
SCRIPTURA SCRIPTURAM INTERPRETATUR
[SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE]

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARABIC BIBLE AS USED IN THE TAFSĪRS OF
IBN BARRAJĀN (D. 536/1141) AND AL-BIQĀ'Ī (D. 885/1480)

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To my wife, Joy, and daughters, Riley, Emma and Olive:

*“Ah wanderer, wanderer, Spotty, Spotty;
how have you gone limping all this time?
What wolves have frightened you, my daughter?
Won't you tell me what is the matter, my beauty?
But what else can it be except that you are a she,
and cannot keep quiet!”*

— Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, I.iv.1, 1605

Abstract

Scriptura Scripturam Interpretatur [Scripture Interprets Scripture]: An Analysis of the Arabic Bible as Used in the Tafsirs of

Ibn Barrajan̄ (d. 536/1141) and al-Biqā'ī (d. 885/1480)

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DPhil Theology and Religion

The Bible remains an indispensable part of the Muslim tradition as a scripture with which the Qur'ān is in close dialogue. From the earliest period of qur'ānic interpretation, questions concerning the exact nature of the Bible and its relationship to the Qur'ān provoked classical Muslim scholars to either defend the text or condemn it for the sake of their own sacred book and prophet. Recent scholarship on Ibn Barrajan̄ (d. 536/1141) and al-Biqā'ī (d. 885/1480) has provided fertile ground for cultivating new perspectives on the relationship between qur'ānic and biblical hermeneutics within tafsīr studies. This dissertation further tills this ground by exploring Ibn Barrajan̄'s method of qur'ānic interpretation, known as *nazm al-qur'ān*, and that of al-Biqā'ī, called *ilm al-munāsabāt*, and by examining how the Arabic Bible is used in their reading of the Qur'ān.

Moreover, this exploration is facilitated through an original comparative analysis between the two authors' biblical quotations and several Arabic Bible manuscripts believed to have circulated in the milieu of Ibn Barrajan̄ and al-Biqā'ī. How each author transmits and integrates biblical material into their tafsīr will shed light on the reception history of the Bible in the Islamic tradition. Therefore, whether their citations remain true to the biblical source text or, rather, become an islamised version of the Bible is of primary importance to discover.

Preface and Acknowledgements

The dissertation in hand grew out of a desire to wed my previous background in biblical theology with Qur'anic studies. This quest for a true interdisciplinary area of research began during my time as an MPhil student at Oxford. In my second year, I stumbled onto the work of Walid Saleh, whose book, *In Defense of the Bible: A Critical Edition and Introduction to al-Biqā'ī's Bible Treatise*, would lead me to al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr. To my benefit, this would not be Saleh's last word on Biqā'ī. Under the supervision of Nicolai Sinai, I focused on al-Biqā'ī's use of the Gospels in the context of his interpretation at Q 3:7.

At the beginning my DPhil, Biqā'ī was my sole interlocutor. This would change, however, a few years into my doctorate after presenting on the same panel as Yousef Casewit, who gave a talk on Ibn Barrajān that would change the course of my own research. As Casewit spoke, I quickly made changes to my own paper, removing comments like, 'Biqā'ī is the only one in the Islamic tradition to extensively integrate the Bible into his exegesis,' and 'No one before al-Biqā'ī took the Bible as seriously as he.' I quickly realised that Saleh's thesis on al-Biqā'ī's 'unique' approach to the biblical corpus in his tafsīr was no longer tenable, at least not in such robust terms. This would set me on a slightly different course, not only utilising the Gospels, but bringing the Hebrew Bible into a conversation with al-Biqā'ī and Ibn Barrajān as well. It has made for a much more engaging dissertation and, in my opinion, a change for the better on all counts.

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the people who have given of their time and energy to me along the way. I am first and foremost indebted to Martin Whittingham, whose constant encouragement and guidance, from the end of my MPhil research until now, have been invaluable. Martin's sensibilities as a scholar always proved to be the compass that guided me through the many uncharted academic waters that a young doctoral student must navigate. He is both a friend and a mentor, and I am forever grateful for all of his time. I owe thanks to Nicolai Sinai as well, who was kind

enough to give me a chance early on as a first-year MPhil student. He was a motivating supervisor who pushed me to think outside of the box, and was patient as I worked through some, at that time, formidable Arabic texts. Nicolai also understood the challenges one faces with full-time study and a family. I am indebted to Afifi al-Akiti for taking on and overseeing this project; he allowed me into the DPhil program, and I have been grateful for his insight at pivotal moments.

I would also like to express my appreciation to those teachers and professors under whom I had the privilege to study. Elka Hsu-Lafertl deserves the highest recognition. She encouraged me to pursue higher education at the earliest stages of my collegiate career, and her love for linguistics was contagious. Benjamin Shin and Rob Price entrusted me with their classes, giving me opportunities to learn and develop pedagogical skills; both of them were profound influences during my undergraduate and graduate time. Chris Evans demonstrated what it means to care about students in and out of the classroom. Scott Yoshikawa, Thomas Finley, Daniel Kim and Alan Gomes, all provided me with the language tools necessary to grow in my fields of study. While at Oxford, Keith Small made my transition to British life easier, and was always a source of encouragement. Nadia Jamil, Adam Talib, Paul Gledhill, Taj Kandoura and Julian Faultless each contributed in different ways to my study of Arabic at Oxford; Sohail Hanif deserves recognition here as well for his language instruction. Robert Hoyland, Christopher Melchert and Talal al-Azem were formative tutors along the way. And I also thank Walid Saleh for his support early on, and the conversations that would follow over the years; Yousef Casewit and Ronny Vollandt, as well as Miriam Hjälml, all gave of their time at various points and I owe them dearly for that. Thanks is due to the Oriental Institute library staff, especially Lidio Ferrando and Kenan Khazendar, for their services; Barbara J. Messer at the Santa Fe Public Library also procured many a needed text from various universities around the country for which I am thankful.

The friends made during my studies, who became constant sources of inspiration, are more numerous than space would allow here to acknowledge. A special debt of gratitude is owed to John

Wainwright whose unceasing support and valuable insights made my graduate experience that much richer. I also commend Ryan Lynch for his depth of knowledge and his friendship; from my first months in Oxford to the present day, he continues to support me. A thanks as well to my fellow Arabic cronies, Katerina Nordin, Ayah al-Zayat, Gioia Foster, Umberto Bongianino, Nick Evans and Marek Jankowiak; I only made it through because of you. Zeynep Yürekli was a neighbour and friend; her Turkish coffee and conversation were always welcomed. I am grateful for Joshua Falconer and his assistance over the years as well. My appreciation for Daniel Brubaker and his family for allowing me to retreat at their home and write, undisturbed for hours on end, cannot be measured. Richard Shumack's final proofs also deserve credit here, for the shape of things would not be as they are without his eye for the 'why.' Over these last few years, Iconik Coffee functioned as a quasi-office and has been a source of caffeination, without which I never could have finished.

As for my loving and devoted family, they occupy the highest place in my heart and mind. It is on account of their reassurance and unfailing positivity through the darkest of my dissertation hours that I am able to present this work to you now. My wife, with grace and complete confidence in me, has endured the trials of collegiate life for far too long. I am thankful that she and our children have remained steadfast through it all, and we can finally cross the finish line together.

Note on Transliteration and Dates

The following alphabet scheme will be used to render Arabic consonants:

a b t th j ḥ kh d dh r z s sh ṣ ḍ ṭ ḏ ʿ gh f q k l m n h w y, and the glottal stop ʾ

The vowels and diphthongs are *ā ī ū aw ay*. *Tanwīn* is romanised *un an in* when indicating the adverbial use of a noun or adjective. Final *tāʾ marbūṭah* is marked with *h*, or *t* if the word is in the construct state. Elisions are reflected when the article *al-* is preceded by the preposition, e.g., *waʾl-bayt*, *fīʾl-ard*, *līʾl-waqt*. The *alif maqsura* is represented by *á* not *ā*.

The following alphabet scheme will be used to render Hebrew consonants:

ʾ *b g d h w z ḥ ṭ y k l m n s ʿ p ṣ q r ś š t*

Begadkephat letters are *b ḡ ḏ k p t*

The vowels are *ā ē ō a e i o u ă ě ǒ â ê ô û î*. *Schwa* is represented by *a*.

The following alphabet scheme will be used to render Syriac consonants:

ʾ *b g d h w z ḥ ṭ y k l m n s ʿ p ṣ q r š t*

The vowels and diphthongs are transliterated as follows: *a ā e ē i ī u ū o ō aw ay ēw*. Spirantization and *schwas* are not represented.

All dates are formatted with Hijrī (AH) followed by the Gregorian (CE), e.g., (*d. 536/1141*).

Abbreviations

<i>A</i>	<i>Arabica</i>
<i>AA</i>	<i>Al-Andalus</i>
<i>AQ</i>	<i>Al-Qanṭara</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>Bessarione</i>
<i>CMR1</i>	<i>Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 1</i>
<i>CMR2</i>	<i>Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 2</i>
<i>CMR4</i>	<i>Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 4</i>
<i>CMR5</i>	<i>Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Volume 5</i>
<i>CI</i>	<i>Critical Inquiry</i>
<i>DI</i>	<i>Der Islam</i>
<i>ECA</i>	<i>Enciclopedia de al-Andalus</i>
<i>EI2</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition</i>
<i>EI3</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HE</i>	<i>Hespéris</i>
<i>HG</i>	<i>Hugoye</i>
<i>IC</i>	<i>Islamochristiana</i>
<i>ICMR</i>	<i>Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations</i>
<i>IQ</i>	<i>Islamic Quarterly</i>

<i>J ECS</i>	<i>Journal of Eastern Christian Studies</i>
<i>J ESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>The Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>JOAS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JIS</i>	<i>Journal of Islamic Studies</i>
<i>JQS</i>	<i>Journal of Qur'ānic Studies</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>MSR</i>	<i>Mamlūk Studies Review</i>
<i>ME</i>	<i>Medieval Encounters</i>
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Muslim World</i>
<i>O</i>	<i>Oriens</i>
<i>OC</i>	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
<i>OLP</i>	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica</i>
<i>QSA</i>	<i>Quaderni di studi arabi</i>
<i>RSO</i>	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i>
<i>S</i>	<i>Speculum</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgländische Gesellschaft</i>

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Preface and Acknowledgements	ii
Note on Transliteration	v
Abbreviations	vi
Chapter 1 — Introduction	1
1.1. Reading Someone Else's <i>Kitāb</i>	3
1.2. Ibn Barraġān: Life and Career	5
1.2.1. Ibn Barraġān: the <i>Mu'tabir</i> par excellence	7
1.2.2. Ibn Barraġān's Biblical Engagement in Historical and Cultural Context	9
1.3. Biqā'ī: Life and Career	13
1.3.1. Biqā'ī: the Polymath Preacher	16
1.3.2. Biqā'ī's Biblical Engagement in Historical and Cultural Context	20
1.4. Methodology	23
1.5. Concluding Remarks	24
Chapter 2 — A Historical Survey of Muslim Biblical Scholarship	26
2.1. <i>Biblical Quotation in the Islamic Tradition</i>	27
2.1.1. <i>Taḥrīf al-ma'nā</i> and <i>al-naṣṣ</i>	30
2.1.2. <i>Sīrah al-nabawīyyah</i> Literature and the Bible	32
2.1.2.1. Old Testament Allusions and Parallels in the <i>Sīrah</i>	33
2.1.2.2. Gospel Parallels, Allusions and Quotations in the <i>Sīrah</i>	35
2.1.3. <i>Ta'riḫ</i> Literature and the Bible	38
2.1.3.1. Ya'qūbī's Adam and Eve	39
2.1.3.2. Ya'qūbī's Jesus	40
2.1.4. <i>Ḥadīth</i> Literature and the Bible	42
2.1.5. <i>Zuhd</i> Literature and the Bible	43
2.1.6. <i>Dalā'il al-nubuwwah</i> Literature and the Bible	44
2.1.6.1. 'Abd al-Jabbār's <i>Critique</i> of Christianity	45
2.1.7. <i>Al-Radd alā al-Naṣārā</i> Literature and the Bible	47
2.1.7.1. Qarāfī on Primordial Sin	48
2.2. <i>Concluding Remarks</i>	50

Chapter 3 — Identifying the Arabic Versions of the Bible Used by Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī: A Comparative Analysis	54
3.1. <i>The Manuscripts for Ibn Barraġān</i>	57
3.1.1. The Torah	57
3.1.2. The Gospels	58
3.2. <i>The Manuscripts for al-Biqā'ī</i>	59
3.2.1. The Torah	59
3.2.2. The Gospels	59
3.3. <i>A Verse-by-Verse Analysis of Arabic Bible Manuscripts and Biblical Quotations in the Tafsīrs of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī</i>	61
3.3.1. Ibn Barraġān: Genesis 3:1-7	62
3.3.1.1. Conclusion	71
3.3.2. Ibn Barraġān: Matthew 19:30-20:9	72
3.3.2.1. Conclusion	78
3.3.3. Biqā'ī: Genesis 3:1-7	79
3.3.3.1. Conclusion	86
3.3.4. Biqā'ī: Matthew 19:30-20:9	86
3.3.4.1. Conclusion	94
3.4. <i>Concluding Remarks</i>	95
Chapter 4 — The Scriptural Hermeneutics of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī	97
4.1. <i>Biqā'ī's Defense of the Bible: The Aqwāl</i>	99
4.1.1. <i>Aqwāl</i> 5: Suspending Judgment (<i>tawaqquf</i>) on the Biblical Text	101
4.1.2. <i>Aqwāl</i> 7&8: Categories of Alteration (<i>tabdīl</i>) and Classes (<i>aqṣām</i>) of Biblical Material	106
4.1.3. Conclusion	109
4.2. <i>Reception History of Sūrat Āl 'Imrān (Q 3:7)</i>	110
4.2.1. Muqātil b. Sulaymān on Q 3:7	110
4.2.2. Ṭabarī on Q 3:7	112
4.2.3. Zamakhsharī on Q 3:7	115
4.2.4. Conclusion	117
4.3. <i>Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī's Scriptural Hermeneutics of the Qur'ān and Bible</i>	117
4.3.1. The Theories of <i>Nazm</i> and <i>Munāsabāt</i>	119
4.3.2. Q 3:7 and the Hermeneutical Value of <i>Muḥkam</i> and <i>Mutashābih</i>	125
4.3.3. The Ontological Relationship between Biblical and Qur'ānic Revelation	133

