so is the apologetic treatise of Ibn al-Layth (d. 796), which he wrote to the Byzantine emperor Constantine IV on behalf of the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd. See Ronny Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch: A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 96.

29. Albeit a simple locution, "House of God" is nevertheless also a qur'ānic one; cf. Q 2:127, 14:37, 22:26

30. *Rēš Mellē*, in Alphonse Mignana (ed.), *Sources syriaques* (Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1907), 155. As noted by Sebastian Brock, Bar Penkāyē here most likely refers to the first siege of Mecca in 64/683, not the final siege of al-Ḥajjāj in 73/692. Supporting this reading is Bar Penkāyē's assertion that after "al-Zubayr" was killed in the siege, his followers "established after him his son to rule as *amīr*" (*brh btrh 'qymw b'nyrwt'*). See Sebastian Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John bar Penkāyē's *Riš Mellē*," *JSAI* 9 (1987): 51–75, 64.

31. Penn, *Sourcebook*, 134, 136. On the date of this apocalypse, see G. J. Reinink, "Der edessenische 'Pseudo-Methodius,'" *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990): 31–45, 34–38.

conquerors' sanctuary and the rites they perform there in his *Edifying Tales*. He writes (2.11 C7):[32]

> Some men, true servants of Christ our God who had the Holy Spirit in them, told us that a few years ago a Christian man was present in the place where those who hold us in slavery have the stone and the object of their worship. He said: "When they had slaughtered their sacrifice, for they sacrificed there innumerable myriads of sheep and camels, we were sleeping in the place of sacrifice. Around midnight, one of us sat up and saw an ugly, misshapen old woman rising up from the earth. And immediately he nudged us and woke us up, and we all saw her take the heads and feet of the sheep that they had sacrificed and toss them into her lap, and then she descended to the netherworlds whence she had come. Then we said to one another: 'Behold, their sacrifices do not rise up to God, but go downward. And that old woman is the fraud of their faith.'" Those who saw these things are still alive in the flesh unto this very day.

While the story of the demonic old-woman who consumes the ritual slaughters is purely fantastical, the story's explicit reference to a stone as "the object of their worship (*to sebas*)" and as the place of their sacrifices, most notably of camels,[33] clearly seems to refer to the Meccan cult.

The account of Anastasius does not reveal how the Christian men came to find themselves in the sanctuary where they witnessed the Arabs sacrificing—while it may be tempting to speculate that the men were captives or slaves because Anastasius refers to the Arabs as "those who hold us in slavery," the passage is ambiguous. Other Christian authors writing in the western half of the empire do show, however, that one did not need to travel into Arabia to surmise the importance of Mecca to the conquerors. Mere observance of the conquerors' societal and religious customs could suffice. One may observe this in a letter written in Syriac by the churchman and polymath Jacob of Edessa between 684–689 CE to John the Stylite, in which Jacob explains to John that, while Jews and Muslims (*mhgry'*) both pray towards the south in Syria, the two communities actually pray towards different places altogether, "the Jews towards Jerusalem and the Muslims (*mhgry'*) towards the Kaʿbah (*k'bt'*), the [respective] places of their ancestral races."[34] Although the letter is written in the 680s, Jacob recounts his eye-witness observations of Muslims

32. Stephen Shoemaker, "Anastasius of Sinai and the Beginnings of Islam," *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 1 (2018): 137–154, 144–145.

33. The sacrifice of camels, in particular, suggests an Arabian context and the absence of any holocaust of the slaughtered animals certainly accords with qurʾānic ritual slaughter; see Aziz al-Azmeh, *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allāh and his People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 224–226.

34. BL Add. 12172, fol. 124a; English translation in Penn, *Sourcebook*, 172–173.

in Egypt praying towards the east from an earlier date—specifically, from his time residing in Alexandria, where as a young monk he "amassed knowledge in the sciences" before he returned to Syria and gained considerable fame in Edessa before becoming the city's bishop in 684 CE.[35] Expressed another way: Jacob of Edessa surmised from the conquerors' prayerful devotion to the Kaʿbah in Egypt that it served as a type of Jerusalem for the Mhagrāyē well before the outbreak of the Zubayrids' challenge to the Umayyads.