4.4. <i>Concluding Remarks</i>	135
Chapter 5 — Adam in the Gardens of Paradise: Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqāʿī's Theological Exegesis of Genesis 1-3	137
5.1. <i>Adam in Muslim Imagination</i>	138
5.1.1. Tafsīr Ṭabarī on the Angels' Protest (Q 2:30)	139
5.1.2. Tafsīr Ṭabarī on the Creation of Adam (Q 2:31, 15:26 and 7:12)	140
5.2. <i>The Garden Narrative in Ibn Barraĵān's Commentary</i>	142
5.2.1. The Qurʾānic Garden Account	143
5.2.2. The Biblical Garden Account	144
5.2.3. The Use of Ḥadīths in the Interpretation of the Garden	147
5.2.4. The Role of the 'Two Trees' in the Garden Account	149
5.3. <i>The Garden Narrative in al-Biqāʿī's Commentary</i>	151
5.3.1. The Created Order: From Ḥadīth to Torah	152
5.3.2. Arguments in Context: Foundations for Biblical Quotation	154
5.3.3. The Creation of Adam	156
5.4. <i>Concluding Remarks</i>	158
Chapter 6 — Parables and Prophets: Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqāʿī's Theological Exegesis of a Matthean Gospel Parable	161
6.1. <i>Methods for Using the Gospels in Qurʾānic Interpretation</i>	163
6.1.1. Supplementary Quotations	164
6.1.2. Interpretive Quotations	166
6.1.3. Confuting Quotations	169
6.1.3.1. Two Christian Assertions Tested	169
6.2. <i>Ibn Qutaybah's Matthean Quotations</i>	174
6.3. The 'Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard' in Ibn Barraĵān's Commentary: Sūrahs <i>al-Nisā'</i> and <i>al-Ḥadīd</i>	175
6.4. The 'Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard' in al-Biqāʿī's Commentary: <i>Sūrat al-Aʿraf</i>	180
6.4.1. Biblical Proofs of Prophethood <i>sub</i> Q 7:157: Deuteronomy 18	182
6.4.2. Biblical Proofs of Prophethood <i>sub</i> Q 7:157: Gospels	185
6.5. <i>Concluding Remarks</i>	192

Chapter 7 — Conclusion	194
7.1. Contexts for Biblical Engagement	194
7.2. <i>Biblia Arabica</i>	195
7.3. Scriptural Hermeneutics	196
7.4. Case Studies	198
7.5. Avenues for Future Research	200
Appendix I	203
Appendix II	206
Bibliography	211

Chapter 1

Introduction

The question of the Arabic Bible's function within the Islamic tradition has elicited responses from numerous scholars immersed in the study of the Qurʾān. With respect to the subfield of tafsīr studies, an argument is made by Walid A. Saleh for the singular importance of Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar b. Ḥasan al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480) to the conversation on the use of the Bible in Islam.¹ However, recent scholarship by Yousef Casewit on Abū l-Ḥakam ʿAbd al-Salām b. al-Ishbīlī (d. 536/1141), referred to as Ibn Barraġān in the historical and biographical literature, has challenged this thesis.² Preceding al-Biqāʿī by more

¹ Walid A. Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible: A Critical Edition and an Introduction to al-Biqāʿī's Bible Treatise* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 7-20; idem, 'A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist: Al-Biqāʿī and His Defense of Using the Bible to Interpret the Qurʾān,' *S* 83 (2008): 629-54; idem, "Sublime in its Style, Exquisite in its Tenderness:" The Hebrew Bible Quotations in al-Biqāʿī's Qurʾān Commentary' in Y. Tzvi Langermann and Josef Stern, eds., *Adaptations and Innovations: Studies on the Interaction Between Jewish and Islamic Thought and Literature from the Early Middle Ages to the Late Twentieth Century, Dedicated to Professor Joel L. Kraemer* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 331-47; see s.v., 'al-Biqāʿī,' *EL3*; on Biqāʿī, see Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Leiden: Brill, 1943-9) 2:142-3; *Supplement* 2:177-8 (henceforth abbreviated as *GAL*); al-Biqāʿī; ʿAbd al-Razzāq Ghālib al-Mahdī, ed., *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsib al-āyāt waʾl-suwar*, 8 vols. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2011) (hereafter referred to as *Naẓm al-durar*); idem, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsib al-āyāt waʾl-suwar*, 22 vols. (Hyderabad: Dār al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyah, 1976-1982) (henceforth designated by 'Hyderabad Ed.' after the title when cited); this Indian edition contains a critical apparatus with variant readings from four mss. (Rabat, Medina, Cairo and Damascus); see *Naẓm al-durar (Hyderabad Ed.)*, 1:1-2, nn.1-5; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy b. Aḥmad b. al-ʿImād; ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Arnāʿūṭ and Maḥmūd al-Arnāʿūṭ, eds., *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab*, 10 vols. (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1986); Li Guo, 'Al-Biqāʿī's Chronicle: A Fifteenth-Century Learned Man's Reflections on His Time and World' in Hugh Kennedy, ed., *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (C. 950-1800)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 121-48; idem, 'Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem: Domestic Life in al-Biqāʿī's Autobiographical Chronicle,' *MSR* 9/1 (2005): 101-21.

² Yousef Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barraġān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); idem, *The Forgotten Mystic: Ibn Barraġān (d. 536/1141) and the Andalusian Muʿtabirun*, Ph.D dissertation submitted at Yale University (2014) (henceforth referred to as *Forgotten Mystic*); on Ibn Barraġān, see *GAL* 1:434, *Supplement* 1:775-6; Ignaz Goldziher, 'Ibn Barraġān,' *ZDMG* (1914): 544-6; see s.v., 'Ibn Barraġān,' *EL3*; Gerhard Böwering and Yousef Casewit, eds., *A Qurʾān Commentary by Ibn Barraġān of Seville (d. 536/1141): ʾIḍāḥ al-ḥikma bi-aḥkām al-ʿibra* (Wisdom Deciphered, the Unseen Discovered) (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 1-45; Purificación De la Torre, ed., *Sharḥ asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā — Comentario Sobre Los Nombres Más Bellos de Dios* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 2000); Aḥmad Farid al-Mazyadī, ed., *Sharḥ asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*, 2 vols. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2010); idem, *Tafsīr Ibn Barraġān: Tanbīh al-afḥām ilā tadabbur al-kitāb al-ḥakīm wa-taʿarruf al-āyāt waʾl-nabaʾ al-ʿaẓīm*, 5 vols. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2013); Denis Gril, 'La "lecture supérieure" du Coran selon Ibn Barraġān,' *A* 47/3 (2000): 510-22; Miguel Asín Palacios, 'El místico Abū-l-ʿAbbās ibn al-ʿArif de Almería y su Maḥāsīn al-Maʿyālīs,' *Boletín de la Universidad de Madrid* 3 (1931): 441-58; Paul Nwyia, 'Note sur quelques fragments inédits de la correspondance d'Ibn al-ʿArif avec Ibn Barraġān,' *HE* 43 (1956): 217-21.

than three hundred years, the significance of Ibn Barraġān's contributions to the areas of qur'ānic exegesis and Muslim biblical scholarship has broken open the door anew.³ My task here will be to take the research on Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī one step further through a detailed examination of their scriptural hermeneutics, which entails an analysis of their methods for interpreting the Qur'ān and the Bible together. I will demonstrate that both of these Muslim scholars have more in common than has hitherto been presented in the study of either one.

With the separation of three centuries and the development of Islamic thought across the Mediterranean, the relationship between Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible in their exegesis of the Qur'ān raises distinct questions for the field of tafsīr studies and, more directly, that of Muslim biblical scholarship. What similarities exist between each authors' methodological approach to the Qur'ān and the Bible? Where are they located in the broader landscape of the Islamic exegetical tradition on the Bible? What are the Arabic versions of the Bible each author quotes in his Qur'ān commentary? And how is biblical material used in their interpretation of the Qur'ān? An attempt will be made in the next five chapters to satisfy these queries while exploring the level of importance for the Bible in the two authors' exegesis of the Qur'ān.

The aim of the following biographical sketches is to provide some details for each author's early life with more of a focus on their distinguished careers at later points. By elucidating the circumstances surrounding Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī's distinct paths, hopefully new light will be shed on the forces that shaped them into the biblical exegetes we find herein. Due to the nature of al-Biqā'ī's particular career path and the scene setting involved, more space is allotted to him in this introductory chapter. However, before approaching the life of each author, an account must be given for the use of key terms in this dissertation, such as 'Hebrew Bible,' 'Torah' and 'Gospel.'

³ This subfield of Muslim biblical exegesis gained more exposure with Hava Lazarus-Yafeh's *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); see also, Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 'The Qur'ānic Context of Muslim Biblical Scholarship,' *ICMR* 7/2 (1996): 141-58.

1.1. Reading Someone Else's *Kitāb*

Throughout this dissertation reference will be made to verses of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament Gospels found in quoted form in the tafsīrs of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī. While this biblical material generally agrees with the text found in a modern Bible, the question remains as to what text(s) these two authors *believed* they were quoting. Both Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī appear to follow the qur'ānic bifurcation of the Bible into the 'Torah' (*tawrāh*) and the 'Gospel' (*injīl*) when engaging with the biblical text.⁴ They also accept the 'Psalms' (*zabūr*) of David and some of the prophetic writings found in the Hebrew Bible (that is, the Christian Old Testament).⁵ However, Ibn Barraġān only quotes at length from Genesis and the Gospel of Matthew throughout three of his works.⁶

⁴ For the four Gospels, the appendix in Walid A. Saleh and Kevin Casey's article ('An Islamic Diatessaron: Al-Biqā'ī's Harmony of the Four Gospels,' in Sara Binay and Stefan Leder, eds., *Translating the Bible into Arabic: historical, text-critical and literary aspects* [Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2012], 89-115) was used for calculating the amount of Gospel material quoted: Matthew 72%, Mark 41%, Luke 58% and John 47%. The qur'ānic locations for the quotations from the Hebrew Bible were, at least initially, observed in one of Saleh's works ("Sublime in its Style, Exquisite in its Tenderness:" The Hebrew Bible Quotations in al-Biqā'ī's Qur'an Commentary'), but some were also discovered in the context of reading select passages used for chapters 5 and 6. These include Genesis 1:1-3:24 *sub* Q 2:35-6 (5%), Exodus 20:2-17 *sub* Q 2:33-5 (1%) and Deuteronomy 18:9-11, 14-19 *sub* Q 7:157 (.9%). The reader should bear in mind that these percentages could be misleading as there may in fact be other quotations from the Torah in al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr not accounted for here and would thus skew the current totals. Casewit's 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible' is used for the following calculations and, according to him, are the only Bible quotations (see n.5 below) found in all of Ibn Barraġān's works: Genesis 1:1-31 and 2:1-7 *sub* Q 11:7; 2:8-9, 10-14, 16-19 and 3:1-7, 24 *sub* Q 7:18-25; 15:4-7, 13-18 and 22:16-18 *sub* Q 12:109-11; 19:20-21, 24-5, 27-8, 30, 18:20, 22-33 *sub* Q 15:62-5, 26:173 (6%); and the Gospel of Matthew 4:34-5 *sub* Q 2:55, 20:56, 7:58; 11:2-8, 11, 13-15 *sub* Q 43:57-62; 13:31-3, 44-6 *sub* Q 19:9-11; 19:30; 20:1-16 *sub* Q 57:28; 24:22, 24, 29-30 *sub* Q 14:47-52 (3.8%).

⁵ For Biqā'ī's quotations from the Psalter, see Walid A. Saleh, 'The Psalms in the Qur'an and in the Islamic Religious Imagination,' in William P. Brown, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of The Psalms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 281-96; for Biqā'ī's quotations from the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jonah, see Saleh, 'Sublime in Its Style,' 340, 331 and 337, respectively; for al-Biqā'ī's quotations from Ezekiel 37:1-10 *sub* Q 2:243, see *Nazm al-durar* 1:467. For Ibn Barraġān's quotations from Isaiah 29:14 and Jeremiah 1:4-5 *sub* Q 17:4-7, see *Tanbīh* 3:371-6; for Exodus 3:21-2 *sub* Q 20:87; 4:1-9 *sub* Q 7:134, see *Tanbīh* 2:356-7 and 366-7, respectively (these references were communicated via email by Casewit from his personal, unpublished notes on 3 February, 2016 at 12:14am); for Ibn Barraġān's quotations from Ezekiel 37:1-10 *sub* Q 2:243, see Casewit, 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible: Prooftexts from Genesis and Matthew in the Qur'an Commentary of Ibn Barraġān of Seville (d. 536/1141),' *JQS* 18/1 (2016): 27-8. After a detailed examination of the Ezekiel passage, it is the present author's conclusion that that biblical text is paraphrased and most likely not quoted directly as the case is with Genesis and Matthew; on the original source text for the Matthean quotations, see chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁶ Casewit, 'Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 6-8.

When citing the first five books of the Hebrew Bible the term ‘Torah’ is used in this dissertation. This aligns with Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā’ī’s understanding as well. The term ‘Gospel’ applies generally to the four canonical Gospels of the New Testament, and it also designates a particular Gospel when specified by an author. Moreover, reference to the ‘Torah and Gospel’ together in quotation from the Qur’ān does not imply that *tawrāh* and *injīl* signify the same ‘Hebrew Bible and Gospels’ referred to in other contexts.

Whereas al-Biqā’ī always references the Gospels by name — Matthew (Arab. *Mattá*), Mark (Arab. *Marqus*), Luke (Arab. *Lūqā*) and John (Arab. *Yūhannā*) — his citations from the Torah are prefaced with ‘the third part of book one’ (*al-juz’ al-thālith min al-sifr al-awwal*), that is, Genesis, or ‘the first part of book five’ (*al-juz’ al-awwal min al-sifr al-khāmis*), meaning Deuteronomy, and so forth.⁷ Ibn Barrajān, however, is not as specific. He generally introduces quotations from the Torah and the Gospel with the expression, ‘It has been related also in the book that is said to be the Torah (*wa-jā’a ayḍan fīl-kitāb alladhī yudhkaru annahu l-tawrāh*)’ or ‘[...] the Gospel (*al-injīl*)’.⁸

Furthermore, the question of ‘Who’s *Kitāb*?’ becomes more complex when modern scholars weigh in on this conversation. For example, Emran El-Badawi comments in *The Qur’ān in the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* that al-Biqā’ī understood the ‘canonical Hebrew and Christian scriptures’ he was quoting to be the same *tawrāh* and *injīl* referred to in the Qur’ān.⁹ If one takes into account the quotient of biblical material in al-Biqā’ī’s tafsīr, El-Badawi’s conclusion seems plausible. Sidney Griffith also cites al-Biqā’ī as the ‘exception that proves the rule’ as one scholar in the Islamic tradition that

⁷ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar* 3:126.

⁸ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶387 and *Tanbīh* 2:93, respectively.

⁹ Emran El-Badawi, *The Qur’ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* (London: Routledge, 2014), 45; while this is an intriguing proposition, it must be held loosely given the fact that in all of the passages examined herein al-Biqā’ī never explicitly makes this claim, and El-Badawi does not specifically note the reference from which he draws his conclusion.

showed great interest in the Bible ‘as the Jews and the Christians actually have it.’¹⁰ And Saleh comments that al-Biqā’ī’s commentary ‘incorporated a substantial amount of the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels, unfiltered, in Arabic translations, as a source of divine knowledge.’¹¹ Likewise, Casewit extols Ibn Barraĵān as ‘the first Qur’ānic exegete to seriously engage with the Bible non-polemically and through actual extended quotations.’¹² There are instances, continues Casewit, where ‘the Bible not only complements but also challenges’ Ibn Barraĵān’s qur’ānic understanding.¹³

These comments from recent scholarship highlight the complexity of determining the exact place of the Bible in the thinking of Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqā’ī. Needless to say, for both authors the Bible becomes part of their hermeneutical repertoire in one form or another. The extent to which this occurs will be addressed in the pages that follow. First, a brief discussion on the life and context of Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqā’ī will be presented.

1.2. Ibn Barraĵān: Life and Career

Ibn Barraĵān hailed from al-Andalus, Seville (*Ishbīliyah*) to be precise, and was a littérateur who flourished as a scholar during the Almoravid dynasty. His family migrated from central North Africa (*Ifriqiyah*) to Seville just after Ibn Barraĵān was born, most likely some time between 450/1058 and 455/1063.¹⁴ He spent most of his life in Seville and the surrounding area of Aljarafe. Ibn Barraĵān began his scholarly career as a *muḥaddith*, studying under Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Manẓūr (d. 469/1077), and

¹⁰ Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the “People of the Book” in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 96.

¹¹ Saleh, ‘A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist,’ 633.

¹² Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 309.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 309-10.

¹⁴ Böwering and Casewit, *A Qur’ān Commentary*, 2; some of the primary sources consulted here are Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Dāwūdī; Muḥammad ‘Alī Bayḍūn, ed., *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2002), 212 no. 280; ‘Abd al-Ḥayy b. Aḥmad b. al-‘Imād; ‘Abd al-Qādir Arnā’ūt and Maḥmūd Arnā’ūt, eds., *Shadharāt al-dhahab fi akhbār man dhahab*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1986-93), 6:185-7; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī; ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Amr, ed., *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn* (Kuwait: Dār al-Nawādir, 2010), 68 no. 58.

would go on to make contributions in several fields of Islamic thought, including theology (*ilm al-kalām*), qurʾānic readings and the ḥadīth (*qirāʾāt waʾl-ḥadīth*), Ṣūfism (*al-taṣawwuf*), including the ascetic practices (*al-zuhd waʾl-ʿibādah*), and qurʾānic hermeneutics (*al-taʾwīl waʾl-tafsīr*).¹⁵

Further, Ibn Barraĵān espoused a particular form of qurʾānic interpretation, that of *ʿtibār* (‘crossing over’ or ‘symbolic transposition’), which, during his day, existed as a ‘distinctive strand’ characteristic of the Andalusian ṣūfis; it would later develop into intellectual Ṣūfism.¹⁶ He died in the city of Marrakesh six years before it fell to the Almohads in 541/1147.¹⁷ The circumstances surrounding his final days and the time leading up to his death are clouded by controversy and Mahdist conspiracy theories.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the orders from the sultan to dispose of his dead body in a trash dump fell on deaf ears as he was given a proper burial by one of the prominent ṣūfī leaders in Marrakesh, Abū I-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Ḥirzihim (d. 559/1164).¹⁹ Therefore he still emerges from these controversies as ‘the Ghazālī of al-Andalus.’

¹⁵ Al-Dāwūdī, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufasssīrīn*, 212 no. 280.

¹⁶ José Bellver, ‘Al-Ghazālī of al-Andalus’: Ibn Barraĵān, Mahdism, and the Emergence of Learned Sufism on the Iberian Peninsula,’ *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 133/4 (2013), 667-8; also, s.v., ‘Ibn Barraĵān,’ *EI3*. Ibn Taymiyyah’s (d. 728/1328) polemics against the *waḥdat al-wujūd* strand of Ṣūfism was far-reaching with indictments extended to Ibn Barraĵān as well (see Bellver, ‘Al-Ghazālī of al-Andalus,’ 662; on Ibn Taymiyyah’s influence, see Frank Griffel, ‘Ibn Taymiyya and His Ashʿarite Opponents on Reason and Revelation: Similarities, Differences, and a Vicious Circle,’ *MW* 108/1 [2018]: 11-39).

¹⁷ There are conflicting reports on Ibn Barraĵān’s death; he either died of an illness in Marrakesh after an inquisition (Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī; ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda, ed., *Lisān al-mizān*, 7 vols. [Aleppo: np, 2002], 5:173-4), or he was executed with some of his followers after the trial (‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, 2 vols. [Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿĀmira al-Sharafīyyah, 1897], 1:15); cf. Böwering and Casewit, *A Qurʾān Commentary*, 6 and Bellver, ‘Al-Ghazālī of al-Andalus,’ 675-6; on the Almohads, see Amar S. Baadj, *Saladin, the Almohads and the Banū Ghāniya: The Conquest for North Africa (12th and 13th Centuries)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 48-50.

¹⁸ On Mahdist movements and their relationship to al-Andalus before and after Ibn Barraĵān’s day, see s.v., ‘al-Mahdi,’ *EI2*; also, Bellver, ‘Al-Ghazālī of al-Andalus,’ 659-81; also, David Cook, *Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 126-49; on Mahdī-Imāmī beliefs in Shīʿism, see Etan Kohlberg, *Belief and Law in Imāmī Shīʿism* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1991), 1-22.

¹⁹ Yūsuf al-Tādīlī (d. 627-8/1229-30); Aḥmad al-Tawfīq, ed., *al-Taṣawwuf ilā rijāl al-taṣawwuf* (Rabat: Jāmiʿat Muḥammad al-Khāmis, 1984), 170 no. 51.

The following discussion will focus on his life as, in his words, a *mu'tabir*, or 'one who contemplates,' or 'one who undertakes to cross over.'²⁰ For it is in this later role that Ibn Barraĵān begins to mine the biblical revelation, and the intertwining of his qur'ānic and biblical hermeneutics becomes more visible. The relationship between the contemplative and exegetical sides to Ibn Barraĵān's scriptural hermeneutics will be discussed further in the context of chapter 4. The following sections will also explore Ibn Barraĵān's cultural context among Jews, Christians and Muslims in order to understand how they may have shaped his scriptural sensibilities and fascination with the Bible.

1.2.1. Ibn Barraĵān: the *Mu'tabir* par excellence

In this section, some of Ibn Barraĵān's defining characteristics as an exegete of the Qur'ān will be presented. The discussion will centre on his self-identification as a *mu'tabir* and what that means exactly with respect to his fascination with the Bible. In other words, it will be interesting to explore this side of Ibn Barraĵān's worldview, however briefly, in order better to understand his underlying intellectual motivations for adopting the biblical revelation into his interpretive paradigm for the Qur'ān. For this part of the survey, Casewit's work will be utilised primarily as he is the first to analyse *systematically* Ibn Barraĵān's work from this *i'tibār* perspective.

For Ibn Barraĵān, remarks Casewit, 'both *ẓahir* ("outer reality") and *batīn* ("inner reality") emerge as intimately connected facets of the same reality with no clear line of demarcation.'²¹ This world (*dunyā*), according to Ibn Barraĵān, reveals the hereafter (*ākhirā*) rather than veiling it; thus 'God hid the next world in the shade of this world' (*khabba'a l-ākhirā fī ẓill al-dunyā*).²² He viewed the world around him 'with the eye of correspondence,' continues Casewit, and he 'overcame the duality

²⁰ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 207; for the term *mu'tabir*, see Ibn Barraĵān; Mazyadī, ed., *Sharḥ*, 1:181, 264, 302, 326, 399 and 402; idem, *Īdāḥ* ¶762, 833.

²¹ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 339.

²² Ibid., 339; cf. Ibn Barraĵān, *Tanbīh*, 4:233.

of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, and linked realities above and below. He was a true *mu'tabir* [...] and beheld realities of the hereafter unfolding in this world.'²³

The comparison here between Ibn Barrajān's cosmological/eschatological perspective will be explored in more detail in chapter 6 with Ibn Barrajān's inclusion of 'kingdom parables.' The main idea to glean from the above quotes is that Ibn Barrajān views all of reality as interconnected; this life (*dunyā*) and the next (*ākhirā*) are 'mutually complementary.' This will be further elaborated on in chapter 4 when looking at the hermeneutical value of the *muḥkamāt* ('fixed') and the *mutashābihāt* ('self-similar') for both Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's method of interpretation.

This perspective on the *mu'tabir's* assimilation of the *ẓāhir* and the *bāṭin* into one, finds expression in another context that will be examined later on in this dissertation (chapter 5). It relates to Adam and Eve in the Garden and the concept of outward weakness (*al-ʿawarah al-ẓāhīrah*) and inward weakness (*al-ʿawarah al-bāṭīnah*).²⁴ A play on words occurs here in the Arabic as *awarah* means 'weakness' or 'faultiness' or 'badness/sinfulness' — understood as inward conditions — and *ʿawrah* means 'pudendum' or 'genitals,' that is, the outward condition of a human being; both apply in the context of the Garden narrative. Ibn Barrajān reveals the duality of the human soul, the condition of both his inner and outer forms in this context.

The way Ibn Barrajān interprets reality, which consists of two parts — God and other than God — leads him down a particular theological path that then allows for a further correspondence between man (*insān*), creation (*khalq*) and revelation (*waḥy*); these three categories comprise the 'other than God' (*mā siwā Allāh*) part of reality.²⁵ It is the third category, that of *waḥy*, that will become the most relevant for his use of the Bible. Revelation 'resembles both man and creation because it

²³ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 339.

²⁴ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶403.

²⁵ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 347.

comprises both differentiated and undifferentiated modes of divine self-disclosure: the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*.²⁶ As alluded to above, and will be further unpacked later, this understanding bears directly on Ibn Barrajān's quotation of the Bible as a *mu'tabirūn*. It would also be helpful to inquire about other forms of Judaism, Christianity and Islam observable in Ibn Barrajān's intellectual ambience, as well as his Andalusian context, that may have contributed to his use of the Bible in his qur'ānic exegesis.

1.2.2. Ibn Barrajān's Biblical Engagement in Historical and Cultural Context

By the time Ibn Barrajān put stylus to vellum²⁷ in the early 6th/12th c., vast multifarious Jewish and Christian communities had been established in Muslim Spain. The degree to which this was an Andalusian 'Golden Age' of intellectual and cultural prosperity is debatable, however.²⁸ Suffice it to say, there was a growing cultural affinity among some in the Jewish communities with that of the Arabo-Islamic West.²⁹ This is exemplified in a report of Moses Ibn 'Ezra' (d. after 529-30(?)/1135) about one Andalusī Jewish elite, Joseph, son of Samuel b. Nagrīlah (d. 458/1066): "After knowledge of the Hebrew [culture], his greatest knowledge was [in] Arabic culture — language, poems, *zajals*, books of history (*akhbār*), chronicles (*ayyām*) and ancient records (*āthār*)."³⁰

²⁶ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 347.

²⁷ Some of the first paper mills of Europe are believed to have been developed on the Iberian peninsula at Xàtiva and can be dated to 1151 CE, shortly after the death of Ibn Barrajān; see Dard Hunter, *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft* (New York: Dover, 1943), 153.

²⁸ The recent work of Darío Fernández-Morera attempts to debunk the notion that Islamic Spain existed as a place of tolerance and *convivencia* for these three cultures (*The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain* [Wilmington: ISI Books, 2016]); for a more positive view, see Chris Lowney, *A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); and for a recent look at *convivencia* from different perspectives, see Mark T. Abate, ed., *Convivencia and Medieval Spain: Essays in Honor of Thomas F. Glick* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

²⁹ Esperanza Alfonso, *Islamic Culture Through Jewish Eyes: Al-Andalus from the tenth to the twelfth century* (London: Routledge, 2008), 47-8.

³⁰ Alfonso, *Islamic Culture Through Jewish Eyes*, 48.

Further, the famed convert from Judaism to Islam, Samaw'al b. Yaḥyá al-Maghribī (d. 570/1175),³¹ encountered Islam through books of history, accounts of the prophet Muḥammad, his conquests and stories of the miracles God performed for him, as well as other events found in Islamic literary genres.³² As a result of Samaw'al's initiation and ultimate conversion to Islam, he conceded the Qur'an's miraculous character and the validity of Muḥammad's prophetic mission. This provides some evidence that shared streams of knowledge flowed through the Iberian Peninsula during Ibn Barraĵān's lifetime.³³ Islamic scholars during this period also showed a keen interest in Judeo-Christian history, transmitted in its biblical form, 'as they considered Islam to be its direct continuation.'³⁴

At that time there was also an indigenous Arabic-speaking Christian presence in al-Andalus among these Jewish and Muslim communities. By the 5th/11th c., the Christians of al-Andalus, referred to as 'Mozarabs' — from the participle *musta'rib* ('-r-b), meaning in its active sense, 'to make oneself similar to the Arabs,' and in its passive, 'having assimilated Arabic customs'³⁵ — regularly used the Arabic Bible in their congregations to read the Gospels, the Pauline epistles and the Psalms.³⁶ According to Casewit, the Gospel of Matthew, which is the only New Testament text quoted by Ibn Barraĵān, 'occupied a central position in the Mozarab community of al-Andalus from the beginning.'³⁷

³¹ Samaw'al al-Maghribī will appear again in chapter 6 (6.4.1.) in the context of al-Biqā'ī's biblical quotations from the Hebrew Bible and Matthew 19:30-20:16.

³² Ibid., 48.

³³ Alfonso, *Islamic Culture Through Jewish Eyes*, 48.

³⁴ Ibid., 49.

³⁵ Richard Hitchcock, *Mozarabs in Medieval and Early Modern Spain* (London: Routledge, 2016), ix-xx. Hitchcock, commenting on the application of the term 'mozarab,' states, 'Clearly, there were Arabicized members of the indigenous community, but there were also Christians for whom Arabicization was an abhorrence' (*Mozarabs*, 51 n.29).

³⁶ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 306-7.

³⁷ Ibid., 333.

The degree to which Ibn Barrajān could have engaged with Mozarabs is unclear, but it is plausible that he had access to Mozarab Arabic Bible translations of the Hebrew Bible and the Gospel of Matthew as ‘Mozarab scholars [had] tweaked and refined Arabic recensions’ over the centuries.³⁸ In fact, Ibn Barrajān claims to have consulted Arabic commentaries on ‘some of the previously revealed books’ in a discussion under *sūrat Ṭā Hā* (Q 20:87).³⁹ It seems plausible that Ibn Barrajān had access either in oral or written form to commentaries of exegetes such as the Jewish scholars Sa‘adiah b. Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī (commonly referred to as Sa‘adiah Gaon) (d. 942)⁴⁰ and Abraham b. Ezra (d. ca.1167), to name a few, and possibly even the ‘Irāqī Christian commentator Ibn al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043).⁴¹

Another source to note from an ‘Irāqī context are the ‘Brethren of Purity’ (*Ikhwān al-ṣafā*).⁴² The *Ikhwān* stand out as a probable source of influence on Ibn Barrajān’s scriptural engagement.⁴³ The middle period of the 6th/12th c. was ‘a watershed moment of Andalusī mysticism [that] championed a wedding of Qur’ānic teachings and Sunnī Ḥadīth studies to the treatises of the Brethren of Purity [...]’.⁴⁴ The *Ikhwān* were a 4th/10th century ‘esoteric fraternity of lettered urbanites that

³⁸ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 334.