All of these data are somewhat surprising when one considers how little knowledge these non-Muslim authors show of the existence of the Qur'ān in the same period. One might even conclude that, to outsiders at least, "the House" was a more conspicuous facet of their religiosity than "the Book." The conquered peoples were far quicker on the uptake when it came to imputing to these conquerors an Abrahamic-Ishmaelite genealogy and, concomitant with that, a devotion to a distant cultic sanctuary in Arabia than they were to associate a scripture with them. As Prof. Hawting himself notes, our earliest non-Muslim attestations to the text of the Qur'ān are all eighth-century testimonies.[36] But this viewpoint accords, surprisingly enough, with how early Muslims viewed their community: as opposed to designating themselves as yet another *ahl al-kitāb*, or "People of the Book," early Muslims preferred to refer to their community as *ahl al-qiblah*, "people who pray towards Mecca."[37]

By the first quarter of the eighth-century CE, Christian authors had put in place what became a long-lived trope that filled their polemics against the conquerors' religion: the Saracens' devotion to their Arabian sanctuary, many Christians averred, revealed the falsehood of their piety because it was, so they claimed, a center of idolatry. They thus cast the conquerors and all who followed their faith as "crypto-idolaters."[38] A letter written in the 720s by the Patriarch Germanos I to the bishop Thomas of Klaudiopolis provides one of the earliest testimonies to this polemic. Germanos writes:[39]

35. Jack Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 86; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 566.

36. These include the writings of John Damascene, the account of the disputation between an *amīr* and a monk of Bēt Ḥālē, and the correspondence between Leo III and ʿUmar II.

37. Josef van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra*, vol. 1, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 230ff.; Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 560.

38. Barbara Roggema, "Muslims as Crypto-Idolaters—A Theme in the Christian Portrayal of Islam in the Near East," in David Thomas (ed.), *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule: Church Life and Scholarship in ʿAbbasid Iraq* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 1–18.

39. *Ep. ad Thomam episcopum Claudiopoleos* (PG 98, 168A–D); cited in Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, 105–107. See Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680–850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 98.

> But with respect to the Saracens, since they also seem to be among those who urge charges against us, it will be quite enough for their shame and confusion to allege against them the invocation which even to this day they make in the wilderness to a lifeless stone—namely, that which is called "Chobar," and the rest of "their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers" (1 Pet 1:18); as, for instance, the ludicrous mysteries of their solemn festivals.

By way of conclusion, I would like to return briefly to Mamre again. It is instructive to note the fate of Mamre's cult in the course of the emperor Constantine's Christianization of Palestine. Constantine's mother-in-law Eutropia recognized the holiness inherent in the site due to its association with Abraham, but she recommended that the shrine at Mamre be destroyed and a church built in its stead (Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.4; cf. Eusebius, *Vit. Const.*, 3.53). Thereafter, the site was transformed, yet some symbiosis of multi-confessional communal worship did continue. A century later, the Piacenza pilgrim noted how the newly built basilica continued to serve as a shared place of worship between Christians and Jews, albeit now separated by a partition.[40] But whom does the Piacenza pilgrim now leave out? The pagans and their heathen rites, of course. At least one Islamicist, Tilman Nagel, has suggested that the pagan Abrahamic cult that flourished at Mamre in the early fourth century did not in fact entirely disappear. Nagel speculates, rather, that the pagan cult at Mamre merely relocated, finding a refuge in the Ḥijāz where over the course of three centuries it transformed into the qur'ānic *millat Ibrāhīm*.[41]