³⁹ Ibid., 314; cf. *Tanbih* 2:366-7.

⁴⁰ Sa‘adiah Gaon, *Œuvres complètes de R. Saadia ben Iosef al-Fayyūmī*, eds., Joseph Derenbourg, Hartwig Derenbourg, and Mayer Lambert (Paris: E. Leroux, 1893-99); for recent scholarship on Sa‘adiah Gaon’s *Tafsīr*, see chapter 2 of Tamar Zewi, ed., *The Samaritan Version of Saadya Gaon’s Translation of the Pentateuch: Critical Edition and Study of MS London BL OR7562 and Related MSS* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 25-40; on the use of Gaon’s *Tafsīr* in Jewish and Coptic Christian circles, see Ronny Vollandt, ‘Flawed Biblical Translations into Arabic and How to Correct Them: A Copt and a Jew Study Sa‘adiah’s *Tafsīr*’ in David Bertaina, Sandra T. Keating, Mark N. Swanson and Alexander Treiger, eds., *Heirs of the Apostles: Studies on Arabic Christianity in Honor of Sidney H. Griffith* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

⁴¹ On Ibn al-Ṭayyib see *GCAL* 2:160-77; s.v., ‘Ibn al-Ṭayyib,’ *CMR2*; J.C.J. Sanders, ed., *Commentaire sur la Genèse* (CSCO 274, Scriptorum Arabici 24; Louvain: Peeters, 2003).

⁴² For a thorough read on the *Ikhwān*, see Godefroid de Callataÿ, *Ikhwan al-Safa’: A Brotherhood of Idealists on the Fringe of Orthodox Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005); also Ian Richard Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists: An Introduction to the Thought of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-ṣafā’)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991).

⁴³ Casewit and Böwering, *A Qur’ān Commentary*, 35, 42-3.

⁴⁴ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 1.

[were] principally based in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.⁴⁵ In the foreword to *Epistle 5* of the Brethren, Nader El-Bizri comments,

‘Encountering “veracity in every religion,” and grasping knowledge as “pure nourishment for the soul,” the Ikhwān associated soteriological hope and attainment of happiness with the scrupulous development of rational pursuits and intellectual quests. Besides filial observance of the teachings of the Qur’an and hadith, the Brethren also reverently appealed to the Torah of Judaism and to the Gospels of Christianity.’⁴⁶

While this statement alone cannot prove definitively that Ibn Barraĵān relied upon the *Ikhwān* for his use of the Bible, it does provide a plausible scenario for his appreciation and leanings toward the Torah and the Gospel. Casewit does not make any kind of intrinsic connection between Ibn Barraĵān’s use of the Bible with that of the *Ikhwān*, in published form at least, but the extent to which they were influential on Ibn Barraĵān’s worldview seems to give some general foundation to the role of the biblical text in his exegesis.

The high esteem with which the *Ikhwān* held the Gospels is highlighted in another study, which states that ‘the most important single factor in this was their total acceptance of Christian scriptures as a primary source of equal weight with the Qur’an and the Torah.’⁴⁷ But the *Ikhwān* did not stop there. They culled from many sources to acquire knowledge and truth, from the ancient Stoics and Pythagoreans to Jewish midrashic works and the *qīṣāṣ al-abniyā’*, or stories of the prophets.⁴⁸ Ibn Barraĵān also uses *isrā’īliyyāt* in his commentaries, though far less than the ḥadīth and the Bible. If the *isrā’īliyyāt* has been qur’ānically validated, it enjoys ‘more or less the same level of authority in his

⁴⁵ Owen Wright, ed. and trans., *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity, On Music: An Arabic Critical Edition and English Translation of EPISTLE 5* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xvii.

⁴⁶ Wright, *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, xviii.

⁴⁷ Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*, 70.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 73; cf. Wright, *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*, xviii. On the categories of *isrā’īliyyāt* and *qīṣāṣ al-abniyā’*, see Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 9. *Isrā’īliyyāt* and *qīṣāṣ al-abniyā’* are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

writings as ḥadīth and biblical material.⁴⁹ Whereas Ibn Barrajan adopts some *qīṣāṣ* material in his commentaries, Biqā'ī appears to abandon it altogether, which will be discussed further below in section 1.3.2. The life and career of al-Biqā'ī will be introduced first, followed by some observations on the relationship between his Cairene context and biblical engagement.

1.3. Biqā'ī: Life and Career

The following biographical survey of al-Biqā'ī will contain some brief anecdotes of his early life leading up to his scholarly career; the general contours of his biography have been studied and commented on previously in the secondary literature.⁵⁰ At that point, the focus will be on elements of al-Biqā'ī's life which relate more directly to his work as an exegete in the field of Muslim biblical scholarship. That is to say, this survey will attempt to draw some preliminary conclusions from the facets of al-Biqā'ī's life as a Qur'ān teacher that shed light on the reasons surrounding his large-scale quotation of the Bible in his tafsīr.

The historical account in Ibn 'Imād's *Shadharāt al-dhahab* provides a glimpse into the early life of al-Biqā'ī:

'The Imām Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar b. Ḥasan al-Ribāṭ al-Biqā'ī al-Shāf'ī al-Muḥaddith al-Mufasssīr al-Imām al-'Allāma al-Mu'arrikh was born in the year 805 and died in the year 885. He said, "on Sunday night, the ninth of *Sha'bān* in the year 821, men attacked our village of *Khirbit Rūḥā* of *al-Biqā'*. It was said that from them was a tribe of rivals among my relatives, the tribes of Hasan from the aforesaid village. They killed eight people and among them was Abū 'Umar b Ḥasan al-Ribāṭ b. Alī b. Abū Bakr and his brothers Muḥammad Sūyud and Alī, both paternal brothers. I, myself, was struck with a knife three times by one of the [attackers] and they wounded me. At that time I was a boy of twelve years. So we departed from the village and we continued traveling near the villages of *Wādī l-Taym*, *al-'Arqūb* and others until God, Most High, willed."⁵¹

⁴⁹ Casewit, 'Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 8.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 7-33; Guo, 'Al-Biqā'ī's Chronicle,' 121-5; idem, 'Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem,' 101-8.

⁵¹ Ibn 'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, 9:218.

Biqā'ī would eventually settle in Damascus until young adulthood when he would then travel to Jerusalem, and finally end up in Cairo, where he would study under the famous ḥadīth scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449). The most important event to note for purposes here, however, is the position al-Biqā'ī acquired in the mosques of Cairo, notably at the Zahir Mosque, as the Qur'ān teacher, or preacher; more on this in the next section. It was during this time as teacher in the mosque that he would begin to pen his magnum opus, *Nazm al-durar*.

After spending twenty years on his first cycle of weekly seriatim lectures on the Qur'ān, Biqā'ī began to write his commentary. The first draft (*musawaddah*) of *Nazm al-durar* appeared in serialized form over a period of fourteen years (861-75/1457-71) and another seven years passed before it was available in a final or clean copy (*mubayyadah*) (882/1477);⁵² he finished it in Damascus one year after leaving Cairo. While his commentary did create debate, it was not abandoned outright. He was able to get *fatwahs* from leading *muftīs* to support his work, at least at the beginning. As noted, his tafsīr did not appear first in completed form. Rather, he responded to his audience as he went along; therefore the final version is comprised of both his original commentary and justifications that were added at later stages.⁵³ He continued in this post at Zahir Mosque on and off for nearly thirty years.

Then, however, approximately seven years into writing his commentary (*ca.* 867-8/1463-4), scandal broke out. Biqā'ī's commentary would be inspected by some reputable scholars who found the

⁵² Al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 22:443: 'I finished the draft (*musawaddah*) on Tuesday, the seventh of *Shaban* in the year 875, and it was begun in *Shaban* of the year 861 — that was fourteen years to completion; and I finished this fair copy (*mubayyadah*) on Sunday afternoon, the tenth of *Shaban* in the year 882.'

⁵³ See s.v., 'Al-Biqā'ī,' *CMR*5.

biblical quotations problematic.⁵⁴ A year later he was vindicated, apparently, and was able to get the endorsement of four chief judges in Cairo who then issued *fatwāhs* in favour of his commentary, leading to further endorsements by many other prominent scholars of that time. According to an account in Ibn Taghrī-birdī's (d. 874/1470) *Ta'riḫ al-Miṣr* ('History of Egypt'), moreover, Biqā'ī was still regarded as 'a very learned memoriser' (*al-ḥāfiẓ al-allāmah*) in 870/1466, roughly nine years after he first began circulating volumes of his commentary; the account in Taghrī-birdī's *Ta'riḫ* also concerned the character of one member of the community whom al-Biqā'ī issued a statement about, meaning that his reputation was still good despite the earlier controversy.⁵⁵

The second phase of controversy involved a little recognised scholar, Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, who decided to stir up the Bible controversy anew. Given his low status among the 'ulamā' of Cairo, he enlisted the help of al-Biqā'ī's old classmate al-Sakhāwī; both men studied together under Ibn Ḥajar.⁵⁶ Sakhāwī wrote a treatise which presented the traditional position of the shari'ah against the use of and reading of the Bible. It is this intellectual assault that forces al-Biqā'ī to write his *apologia*, the

⁵⁴ Three major scandals occurred during al-Biqā'ī's time in Cairo, the first of which has been elaborated on, in detail, by Saleh (*In Defense of the Bible*, 7-33). In brief, the first controversy centred on an incident involving a friend from Jerusalem, al-Qudṣī, which ended in allegations of embezzlement and sexual assault; the second controversy centred on the ṣūfī poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235) and the mystic Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) and the concepts of incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and unification (*ittiḥād*) attributed to the works of both; for the controversies around ṣūfism during in this period, see Éric Geoffroy, *Le Soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie: Sous les Derniers Mamelouks et les Premiers Ottomans* (Damas: l'Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas, 1995), 439-59; for each of al-Biqā'ī's controversies see, respectively, Th. Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, His Verse, and His Shrine* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2001), 55-75 and Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 209-23; the third dispute will be described below. This makes al-Biqā'ī's dependence on Ibn Barraḡān even more puzzling given the political climate he was writing in and the consequences he faced after publicly repudiating other popular ṣūfī writers (see Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 11; 17 n.47; note al-Biqā'ī's use of another 7th/13th c. mystic, al-Ḥarālī [d. 637/1239] [*GAL* 1:414; *Supplement* 1:717]. The spelling of the name given here, which follows al-Biqā'ī's own description [*Hyderabad Ed.*, 1:10], differs from that of Brockelmann [al-Ḥirālī/Ḥarālī]).

⁵⁵ Abū l-Maḥāsin Yūsuf Ibn Taghrībirdī; William Popper, ed., *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk miṣr wa'l-qāhira*, 16 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929), 7:811; idem, *Ḥawādiṯ al-duḥūr fī madā l-ayyām wa'l-shuhūr*, 4 vols. in 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930), 1/2:119, 3/4:586.

⁵⁶ On the early development of the 'ulamā' see Manuela Marín, 'The 'ulamā'' in Maribel Fierro, ed., *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2:679-704.

Aqwāl, for quoting the Bible; this occurs *ca.* 873/1469, a date that also coincides with al-Biqā'ī's attack on Ibn al-Farīd's poetry. This attack would amount to career suicide given the political climate of Cairo at that time. Thus he was forced to leave Cairo after this event. Then, having been accepted back into his native community of Damascus, Biqā'ī began railing against al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) theodicy and his doctrine of God's grace, what became the third controversy near the end of his life.⁵⁷ Biqā'ī was forced to leave the city for his antagonistic attitude and died just outside of Damascus not many years later, ostracised and alone.⁵⁸

1.3.1. Biqā'ī: the Polymath Preacher

As it will be argued below, one of the more significant parts of al-Biqā'ī's life that shaped him into the Muslim biblical scholar witnessed in his commentary will be explored in what follows. The first aspect of his career to circle back to is the time he spent as the local Qur'ān teacher, or preacher, in Cairo. Within an Islamic context, there are four terms that express different aspects of 'preaching.' According to Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī's (d. 771/1370) fourteenth-century survey, 1) the *khaṭīb* gives the Friday sermon, 2) the *wā'iz* ('preacher') admonishes or warns the laity, 3) the *qāṣṣ* is the 'storyteller' and 4) the *qāri' al-kursī* is, literally, 'the one who reads from the chair.'⁵⁹ Subkī makes a further distinction here between the *qāṣṣ* and the *qāri' al-kursī*, stating that,

'The *qāri' al-kursī* or Seated Reader is the one who sits on a chair reading to the populace from the gentle tales, ḥadīth, and tafsīr; he shares this function with the *qāṣṣ*, but the two differ in that the *qāṣṣ* reads by heart and from memory, and he stands, though he may sit, but his standing and sitting is in the streets. As for the *qāri' al-kursī*,

⁵⁷ See Eric L. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought: The Dispute Over al-Ghazālī's "Best of All Possible Worlds"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 135-60; idem, *Ghazali* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 132-8.

⁵⁸ Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 13.

⁵⁹ Jonathan Berkey, *Popular Preaching and Religious Authority in the Medieval Islamic Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 14; idem, 'Storytelling, Preaching, and Power in Mamluk Cairo,' *MSR* 4 (2000): 53-73; also, George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 217-8.

he sits on a chair in the Friday mosque or everyday mosque, or in a school, or ṣūfī convent and he only reads from books [i.e., not from memory]. It is obligatory for him, just as it is obligatory for the *qāṣṣ*, only to read what the general populace will understand.⁶⁰

It is this last designation, the *qārī' al-kursī*, that becomes directly associated with the *mī'ād* session, or Qur'ān teaching session, the post al-Biqā'ī held.⁶¹ The *mī'ād* become a venue for storytelling and qur'ānic exegesis by al-Biqā'ī's day. It should be noted, moreover, that he was a gifted poet; this further creates a picture of the *mī'ād* forum that aligns with the descriptions in Berkey et al.⁶² Furthermore, near the end of his life, Biqā'ī was appointed as the senior Qur'ān reciter at the cemetery of *Umm al-Salīh*. This last detail is interesting because cemeteries were a central location for popular preaching and storytelling. Although his tafsir adheres to the standards of the genre, there are other features that align it closely with its author's vocational calling and thus bridge the gap between the art of popular preaching as an oratory experience and the art of exegesis as a textual phenomenon.

Berkey's three defining characteristics of popular preaching will be addressed next as they relate to al-Biqā'ī as the *qārī' al-kursī* and the context in which he worked on his commentary. The first characteristic concerns the legitimacy of *preaching-cum-storytelling* as a means of religious knowledge transmission. Here Berkey examines the phenomena of dreams and visions as the basis of a preacher or storyteller's claim to knowledge, thus making those personal experiences above reproach.⁶³ Indeed, one of the first discussions in al-Biqā'ī's prolegomena focuses on this aspect of knowledge

⁶⁰ Karen Bauer, "I have seen the people's antipathy to this knowledge": the Muslim exegete and his audience, 5th/11th-7th/13th centuries,' in Behnam Sadeghi, Michael Bonner and Asad Q. Ahmed, eds., *Islamic Scholarly Tradition: Studies in History, Law, and Thought in Honor of Professor Michael Allan Cook* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 304 n.33; see al-Subkī, *Mu'īd al-ni'am wa-mubīd al-niqam* (Beirut: Dār al-Hadātha, 1983).

⁶¹ Guo, 'Al-Biqā'ī's Chronicle', 133-4.

⁶² Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 13; Berkey, *Popular Preaching*, 51; cf. Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, 217-8.

⁶³ Berkey, *Popular Preaching*, 81.

transmission. Speaking about the divine assistance he received for composing his tafsīr, al-Biqā'ī intimates:

[A]nd perhaps the reason that this book [*Naẓm al-durar*] came so easily to me was by the blessings of a good dream, impressions of prophethood that I saw when I was young. I was about ten years of age in our village in the lands of *Biqā'*. I saw the angel Gabriel, the one who brought down this spirit [i.e., the Qur'ān], and I saw the Prophet Muḥammad, the one whom this spirit came to, God bless and grant them both peace; I saw them both in the form of two young, beardless men, in the most beautiful form, riding two horses, both [men] in green and both [men] of the most extreme beauty, and they were going towards the East. So God aided me through their blessings in interpreting [the Qur'ān] and organising it through the spirit from Him, as is attested by those who have read my book and contemplated it.⁶⁴

An episode is also found in al-Biqā'ī's historical work, *Ta'riḫ al-Biqā'ī* or the *Chronicle*, concerning a dream that he claims he has had on the day the Sulṭān Jaqmaq (d. 857/1453) dies, which later reoccurs with the death of Sulṭān Īnāl (d. 865/1461).⁶⁵ The dream and the portion of the Qur'ān al-Biqā'ī lectures on become linked, in his mind, to these events.⁶⁶

Yet another way of legitimising knowledge transmission was connecting one's work with that of someone earlier who had already been accepted and was considered reliable. In al-Biqā'ī's prolegomenon, he links his commentary with that of al-Bayḍāwī, calling it a *radīf* to the latter's tafsīr; a

⁶⁴ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 1:4-5.

⁶⁵ Al-Biqā'ī; Muḥammad Sālim b. Shadīd al-'Awfī, ed., *Iẓhār al-'aṣr li-asrār ahl al-'aṣr: Ta'riḫ al-Biqā'ī* (Riyāḍ: np, 1992), 305-7; cf. Guo, 'Al-Biqā'ī's Chronicle,' 133-5.

⁶⁶ Though a learned scholar, with significance of these events surrounding Jaqmaq and Īnāl weighing on him, Biqā'ī would remain at odds with his 'ulamā' compeers and many of the Mamlūk sultans due to some of his stringent views concerning, by that time, mainstream 'ṣūfī' doctrines that the intelligentsia in Cairo had formerly imbibed. This was especially the case with Jaqmaq (r. 857/1453), who dies several years before al-Biqā'ī begins his commentary. Under the Circassian Mamlūk regime (782-3/1382-923/1517), eleven sultans reigned during the span of al-Biqā'ī's life, from al-Malik al-Nāṣir Faraj (r. 801/1399-815/1412), who was the eleven-year-old son of al-Malik al-Zāhir Barqūq (d. 801/1399) when he acceded to the throne, to the sultanate of Qāyṭbāy (r. 872/1468-901/1496) (Guo, 'Al-Biqā'ī's Chronicle,' 121-3; see also, Jean-Claude Garcin, "The Regime of the Circassian Mamlūks" in Carl F. Petry, ed., *The Cambridge History of Egypt Volume One: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 291-2. Barqūq is credited with establishing the Circassian dynasty (783/1382) following the Bahrī Mamlūks (647/1250-792/1390); for details on this transition, see Linda S. Northrup, "The Bahrī Mamlūk sultanate, 1250-1390" in Carl F. Petry, ed., *The Cambridge History of Egypt Volume One: Islamic Egypt, 640-1517* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 287-9.

radīf is one who travels with you across the desert on the back of the same beast.⁶⁷ Bayḍāwī's commentary is regarded as a digest of both Zamakhsharī and Rāzī's commentaries, and it was one of the standard texts studied and transmitted during the medieval period, being widely used for *mī'ād* sessions.⁶⁸ Biqā'ī mentions explicitly in the *Iḏhār* that he regularly consulted three works while lecturing on the Qur'ān (*wa-kuntu anzuru fī ghālib al-amr*): Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf*, Bayḍāwī's commentary and Abū Ḥayyān's *al-Nahr*.⁶⁹

The second characteristic in the tradition of popular preaching is the inclusion of stories, particularly those of pre-Islamic prophets, the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature; these formed the mainstay of a preacher's repertoire. Here a second argument is presented for upholding popular preaching and storytelling as a valid means of religious knowledge transmission, the 'knowledge' in this case being the *qiṣaṣ* literature.⁷⁰ Popular preachers focused on the use of *ḥadīth qudsī*, as well, within the Islamic tradition as a way of legitimising their own use of this literature. *Ḥadīth qudsī* are ḥadīths that take the form of direct statements from God, rather than Muḥammad; these are generally regarded by Muslim ḥadīth scholars as 'weak' (*ḍa'īf*) but nonetheless comprise a second category of divine utterances in Islam, the first being the Qur'ān. This was one of the avenues for authenticating extra-qur'ānic material, and it is exactly the same argument al-Biqā'ī uses in his apologia, the *Aqwāl*, where he defends quoting the Bible in his commentary.

In al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr, however, the *qiṣaṣ* literature is completely abandoned; the Bible, rather, becomes the stock-and-trade of his qur'ānic exposition as he wrote his commentary over a period of

⁶⁷ See Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., *r-d-f*.

⁶⁸ Berkey, *Popular Preaching*, 40.

⁶⁹ Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 22; cf. Biqā'ī, *Iḏhār al-'aṣr*, 203.

⁷⁰ Berkey, *Popular Preaching*, 40-1.

twenty-years all the while preaching and teaching as the *qārī' al-kursī*.⁷¹ The background provided for *preaching-cum-storytelling* and al-Biqā'ī's life as a Qur'ān teacher has worked towards establishing him as a preacher in this context and to create a valid scenario in which using the Bible in his tafsīr was not as shocking as it may have first seemed in his day. The *mī'ād* session would thus become a safe haven for his use of the Bible and provide a venue for testing the exegetical waters with new and exotic biblical stories in place of the *qiṣaṣ* literature that were, in actuality, nothing new at all to al-Biqā'ī's audience. This raises an important historical question concerning al-Biqā'ī's context and the surrounding Jewish and Muslim communities that also rejected *isrā'īliyyāt*. Therefore some additional background material on 9th/15th c. Cairene life will be explored in the next section to see if it can provide any further explanation for al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible.

1.3.2. Biqā'ī's Biblical Engagement in Historical and Cultural Context

Various forms of religious encounter occurred among Jews, Christians and Muslims in the period preceding and during al-Biqā'ī's day.⁷² In the 9th/15th c., Cairo was a religiously pluralistic context with an identifiable overlap between the different faiths and cultures. In her work on another Cairene scholar, Lejla Demiri comments on the interreligious milieu of Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī (d. 716/1316) one century earlier than that of al-Biqā'ī:

‘The 13th and 14th centuries emerge as a fruitful time for intellectual exchanges and theological interactions between Christians and Muslims. Although this was not a new phenomenon — rather, it was a centuries-old theological tradition — this period proved to be a rich and flourishing era for theological treatises reflecting upon the religious “other.”’⁷³

⁷¹ There is no indication in al-Biqā'ī's autobiographical work, *Izhār al-‘aṣr li-asrār ahl al-‘aṣr*, that he had used stories from the *Torah* and *Gospels* to supplement his Qur'ān reading. One can only speculate that reporting this in his autobiography could have brought more criticism his way.

⁷² These various forms of biblical engagement are the subject of chapter 2 (see below).

⁷³ Lejla Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo: Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭūfī's (d. 716/1316) Commentary on the Christian Scriptures* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 29.

Demiri goes on to say that this epoch is also marked by a fascination with and exploration of the other's faith and writings that becomes 'an integral facet of theological endeavour.'⁷⁴ Biqā'ī shared in this world as well, and could even be regarded as a product of it.

The following report from Ibn Taghrī-birdī captures the cultural ambience of al-Biqā'ī's context in late Mamlūk Cairo:

'On Sunday, the 14th of Rajab, corresponding to the Coptic Miṣrā 30, the Sultan ordered Shaykh 'Alī, the market inspector, to make the rounds of the streets of Cairo. The messengers preceded [the inspector] announcing to the men that on the next day public prayers for rain would take place in the Desert Plain, because the Nile had ceased to rise. On Monday, the 15th, the first of the [Coptic intercalary] days of al-Nasī, chief Qāḍī Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Munāwī went out to the Desert Plain, going on foot from his home among masses of students, the poor, and sufis, until he stopped between al-Malik al-Zāhir Barqūq's tomb and Succor Dome near the [Red] hill. There a pulpit had been set up for him. The Caliph and the rest of the qadīs were present, and they were among a vast throng of people of all classes. The Jews and the Christians also came, with their scriptures. The chief qāḍī led a large number of men in a quick two-bow prayer, and prayed to God, to make the Nile flow, while the men said "Amen" to his prayer, and the cries of the throngs, weeping, wailing, and supplicating God were loud. This continued from after sunrise to the end of the second hour of that day; then they went off, continuing their prayer and supplication to God.'⁷⁵

Ibn Taghrī-birdī presents a vivid picture of a shared life among Cairenes from different groups. While there *was* invested interests in the affairs of the religious 'other,' this final age of Mamlūk prestige also provoked less amicable degrees of interaction between the Muslim élite and communities of faith,

⁷⁴ Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible*, 29.

⁷⁵ Ibn Taghrībirdī; William Popper, ed. and trans., *History of Egypt*, 24 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 5:137-8.

from Muslim to non-Muslim to inter-communal as well.⁷⁶ Despite the animosity that still existed in certain quarters, the use of the Bible in al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr is a marked example of how the scriptures of the religious 'other' still could be read and used — especially when considering the quotient of Gospel material that appears in his commentary — amidst the shifting socio-political attitudes toward Jews and Christians.⁷⁷

Biqā'ī culled from several Jewish sources with the help of 'an outstanding Jew' (*fudalā' al-yahūd*) while working through the Hebrew Bible quotations in his tafsīr,⁷⁸ which further highlights the commingling of religious groups and the sharing of textual traditions that occurred in his context. This should be no surprise since Rabbanite Jews and Muslims had interacted as 'co-religionists' for centuries, 'engaged religiously in a shared worldview whose past (and therefore whose space) was inhabited by many of the same regal and prophetic personalities.'⁷⁹ A testimony to this 'hybridised space' is the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature.⁸⁰ With al-Biqā'ī's rejection of this body of texts in his commentary,⁸¹ his method of biblical engagement aligns him more closely with the scripturalism of

⁷⁶ This is evinced in a now well-documented dispute between Jewish factions and the Muslim *'ulamā'* in the year 870/1465, concerning the employment of *ahl al-dhimma* in Islamic administrative offices (William M. Brinner, 'A Fifteenth-century Karaite-Rabbanite Dispute in Cairo' in Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, Mark R. Cohen, Sasson Somekh and Sidney H. Griffith, eds., *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz-Verlag, 1999], 184-96). There is also a report on a dispute concerning the unauthorised building repairs to synagogues and churches under the Sulṭān Īnāl (ca. 1456) whereby the head of the Karaite community issued a petition to confirm mutual obligations between Muslims and dhimmīs (D.S. Richards, 'Arabic Documents from the Karaite Community in Cairo,' *JESHO* 15/1 [1972]: 120-1); see Ibn Taghrī-birdī; William Popper, ed., *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa'l-Qāhira*, 7:721-22).

⁷⁷ See n.4 above for an exact percentage of Gospel material quoted by al-Biqā'ī.

⁷⁸ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 11:343; see also, Saleh, 'Sublime in its Style, Exquisite in its Tenderness,' 333; idem, 'A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist,' 637-8.

⁷⁹ Fred Astren, 'Islamic Contexts of Medieval Karaism,' in Meira Polliack, ed., *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 158.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁸¹ For an argument on al-Biqā'ī's preference for the use of the Bible over the *qīṣaṣ* literature in his tafsīr, see Saleh, 'A Muslim Hebraist,' 632-3. In short, Saleh argues that the *qīṣaṣ* collections developed in tandem with, or as a result of the rejection of the biblical corpus as a corrupted text, which al-Biqā'ī did not fully agree with (see chapter 4 [4.1.2.] below for al-Biqā'ī's categories of alteration (*tabdīl*) and classes (*aqsām*) of biblical material).

the Karaites who ‘eschewed this Rabbanite-Muslim cultural and religious syncretism by rejecting aggadah, which laid out the narrative foundations for this shared conceptual space.’⁸² Furthermore, with several Arabic versions of the Hebrew Bible in hand — including one shared edition by both the Rabbanites (*al-rabbāniyyāna*) and the Karaites (*al-qarā’īna*)⁸³ — Biqā’ī did not discriminate against either group or their scriptural traditions when it came to quoting the Bible.

He also extended the same exegetical pluralism to the canonical Gospels, as will be demonstrated in chapter 6. However, there is no indication that he had, for example, a Coptic Christian informant for his Gospel materials; nothing is stated explicitly in this case. The most that can be said is that the Cairene cultural context afforded al-Biqā’ī opportunities to engage with various Jewish groups, and presumably some degree of those belonging to the Coptic Christian community. There are no explicit comments made by al-Biqā’ī in support of this, but it would seem to be a likely scenario given the cultural climate of his day.⁸⁴ Before moving on to chapter 2, the methodology for evaluating Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā’ī’s quotation of the Bible will be delineated in what follows.

1.4. Methodology

When examining the use of the Bible in the tafsīrs of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā’ī, there are two general contexts to bear in mind. The first is the qur’ānic context for a given passage. Biblical material is quoted while each author attempts to explain certain passages in the Qur’ān. This means that

⁸² Astern, ‘Islamic Contexts,’ 159; see also, Daniel Frank, *Search Scripture Well: Karaite Exegetes and the Origins of the Jewish Bible Commentary in the Islamic East* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). This is not to say, however, that Karaism abandoned Jewish scriptural traditions completely. When Scripture and Tradition agreed, both Karaites and Rabbanites could interpret the text ‘rationally and independently’ (Frank, *Search Scripture Well*, 256).

⁸³ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1102; chapter 3 below will demonstrate the degree to which different Arabic versions of the Bible were used in the tafsīrs of both authors, and chapter 5 specifically addresses the other versions of the Hebrew Bible al-Biqā’ī had access to while writing his commentary (5.4.2.).