Nagel's hypothesis is not very convincing. Why, after all, would the pagan worshippers who visited Mamre travel such a great distance—nearly 1,500 km—to a valley as isolated and inhospitable as Mecca's? What is certain is that, in the seventh century, Mecca underwent a transformation parallel to that experienced in Mamre under Constantine three centuries earlier. The Meccan *ḥaram* was similarly purged of pagans whom the revelation deemed "unclean (*najas*)" (Q al-Tawbah 9:28; cf. Jubilees 22:14, 19–22) and the purity of its rites restored in accord with God's primeval covenant with Abraham and Ishmael (Q 2:125), as much of the Arabian Peninsula was largely purged as well.[42] Unlike Mamre, however, the practice of ritual sacrifice and other

40. Andrew S. Jacobs, *Remains of the Jews: The Holy Land and Christian Empire in Late Antiquity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 130.

41. Tilman Nagel, "'Der erste Muslim': Abraham in Mekka," in Reinhard G. Kratz and Tilman Nagel (eds.), *"Abraham, unser Vater": Die gemeinsamen Wurzeln von Judentum, Christentum und Islam* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), 133–149, 149.

42. The destruction of pagan shrines seems more certain—insofar as they even survived into Muḥammad's lifetime—but the historicity of the alleged end of Christian and Jewish presence in the peninsula has been challenged by a recent study;

pre-Islamic pilgrimage rites remained a salient feature of Mecca's cultic life, and remains so even until this day. Early Christian observers found this persistence of sacrifice curious even when they did not denounce it as evidence of Muslim crypto-idolatry. According to one eighth-century account, a monk of Bēt Ḥālē thus asked a Muslim emir, "What belief (*tawdyt'*) concerning Abraham do you ask of us, and which commandments of his do you wish us to perform?" The emir responds, "Circumcision and sacrifice (*dbḥ'*), because he received them from God."[43] The emir's reply bears a striking resemblance to words attributed to the early Muslim pietist of Iraq, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728):[44]

> God's statement "We redeemed him with a mighty sacrifice" (Q al-Ṣāffāt 37:107) does not only refer to [Abraham's] sacrificial offering (*li-dhabīḥatihi faqaṭ*), but it is also the sacrifice in accord with his religion, the binding custom until the Day of Resurrection (*wa-lākinnahu al-dhabḥ 'alā dīnihi fa-tilka al-sunnah ilā yawm al-qiyāmah*).

Constantius II (337–361) may have sought to abolish the insanity of sacrifices, as Prof. Hawting notes, but the Qur'ān testifies to the survival of sacrificial rites on the borders of the world of Late Antiquity and how such rites were reimagined for a new community of faithful monotheists. Extolling the model of Abraham as the primeval monotheistic worshipper, a model devotee first for his progeny and then for all humanity, the Qur'ān re-sacralized and affirmed the perennial importance of the pilgrimage to the House, and with it the rites of worship offered to God at the House, until the Day of Judgment.

---

see Harry Munt, "'No Two Religions': Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Ḥijāz," *BSOAS* 78 (2015): 249–269. That Muslims and Christians frequently shared prayer spaces, particularly in churches and at sacred sites, beyond the Ḥijāz is well attested both in literary and material evidence. See Suliman Bashear, "*Qibla Musharriqa* and Early Muslim Prayer in Churches," *MW* 81 (1991): 267–282; Mattia Guidetti, "Churches Attracting Mosques: Religious Architecture in Early Islamic Syria," in Gharipour Mohammad (ed.), *Sacred Precincts: The Religious Architecture of Non-Muslim Communities across the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 11–27, 16–19.

43. David Taylor, "The Disputation between a Muslim and a Monk of Bēt Ḥālē: Syriac Text and Annotated English Translation," in Sidney H. Griffith and S. Grebenstein (eds.), *Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum 60. Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015), 187–242, 212 §§14–15; cf. ibid., 217–219 §§23–26.

44. Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al. (15 vols. in three series; Leiden: Brill, 1879–1901), series 1, 308.