⁸⁴ One concluding example is found in the combined efforts of a Jewish and Coptic Christian’s attempt to edit and update an edition of Sa’adiah Gaon’s *Tafsīr* in Ayyūbid Egypt ca. 639/1242 (Vollandt, ‘Flawed Biblical Translations into Arabic and How to Correct Them,’ 9). Albeit two centuries earlier, this exchange demonstrates the cultural climate in Cairo among Jews and Christians under Muslim rule.

something in the qur'ānic context prompted the authors to quote the Bible. Often, if not most times, this relates to a biblical figure, concept or narrative the Qur'ān evokes for its audience. While the reader should be aware of the qur'ānic context, it is not the primary concern here. That is to say, it is not important for the purposes of this dissertation to investigate the Qur'ān's milieu and the purpose behind its recollection of biblical narratives.⁸⁵ Nor is it necessary to pursue the interpretation of a given text in the Qur'ān to its fullest extent through the Islamic interpretive tradition; this would lead the present thesis beyond its scope as well. Therefore, what the Qur'ān says about the biblical story it evokes should remain only within the reader's view.

It is the second context, referred to throughout this dissertation as the 'tafsīr context,' which is of primary importance. How Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī bring together their biblical quotations with their exegesis of the Qur'ān is central for understanding how the Bible functions in their commentaries, whether tangentially or otherwise. An analysis of the tafsīr context will elucidate the connection between the biblical material quoted and its inclusion under certain qur'ānic verses. It should also be borne in mind that the aim of the following comparative study is on Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's use of the Arabic Bible, and is not, therefore, taking into account their interpretation of every qur'ānic idea that a text may present *if it is not related to their biblical quotations*. Thus the version(s) of the Arabic Bible used in each author's tafsīr may also be important to discover.

1.5. Concluding Remarks

The remainder of this dissertation is structured as follows: chapter 2 provides a historical survey of Muslim biblical scholarship, tracing the use of the Bible through various Islamic genres from the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833) to the polemics of al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285); chapter 3 analyses Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's biblical quotations alongside manuscripts for Arabic versions of the Bible that are

⁸⁵ For one of the more recent treatments on this topic, see Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, 6-53; also Angelika Neuwirth's forthcoming publication, *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019) will be an important contribution.

believed to have circulated within the milieu of both authors; chapter 4 is essentially the heart of the dissertation where the scriptural hermeneutics of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī are examined in detail as it relates to their biblical and qurʿānic exegesis; given the significance of *sūrat Āl ʿImrān* (Q 3:7) for both of their qurʿānic hermeneutics, the reception history of this verse will be elucidated using the works of Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767), al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144); chapters 5 and 6 are, therefore, case studies for observing Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī's hermeneutics in action. Respective to each chapter, biblical quotations from both the Torah, namely the creation account and Garden Narrative from Genesis 1-3, and the Gospels, namely the 'Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard' from Matthew 19:30-20:16, will be explored in the context of several different qurʿānic passages.

Chapter 2

A Historical Survey of Muslim Biblical Scholarship

In her work *Intertwined Worlds*, Hava Lazarus-Yafeh shed more light on the subfield of Muslim Bible exegesis than reflected previously within Islamic studies.⁸⁶ This particular niche finds expression in diverse genres of Muslim literature, from polemical treatises to historical writings and everything in between.⁸⁷ In this chapter, a number of topics will be addressed that pertain to both the deliberate and unwitting use of the Bible in Islam.

First, the traditional lines are drawn for Muslim biblical scholarship. This will include a discussion on the genres in which biblical materials primarily occur. While one of the main criteria for the inclusion of a genre in this chapter is based upon the *deliberate* use of both canonical and non-canonical source texts, other forms of biblical reference, such as indirect quotation through allusions and narrative parallels, will also be admitted. In the first section, moreover, a discussion will be included on the defining characteristics of two exegetical categories used for determining the legitimacy of biblical material, that of *tahrīf al-ma'nā* (corruption of the interpretation) and *tahrīf al-naṣṣ* (corruption of the text).⁸⁸ No small amount of ink has been spilt in an effort to distinguish these

⁸⁶ Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 47; also, McAuliffe, 'The Qur'ānic Context of Muslim Biblical Scholarship,' 141-58.

⁸⁷ For the most recent treatment on genres of Islamic literature, see Alexander Treiger, 'Mutual Influences and Borrowing,' in David Thomas, ed., *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations* (London: Routledge, 2018), 194-206. The reader should also bear in mind that the following survey is on Islamic, *not* Arabic, literary genres, e.g., poetry, belletristic prose and narrative, drama and modern critical work; for Arabic literature, see Roger Allen, *The Arabic Literary Heritage: the Development of its Genres and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁸⁸ In academic writing, *tahrīf al-naṣṣ* is used interchangeably with *tahrīf al-lafẓ* (corruption of the word), the former being more common; for an evaluation of these categories, see Martin Whittingham, 'Muslims and the Bible,' in David Thomas, ed., *Routledge Handbook on Christian-Muslim Relations* (London: Routledge, 2018), 269-78; idem, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'nawī* (corrupt interpretation) as a category for analysing Muslim views of the Bible: evidence from *Al-radd al-jamīl* and Ibn Khaldūn,' *IMCR* 22/2 (2011): 209-22; cf. Thomas F. Michel, S.J., ed. and trans., *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ* (New York: Caravan Books, 1984), 89; *tahrīf al-ma'nā* can also be expressed using the terms *tahrīf al-ma'nawī* or *tahrīf ma'ānī* (Whittingham, 'The value of *tahrīf ma'nawī*,' 209).

classifications, yet both remain an indispensable part of any conversation on Muslim biblical scholarship.⁸⁹ In the remaining sections, examples of biblical exegesis will be evaluated with the use of various texts from a selection of Islamic literary genres, as will be introduced below.

2.1. Biblical Quotation in the Islamic Tradition

Classically, Muslims used biblical material most extensively within two literary contexts: apologetic works and polemical treatises.⁹⁰ The difference between the two lies in their intended aim: either biblical proofs are gathered to mount an argument in order to defend a particular position (apologetics), for example, Muḥammad's prophethood, or the Bible is disparaged, and the central tenets of Judaism and Christianity that flow from it are refuted (polemics). The genre of apologetic literature, commonly referred to as *a'lām/dalā'il al-nubuwwah* (signs/proofs of prophethood), first developed in response to the Jewish and Christian dialogues surrounding the notion of 'false messiahs' and 'false prophets.'⁹¹ This forced Muslim scholars to demonstrate through their own religious discourse that 'signs' (*a'lām*), or 'proofs' (*dalā'il*), for Muḥammad's prophethood could be found in the

⁸⁹ See, for example, Haggai Mazuz, 'Ibn Ḥazm and Midrash,' *JSS LXII/1* (2017): 137-52; Khaleel Mohammed, *David in the Muslim Tradition: the Bathsheba Affair* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 1-30; Gabriel S. Reynolds, 'On the Qur'anic Accusation of Scriptural Falsification (*tahrif*) and Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic,' *JOAS* 130/2 (2010): 189-202; Jon Hoover, 'The Apologetic and Pastoral Intentions of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Polemic against Jews and Christians,' *MW* 100 (2010): 476-89; for pioneering works on the topic in western scholarship, see Ignaz Goldziher, 'Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitāb,' *ZDMG* 32 (1878): 341-87; Hartwig Hirschfeld, 'Mohammedan Criticism of the Bible,' *JQR* 13/2 (1901): 222-40; Ignazio Di Matteo, 'Il "tahrif" od alterazione della Bibbia secondo i Musulmani,' *B* 38 (1922): 64-111, 223-260; idem, 'Confutazione contro i Cristiani dello Zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm,' *RSO* 9 (1921-1923): 301-64; idem, 'Le pretese contraddizioni della S. Scrittura secondo Ibn Hazm,' *B* 39 (1923): 77-127; M. H. Ananikian, 'Tahrif or the Alteration of the Bible according to Moslems, Abbreviated and Translated from *Bessarione*, xxvi, 1922,' *MW* 14/1 (1924): 61-84; Jean-Marie Gaudeul and Robert Caspar, 'Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le *tahrif* (falsification) des Écritures,' *IC* vi (1980): 61-104.

⁹⁰ On these two parallel trajectories, see McAuliffe, 'Qur'anic Context,' 144-53; for a list of Islamic literary genres in which both canonical and non-canonical biblical material can most commonly be found, see Sabine Schmidtke, 'The Muslim reception of biblical materials: Ibn Qutayba and his *A'lām al-nubuwwa*,' *ICMR* 22/3 (2011): 250.

⁹¹ El-Badawi, *The Qur'an and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions*, 86; see also Sarah Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 25. It should be noted, as well, that the 'proofs genre' also included intra-confessional debate between Sunnī and Shī'a adherents. This occurred, for example, between Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925) and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/935), respectively, over their differing theological claims (see Tarif Khalidi, *Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, The Proofs of Prophecy: A parallel English-Arabic text* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2012], 9-23).

biblical corpus.⁹² Thus Muslim polemics grew out of, or rather, came about concurrently with this particular genre. The dialectical method employed in these theological and philosophical responses to the *critique du Prophète* often carried the title, *al-radd ‘alá l-naṣārā* (Refutation of the Christians), for the purpose of discrediting the Bible and refuting Christian dogma.⁹³

Other literary genres that engage with biblical concepts and reflect interaction with biblical sources are *sīrah al-nabawiyyah* (biography of Muḥammad), *ta’rīkh* (Islamic historical writings), *ḥadīth* (traditions of Muḥammad), *zuhd* (ascetic works) and *tafsīr* (Qur’ān commentary). The remaining chapters of this dissertation will analyse the use of the Bible in two tafsīrs from the Islamic tradition, which will entail a comparison with other commentaries in some instances; therefore the literary genre of Qur’ān commentary will not be surveyed at this time. Furthermore, the inclusion of examples from the vast corpus of ḥadīth will be minimal; biblical references appear less frequently in the ḥadīth literature.⁹⁴ Therefore only one parallel will be cited that corresponds directly with the Bible. So too will the *zuhd* literature be represented by only one biblical reference from the Gospel of

⁹² This genre appears under two common titles, *a’lām al-nubuwwah* (‘signs of prophethood’) and *dalā’il al-nubuwwah* (‘proofs of prophethood’), both of which refer to the same body of literature; the latter name will be used when referencing those works in general. Other works in this genre do occur with different titles, for example, Bishr b. al-Mu’tamir’s (d. 210/825) *al-Ḥujja fi ithbāt al-nabī* (Incontrovertible Evidence for the Confirmation of the Prophet) (Gabriel S. Reynolds, *Critique of Christian Origins: A parallel English-Arabic text* [Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2010], xlii).

⁹³ The earliest extant dialectical Muslim polemical treatise against Christianity is al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Raṣṣī’s (d. 246/860), *al-Radd ‘alá l-naṣārā* (*The Refutation of the Naṣārā*) (Imām Ḥanafī ‘Abdallah, ed., [Cairo: Dār al-Afāq al-‘Arabiyyah, 2000]); see also, Di Matteo’s introduction, Arabic edition and Italian translation, ‘Confutazione contro i Cristiana dello Zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm,’ 301-64.

⁹⁴ For the role of biblical texts in the formative period of ḥadīth literature and its transmission, see David Cook, ‘Christians and Christianity in *ḥadīth* works before 900’ in David Thomas et al, eds., *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History, 7 Vols.* (Leiden: Brill, 2009-2014), 1:73-82; see section 5.4. of this dissertation for a general discussion on the relationship between the Bible and ḥadīth, and section 5.5.3. for its relevance to Ibn Barrajān’s biblical interpretation; for a recent treatment on ḥadīth literature among other genres, see Stephen R. Burge, ‘The “*ḥadīth* literature”: What is it and where is it?’ *A 65* (2018): 64-83.

Matthew, which is ascribed to Jesus.⁹⁵ It is not uncommon for Muslim ascetic teachings to be put on the lips of Jesus in various literary contexts; to have actual biblical texts attributed to him, however, seldom happens in this genre.⁹⁶

A word on the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (stories of the prophets) literature is also in order. It is comparatively rare for the entries in the *qīṣaṣ* collections, and the 'historical' accounts of actions therein, to contain canonical material that is either translated directly or paraphrased from the Bible.⁹⁷ General contours of the canonical stories are present, more or less, in these narratives, but the contexts and substance of the dialogues have been reshaped for particular Muslim interests, and, more importantly, they rely heavily upon the 'processed version' of the biblical story, as it has been transmitted through other Islamic genres. In the 'Story of Adam and Eve,' for example, the description of Iblīs (Satan) marauding in the Garden comes from al-Ṭabārī's treatment of the subject in his *Tafsīr*, which, in turn, has found its way into his interpretation through the previous traditions found in Jewish midrash.⁹⁸

This is one of many examples that could be presented from the *qīṣaṣ* literature. For that reason, a survey of *qīṣaṣ* will not be included in this chapter. Thus a total of six genres will be evaluated below: *sīrah al-nabawīyyah*, *ta'riḫh*, *ḥadīth*, *zuhd*, *dalā'il al-nubuwwah* and *al-radd alā l-*

⁹⁵ For a general overview, see s.v., 'zuhd,' *EI2*; for a survey of Islamic *zuhd* material on Jesus, see Cook, 'Christians and Christianity in *ḥadīth*,' 75-7; idem, 'New Testament Citations in the Ḥadīth Literature and the Question of Early Gospel Translations into Arabic,' in Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark N. Swanson and David Thomas, eds., *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 194-5.

⁹⁶ Cf. the 303 selections of 'Jesus sayings' in Tarif Khalidi, ed. and trans., *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

⁹⁷ Cook, 'New Testament Citations in the Ḥadīth Literature,' 186; see also, William M. Brinner, trans. and ed., 'Arā'is al-Majālis fi Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā' or "Lives of the Prophets" as Recounted by Abū Ishāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Tha'labī (Leiden: Brill, 2002), i-xxxiii; Brinner confirms the same in his introduction, stating that the general consensus of Muslim authorities, as it relates to the composition of the *qīṣaṣ* literature, was that 'the biblical texts of Judaism and Christianity [were] altered or deleted by the followers of those religions, hence not to be considered by Muslims as true versions of divine revelation in their present forms' (xviii).

⁹⁸ Brinner, *Lives of the Prophets*, 41-57; the subject of Jewish and Christian textual affinities to the Islamic tradition will be discussed in chapter 5 when discussing the reception history of the 'Garden Narrative' from Genesis 3.

naṣārā. Before exploring these genres, however, the categories of *taḥrīf al-ma'nā* and *taḥrīf al-naṣṣ* will be discussed.

2.1.1. *Taḥrīf al-ma'nā* and *al-naṣṣ*

With the inception of Islam, the desire to elevate the veracity of the Qur'ān over the biblical record was borne primarily out of the need to validate the Islamic revelation and secure Muḥammad's prophetic place among the Abrahamic traditions. As time passed, however, Muslim scholars became more erudite in their exposition of their own doctrines, and that of Christianity.⁹⁹ In so doing, their methods for assessing authentic biblical material became more sophisticated. The development of particular categories to accomplish this task occurred most frequently within the literary arena of polemics. The aim of this polemic was two-fold: either to demonstrate that an otherwise sound biblical text has been misinterpreted or that the text itself has been corrupted/alterred (*taḥrīf/tabdīl*), thus providing logical reasons to reject Christian doctrine. In what follows, the focus will remain on the Muslim claims concerning biblical misinterpretation and textual corruption; to address all of the doctrinal differences, the arguments and counterarguments, would require a chapter of its own.

The seminal work on this topic by Ignaz Goldziher will be consulted as it never fails to be referenced, deservedly so, in the secondary literature on Muslim 'Polemik' against Jews and Christians.¹⁰⁰ Here Goldziher solidifies the discussion on the two main schools of thought: *taḥrīf al-ma'nā* and *taḥrīf al-naṣṣ*. Of the former category, he states that it is the milder one, which 'denies that that accusation refers to forgery, interpolation or tendentious reduction of the Bible, claiming, rather,

⁹⁹ A comparison of any given passage from Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Balkhī's (d. 150/767) *tafsīr* ('Abdallah Maḥmūd Shiḥāta, ed., *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 5 vols. [Beirut: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1979-89]) with, for example, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) Qur'ān commentary (Abū Ja'far b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī; 'Abdallah ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin Turkī, ed., *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, 26 vols., [Riyad: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub-Ma'ārif, 2003]) will demonstrate this point within the genre of *tafsīr* literature. The same argument can and will be made over the course of this dissertation as it relates to development of both exegesis and hermeneutics in the field of Muslim biblical scholarship.

¹⁰⁰ Goldziher, 'Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitāb,' 341-87.

special acknowledgement of the continuous chain of transmission (*tawātur*) these texts have for their authenticity.¹⁰¹ Thus, according to Goldziher, *taḥrīf al-maʿnā* refers to Jewish and Christian misinterpretation of the text, not deliberate corruption of the text itself. He further recognises that a claim has been made for the authenticity of the biblical text based on its continuous chain of transmission (*tawātur*).

Therefore the Bible, continues Goldziher, which the *ahl al-kitāb* ('Scripture people')¹⁰² transmitted, was held to be 'the same unfalsified one God revealed to their Prophet. Only the interpretation of the books had been twisted by them, in particular the passages that relate to a deeper and more correct interpretation of the mission of Muḥammad and the truth of Islam.'¹⁰³ The earliest identification of *taḥrīf al-maʿnā* in an Islamic polemical work is al-Qasīm b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī's *al-Radd ʿalā l-naṣārā*.¹⁰⁴

The accusation of *taḥrīf al-naṣṣ* is described by Goldziher as a view that 'rejects *tabdīl* (replacement/substitution) and relates it to the falsification of the text itself, with particular reference to [scriptural] citations from the *Torah* and the *Gospel* in the Qurʾān that cannot be found in the

¹⁰¹ Goldziher, 'Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitāb,' 364: 'Wir können zwei Hauptrichtungen unterscheiden. Die eine, mildere, bestreitet, dass die Beschuldigung sich auf eine Fälschung, Interpolierung oder tendenziöse Kürzung der Bibeltexte beziehe; behauptet vielmehr mit besonderer Würdigung der kontinuierlichen Traditionskette (تواتر), welche diese Texte für ihre Authentie haben.'

¹⁰² Sydney Griffith uses this fitting expression for *ahl al-kitāb* in his recent work *The Bible in Arabic* (19).

¹⁰³ Ibid., 365: 'sei ungefälscht derselbe, den Gott ihren Propheten offenbarte. Nur die Interpretation (تأويل) der Bücher sei durch sie verdreht worden, und namentlich seien die Stellen, welche eine tiefere und richtigere Interpretation auf die Sendung Muhammads und die Wahrheit des Islam beziehen müsse.'

¹⁰⁴ See s.v., 'taḥrīf,' *EL2*; for a recent critical examination of the distinctions between *taḥrīf al-naṣṣ* and *al-maʿnā* in al-Rassī's treatise, see Ryan Schaffner, *The Bible through a Qurʾānic Filter: Scripture Falsification (Taḥrīf) in 8th-9th Century Muslim Disputational Literature* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2018 forthcoming). A late medieval author, who is also one of the two main subjects under study here, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480), falls into the *taḥrīf al-maʿnā* camp, in part. While al-Biqāʿī does concede that the biblical text may have undergone minimal, textual alteration (*tabdīl*), he does align himself with a fourth designation in his paradigm, which specifies that there is only alteration or modification (*taghyīr*) in meaning (*fi'l-maʿnā*), not in the actual words (*lā fi'l-alfāz*) (Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 125); this will be discussed further in section 4.2.1.2. of this dissertation.

present text.¹⁰⁵ While Goldziher uses Ibn Ḥazm as the exemplar for *tahrīf al-naṣṣ*, the latter's scathing indictment of the biblical text as corrupted beyond recognition creates a false dichotomy, in the present author's view, between the previous category of *tahrīf al-ma'nā* and this one; that is, many authors hold to varying levels of *tahrīf al-naṣṣ* for a given biblical text without condemning the entirety of the book.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Goldziher's delineation of these two categories serve as the foundation for any discussion on *tahrīf* in the secondary literature that follows after him. Thus it is valuable still for an assessment of this hermeneutical doctrine in the Islamic tradition.

2.1.2. *Sīrah al-nabawīyyah* Literature and the Bible

The first genre to be evaluated is the *sīrah al-nabawīyyah*, or biography of the prophet, literature.¹⁰⁷ The *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) survived (in part) in the recension of Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), represents one of the earliest prose works in the Arabic language.¹⁰⁸ This biography contains allusions and parallels from the Old Testament and Gospels, as well as one direct quotation from the canonical

¹⁰⁵ Goldziher, 'Über muhammedanische Polemik,' 365: 'Eine andere Richtung der auch Ibn Ḥazm angehört verwirft diese Auffassung des *تبدیل* und bezieht es unter besonderem Hinweis auf Citate des Korans aus dem Taurāt und Inǧīl, welche sich in dem jetzigen Texte nicht vorfinden, auf die Fälschung des Textes selbst.'

¹⁰⁶ Adang, 'Medieval Muslim Polemics,' 152; as noted above, Biqāfī represents one such author in the Islamic tradition.

¹⁰⁷ The Arabic edition consulted here is Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2001); for an English translation, see Alfred Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); for an historical-critical study on the *Sīrah* literature, see Harold Motzki, ed., *The Biography of Muhammad: the Issue of Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); on methodology and transmission history of the *sīrah*, see Gregor Schoeler, *The Biography of Muhammad: Nature and Authenticity* (London: Routledge, 2010); idem, Uwe Vagelpohl, trans., and James E. Montgomery, ed., *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006); Andrew Rippin, 'Literary analysis of *Qur'ān*, *tafsīr* and *Sīra*: the methodologies of John Wansbrough,' in Richard C. Martin, ed., *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2003), 151-63; and Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the beginnings of Islamic historical writing* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998), 1-31.

¹⁰⁸ Alfred Guillaume, 'The Version of the Gospels Used in Medina circa 700 A. D.,' *AA* 15 (1950): 289; cf. the recent publication, Ma'mar b. Rashīd (d. 153/770); Sean W. Anthony, trans., *The Expeditions: An Early Biography of Muḥammad* (New York: New York University Press, 2015). Anthony notes that this is one of the oldest extant biographies of Muḥammad, surviving in the recension of 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām (d. 211/827) (xv).

Gospel of John.¹⁰⁹ This Johannine text is one of the most cited in Islam, as it provides an apologetic foundation for subsequent Muslim scholars to build upon in various other literary genres.¹¹⁰ The following list of examples is not exhaustive, but fairly represents the kind of overlapping in narrative discourse that occurred as authors in the Islamic tradition composed their own biographical works.

2.1.2.1. Old Testament Parallels and Allusions in the *Sīrah*

At the outset of the *Sīrah*, the story of Shiqq and Saṭīḥ, the two soothsayers (*qiṣṣat Shiqq wa-Saṭīḥ al-kāhinīna*) closely resembles the biblical episode from Daniel 2:1-45.¹¹¹ Here in the *Sīrah*, the king of Yaman, Rabī‘a b. Naṣr, is struck with a terrifying vision that continued to cause him much anxiety. In Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar also has dreams that trouble his spirit. Both kings summon four groups to interpret his dream, and in both stories, the crowd of magicians, sorcerers, enchanters and astrologers — Chaldeans in the biblical account — all request that the king divulge his dream; and in both stories the king refuses in order to preserve the authenticity of their interpretation. Alas the crowds are unable to assist the king in either account, and they send for Shiqq and Saṭīḥ in the *Sīrah*, and Daniel in the biblical story.

Shiqq, Saṭīḥ and Daniel rightly spell out and interpret their kings’ dreams. The main theological difference between the two stories is that in the *Sīrah*, an apostle (*rasul mursal*), that is, Muḥammad, will end that kingdom and establish a dominion of his own, one characterised by truth and justice.¹¹² In Daniel, the God of Heaven, rather than an apostle, establishes an indestructible kingdom for His people. The story of Shiqq and Saṭīḥ, the soothsayers, and the narrative from Daniel 2

¹⁰⁹ On this topic, see Suleiman A. Mourad, ‘Christians and Christianity in the *Sīra* of Muḥammad’ in David Thomas et al, eds., *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, 7 Vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2009-2014), 1:57-71.

¹¹⁰ For the similarity between the *Sīrah* and Gospel materials, see Ignaz Goldziher; C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, trans., *Muslim Studies (Muhammadanische Studien)*, 2 vols. (Albany: State University of New York, 1971), 2:346-62.

¹¹¹ Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 11-13; cf. Daniel 2:1ff. The version of the Bible consulted throughout this dissertation is Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); any deviation from this version will be noted.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 13.

is one of the most explicit parallels to note between the *Sīrah* and the Old Testament. There are, however, other biblical allusions to examine.

The next parallel is found in the story of Baḥīrā.¹¹³ In this account, Muḥammad and his uncle, Abū Ṭālib, pass by a Christian monk named Baḥīrā while traveling with their caravan. Baḥīrā is said to possess ‘knowledge of the Christians’ (*wa-kāna illayhi ‘ilm ahl al-naṣarāniyyah*), which he acquired from a book in his cell, handed down from generation to generation.¹¹⁴ Baḥīrā then witnesses one of the miracles surrounding the boyhood of Muḥammad; the trees bend their branches to shade him.¹¹⁵ Upon seeing this, Baḥīrā summons Abū Ṭālib and his people to feast with him, and here is where the parallel begins.

In this episode, Muḥammad is left out by the tree while the rest of the caravan joins Baḥīrā for the feast. The story of David in 1 Samuel 16 mirrors this narrative.¹¹⁶ In the biblical account, David’s father, Jesse, takes all of his other sons to Samuel for what they believe to be a sacrifice of some kind; Samuel knows, however, it is to anoint a new king. David stays back, for he is the youngest, just as Muḥammad remained behind from the feast ‘on account of his extreme youth’ (*li-ḥadāthat sinnihī*).¹¹⁷ Samuel examines Jesse’s sons, waiting for God to show him who to anoint; Baḥīrā, like Samuel, looks at

¹¹³ Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 85-7; see Barbara Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bahira: Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 11-60; also, S. Gero, ‘The Legend of the Monk Baḥīrā: the Cult of the Cross and Iconoclasm,’ in P. Canivet and J.P. Rey-Cocquais, eds., *La Syrie de Byzance à l’Islam* (Damascus, 1992), 45-57; Sydney Griffith, ‘Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥīrā: Reflections on a Syriac and Arabic Text from Early Abbasid Times,’ *OC* 79 (1995): 146-74.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹¹⁵ As will be the case when looking at the Gospel parallels, here Baḥīrā’s account from the *Sīrah* provides details about Muḥammad that become an apologetic in the genre of *dalā’il al-nubuwwah* (Irfan Shahīd, ‘Islam and *Oriens Christianus*: Makka 610-622 AD,’ in Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark N. Swanson and David Thomas, eds., *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* [Leiden: Brill, 2006], 12).

¹¹⁶ For a thorough investigation of ‘Davidic borrowings’ in the *sīrah* and ḥadīth literature, see Ze’ev Maghen, ‘Davidic Motifs in the Biography of Muhammad,’ *JSAI* 35 (2008): 91-139; *idem*, ‘Intertwined Triangles: Remarks on the Relationship between Two Prophetic Scandals,’ *JSAI* 33 (2007): 17-92.

¹¹⁷ Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 86.

all the people, searching for ‘the mark which he knew and found in his Christian books.’¹¹⁸ Samuel and Baḥīrā both inquire with the group concerning who might be missing, and both crowds confirm that the youngest stayed behind.¹¹⁹ God speaks to Samuel upon David’s arrival in order for the boy to be anointed as the next king; and after Baḥīrā examines Muḥammad, he finds the mark, ‘the seal of prophethood’ between his shoulders, in the exact place described in his books.¹²⁰

The narrative parallelism observed between these two biblical accounts and the *Sīrah* demonstrates that Ibn Ishāq’s biography, as a product of the late 2nd/8th c. — surviving in the recension of Ibn Hishām (3rd/9th c.) — continued to display biblical ‘echoes’ similar to that observed in the Qur’ān.¹²¹ Examples in the *Sīrah* of biblical allusions, parallels and a direct quotation from the Gospel literature will be presented in the following section.

2.1.2.2. Gospel Parallels, Allusions and Quotations in the *Sīrah*

The first identifiable allusion from the Gospels that appears in the *Sīrah* occurs in the story of the rebuilding of the Ka’bah.¹²² During the renovation, Layth b. Abū Sulaym claims that, forty years before Muḥammad’s mission, the people of Quraysh found a stone in the Ka’bah with the following inscription: ‘He that sows good, shall reap joy; he that sows evil, shall reap sorrow; can you do evil and be rewarded with good? No, as grapes cannot be gathered from thorns.’¹²³ In the Matthean text, the

¹¹⁸ Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 86; cf. 1 Samuel 16:6-10.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 86; cf. 1 Samuel 16:11.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 86: ‘*thumma nazara ilā zahrihi fa-ra’a khātam al-nubūwah bayna katifihi alā mawdī’ihi min šifatihi allatī ‘indahū*’; cf. 1 Samuel 16:12-13.

¹²¹ Cf. the story of Adam and Eve (Gen. 1:26-3:24 / Q 2:30-9, 11:10-25, 17:61-5, 20:115-24); the story of Noah (Gen. 6:8-7:24 / Q 11:25-48, 71:1-28); the story of Abraham (Gen. 15:1-16:16, 18:1-15, 22:1-19 / Q 2:122-41, 6:74-83, 37:83-113, 51:24-36); the story of Joseph (Gen. 37:1-46:7 / Q 12:1-101); the story of Moses (Ex. 6:28-16:36, 32:1-35; Num. 13:1-14:12 / Q 2:51-73, 5:20-6, 7:103-62); the story of David (1 Samuel 17:1-58; 2 Samuel 11:1-12:15 / Q 2:249-51, 38:21-4); the story of Solomon (1 Kings 10:1-29 / Q 27:15-44); the story of Jonah (Jonah 1:1-4:11 / Q 10:1-109).

¹²² Ibid., 90-3.

¹²³ Ibid., 92: ‘<<man yazra’ khayr yaḥšid ghibṭah wa-man yazra’ sharr yaḥšid nadāmah ta’malūna l-sayīāt ajal kamā lā yujtanā mina l-shawk al-‘inab>>.’

most explicit reference falls at the beginning, ‘Are grapes gathered from thorns or figs from thistles?’ This corresponds with the final line of the quotation from the *Sīrah*, ‘grapes cannot be gathered from thorns.’

Some of the other parallels are: *Sīrah* (sows good/reaps joy), Matthew 7:17 (good tree/bears good fruit); *Sīrah* (sows evil/reaps sorrow), Matthew 7:17 (bad tree/bears bad fruit); *Sīrah* (do evil/rewarded with good?), Matthew 7:18 (a good tree cannot bear bad fruit/a bad tree cannot bear good fruit). The symmetry here between the structure of the two texts suggests that a biblical maxim for ‘reaping what one sows’ became an Islamic truism in this literary context. More could be said about the parallels and allusions to the Gospel literature, but for now, it will simply be noted below.¹²⁴ The next Gospel text to examine appears as a direct quotation from the Gospel of John.

An extended citation from John 15:23-16:1 occurs in a passage devoted to the explication of a term (*ṣifah*) for Muḥammad, using the Gospel of John as the buttress.¹²⁵ Alfred Guillaume analysed this quotation from a linguistic perspective, which involved an evaluation of Aramaic and Syriac source texts with corresponding Latin versions.¹²⁶ While it is a complete quotation, capturing all of the linguistic elements of the passage, the translation is, more or less, an Islamicised version.¹²⁷ The significance of this text in the *Sīrah*, however, warrants a full translation here:

“Whosoever hates me, hates the Lord. And if I had not done works in their presence which none other before me did, they would not have had sin; but from now they are puffed up with pride and think that they will overcome me and also the Lord. But the word that concerns the law (*nāmūs*) must be fulfilled, ‘They hate me without a cause,’

¹²⁴ Cf. Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 120 and Matt. 14:14-21 (Muḥammad feeds forty men with a morsel of meat / Jesus’ feeding of the multitudes with two fish and five loaves); *Sīrah*, 182 and John 4:14 (Muḥammad recites, ‘He that drinks from it shall never thirst’ [*<<man shariba minhu lā yaẓma’ abadan>>*] / Jesus says, ‘but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty’).

¹²⁵ Ibid., *Sīrah*, 109.

¹²⁶ Guillaume, ‘The Versions of the Gospels,’ 289-96.

¹²⁷ See Sidney Griffith, ‘Arguing from Scripture: the Bible in the Christian/Muslim Encounter in the Middle Ages,’ in Thomas Heffernan and Thomas Burman, eds., *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the religiously plural worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 29-58; on the paraclete, see 36-45.

that is, without reason. But when the *menahhemana* has come whom God will send to you from the Lord's presence, and the spirit of truth which will have gone forth from the Lord's presence, he (shall bear) witness of me, and you also, because you have been with me from the beginning, I have spoken to you about this, that you should not be in doubt"; the *menahhemana* (God bless and preserve him!) in Syriac is Muḥammad; in Greek he is *Paraclete*.¹²⁸

The entire purpose of this quotation from John's Gospel is to support the concluding remark on the meaning of the Syriac term, *menahhemana*. This word, according to the biographer, means 'Muḥammad' in Syriac; it is then equated with the Greek 'Paraclete' (παράκλητος/*paraklētos*) in John 15:26.¹²⁹ Thus the promise to send the *paraklētos* is interpreted prophetically as Muḥammad's coming. With that interpretation in hand, moreover, any reference to the 'Paraclete' in the New Testament corpus then becomes filtered through the same hermeneutical lens. This understanding of the Johannine quotation will provide fertile ground for subsequent Muslim biblical exegetes to develop their arguments.¹³⁰

The genre of *ta'rikh* (Islamic historical writing) will be examined in the following section. Here the discussion focuses on the work of one Muslim historian: Aḥmad b. Ya'qūb al-Ya'qūbī's (d. 292/905)

¹²⁸ Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 109: 'man abghaḍanī fa-qad abghaḍa l-rabb wa-lawlā annī ṣana'tu bi-ḥaḍratihim ṣanā'ī lam yaṣna'hā aḥad qablī mā kānat lahum khaṭī'ah wa-lakin mina l-ān baṭirū wa-ḡannū annahum ya'zūnanī wa-ayḍan li'l-rabb wa-lakin lā budda min an tatimma l-kalimah illatī fi'l-nāmūs annahum abghaḍūnī majānan ay bāṭilan fa-law qad jā'a <<l-menahhemana>> hādhā lladhī yarsaluhu Allāh illaykum min 'inda l-rabb wa-rūḥ al-quḍus hādhā lladhī min 'inda l-rabb kharaja fa-huwa shahīd 'alā wa-antum ayḍan li-annakum qadīm kuntum ma'ī fi hādhā qultu li-kum li-kaymā lā tashukkū wa <<l-menahhemana>> bi'l-suryāniyyat Muḥammad wa-huwa bi'l-rūmiyyat <<al-baraqliṭis>>.'

¹²⁹ The version of the Greek New Testament consulted throughout this dissertation is Dirk Jongkind and Peter Williams, eds., *The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House Cambridge* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017).

¹³⁰ See, for example, Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Ṣanhājī al-Qarāfī's (d. 684/1285) exposition on Muḥammad as the 'Paraclete' (*fāraqlīṭ*) in his polemical treatise, *Splendid Replies to Insolent Questions* (Bakr Zakī 'Awaḍ, ed., 2nd ed., *al-Ajwiba l-fākhira 'an al-as'ila l-fājira* [Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1987], 423-8) (hereafter referred to as the *Ajwiba*); this text will be explored further below in section 2.1.8 on Muslim polemics.

Ta'riḫh.¹³¹ Al-Ya'qūbī's history stands as an early work in the Islamic tradition that brings together biblical sources *and* qur'ānic accounts into one, comprehensive narrative.¹³²

2.1.3. *Ta'riḫh* Literature and the Bible

Al-Ya'qūbī's *Ta'riḫh* contains biblical 'history' from both canonical and non-canonical sources.¹³³ When recounting the primordial story of Adam and Eve from Genesis, the *Ta'riḫh* reflects a clear affinity with the Syriac *Book of the Cave of Treasures*.¹³⁴ *Cave of Treasures*, moreover, comes across as a carefully structured biblical exposition with a clear theological purpose — serving to establish a direct link between Adam and Christ — that reflects an underlying Christian character.¹³⁵ As he adopts this text, however, al-Ya'qūbī omits many of the Christian typologies, replacing them with more Islamic ones.¹³⁶

¹³¹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'riḫh al-Ya'qūbī*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2010), hereafter cited as '*Ta'riḫh*'; see also, M. TH. Houtsma, ed., *Ibn-Wādhih qui dicitur Al-Ja'qubī: Historiæ*, 2 Vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1883).

¹³² See s.v., 'Al-Ya'qūbī,' *CMR*.

¹³³ Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 38.

¹³⁴ For an English translation of the *Cave of Treasures*, see Alexander Toepel, 'The Cave of Treasures: a new translation and introduction,' in Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila and Alexander Panayotov (eds.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume One* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2013), 540-84; the story of Adam and Eve from the *Cave of Treasures* will be examined in detail in chapter 5, section 5.3 of this dissertation; for the most recent critical study, see Sergey Minov, 'Date and Provenance of the *Cave of Treasures*: A Reappraisal' *HG* 20/1 (2016): 129-229; also, Clemens Leonhard, 'Observations on the Date of the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*,' in P.M. Michèle Daviau, John William Wevers and Michael Weigle, eds., *The World of the Aramaeans III: Studies in Language and Literature in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 255-93; a similar argument is presented by Toepel in his *Die Adam- und Seth Legenden im Syrischen Buch der Schatzhöhle* (CSCO 618; Subsidia 119; Louvain: Peeters, 2006), 22-3; Su-Min Ri, 'La Caverne des Trésors: Problèmes d'analyse littéraire,' in Hans J.W. Drijvers, Rene Lavenant, Corrie Molenberg and Gerrit Reinink, eds., *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984* (OCA 224; Rome: Pontifical Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), 183-90.

¹³⁵ Toepel, 'Cave,' 531-6.

¹³⁶ Adang, *Muslim Writers*, 117.

The story of Adam and Eve from the *Ta'rikh* will be examined briefly in what follows.¹³⁷ The *Ta'rikh* is one of the earliest Islamic histories that employs the four canonical Gospels as its main source for the biography of Jesus.¹³⁸ Therefore, the second section will be devoted to the Gospel material that appears in the *Ta'rikh*. The stories recounted in al-Ya'qūbī's work, moreover, will become the regular stock in trade of later authors in various genres.¹³⁹ Although al-Ya'qūbī uses passages from all four Gospels, only those from the Gospels of Matthew and John will be presented.

2.1.3.1. Al-Ya'qūbī's Adam and Eve

The story of Adam and Eve in the *Ta'rikh* of al-Ya'qūbī exemplifies the quotation of a non-canonical, or apocryphal, narrative loosely based on the biblical account. The author retains one part of the canonical story found in the *Cave of Treasures*, however, with his retelling of this event: Adam and Eve eat the fruit of the tree which reveals their nakedness to each other, causing them to hide and cover.¹⁴⁰ Other literary features include the three hours Adam and Eve spent on the earth before entering the garden, and the three hours dwelling 'in bliss and honour' while in the garden; these designations of time correspond directly with the *Cave of Treasures*.¹⁴¹

That Adam and Eve dwelt in a garden located on the earth is a foreign concept to Islamic cosmology for this event. According to Muslim paradisiacal tradition, the garden, or 'paradise,' does

¹³⁷ For the version of the *Cave of Treasures* consulted here, see Alexander Toepel, 'The Cave of Treasures: a new translation and introduction,' in Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila and Alexander Panayotov, eds., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume One* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2013), 540-84 (*Cave of Treasures* 2:1-5:17); Toepel's translation is based on the Eastern Iraqi manuscript (c. 1709 CE) British Museum Codex Add. 25875, a version that merges the Eastern and Western Syriac recensions of the text ('Cave,' 534); see the seminal work by Su-Min Ri, *La Caverne des Trésors: Les Deux Recensions Syriaques* (Louvain: Peeters, 1987) for other Syriac recensions Toepel consults.

¹³⁸ See s.v., 'Al-Ya'qūbī,' *CMR*.

¹³⁹ See, for example, the 'story of Iblīs' in Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī's (d. 311/923) *Tafsīr* ('Abdallah b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin Turkī (ed.), *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, 26 vols. [Riyad: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub Ma'ārif, 2003], 1:561-2).

¹⁴⁰ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, 1:5; cf. *Cave of Treasures* 4:18-20 (Toepel, *Cave*, 543).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1:5; cf. *Cave of Treasures* 5:1 (Toepel, *Cave*, 543).

not exist in a spatially identical realm as the earth since Adam and Eve are expelled *to* the earth *from* paradise.¹⁴² This suggests that the biblical, albeit apocryphal, story becomes admitted into al-Ya‘qūbī’s Islamic historical paradigm for this primeval episode. Further, when the Qur’ān remains silent, Ya‘qūbī has no problem filling in the details with biblical material he deems authoritative. The story of Jesus from the *Ta‘rīkh* will be explored in what follows.

2.1.3.2. Al-Ya‘qūbī’s Jesus

Al-Ya‘qūbī begins his historical narrative on Jesus by collecting all of the names of the disciples (*al-ḥawāriyyūna*) together from the four Gospels.¹⁴³ He then cites the opening of Matthew 1:1, “Then Matthew says in the Gospel, “in the genealogy of the Messiah, Jesus son of David, son of Abraham.””¹⁴⁴ In this context, Ya‘qūbī also introduces king Herod (*Hirūdus*) from Matthew 2:1; this initiates a rather lengthy set of biblical citations that covers the first half of Matthew in only six pages of text.¹⁴⁵ Thus al-Ya‘qūbī’s dependence on the biblical record in Matthew demonstrates that he believes the text to be authoritative enough to allow it to shape his own history of qur’ānic figures and events.

¹⁴² See *s.v.*, ‘paradise,’ *EQ*; this concept, however, finds root in the writings of not a few Jewish and Christian authors, spanning the first century to sixteenth century AD; see Alessandro Scafi, ‘Epilogue: a heaven on earth’ in Markus Bockmuehl and Guy G. Stroumsa, eds., *Paradise in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Views* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 210-20; here Scafi provides concise summaries of the authors’ contributions to this volume, as well as his own conclusions. For a discussion on Jewish, Christian and Muslim conceptions of paradise and its location, see Reynolds, *The Qur’an and Its Biblical Subtext*, 59-64.

¹⁴³ Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta‘rīkh*, 1:68; for a French translation of all four Gospels from the *Ta‘rīkh*, see André Ferré, ‘L’historien al-Ya‘qūbī et Les Evangiles,’ *IC* 3 (1977): 65-83.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:69: ‘*fa-ammā Mattā fa-innahu qāla fī l-injīl fī nasib al-masī‘ al-Īsū‘a ibn Dāwud ibn Ibrāhīm.*’

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:69-75: Matthew 2:1, 10-11, 13-14, 22-23, 3:13-15, 4:1-7, 10, 5:1-3, 6, 13-14, 21-22, 25, 27-9, 32, 34-5, 39-44, 46, 6:1, 3, 5-6, 9-13, 16-20, 7:4, 6-7, 13-18, 24-27, 14:3-5, 8, 10-13; cf. Accad, *Tables*, 1:82-91 and 2:207-11.

Ya'qūbī also quotes a passage that contains some of the most robust Christology in the New Testament, namely the Johannine 'Prologue' (John 1:1-18; omits v.3).¹⁴⁶ Granted, he does not interpret the text as one in the Christian tradition, but its presence in al-Ya'qūbī's historical account endows the biblical text with a certain amount of authority, as will be shown below. The exegetical symbols employed by Martin Accad in his *Tables* are worth using here.¹⁴⁷ Accad's first symbol '%' signifies that 'the Injīl is an authoritative document, part of the revealed books'; the second symbol '=' signifies 'Islamization of the Gospel text (reinterpretation through translation).'¹⁴⁸ When these two symbols are applied to al-Ya'qūbī's quotation of John 1:1-9, according to Accad it passes as an authoritative document:

'Before everything was the word, and the word was with God, and God was the word. He was before all things. In him there was life, and the life was the light of men; that light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overtaken it. There was a man sent by God, and he was called John. He came as witness in order to bear witness about the light so that people might be led to believe on account of him. He was not the light, because the true light had not yet shined, but it was coming out into the world.'¹⁴⁹

Ya'qūbī retains *Yūḥannā* for the name 'John' rather than using *Yaḥyā*, a small matter, but one that demonstrates the integrity he maintains for the text.¹⁵⁰ The inclusion of John 1:1-9 also conveys al-

¹⁴⁶ See John Chrysostom; Philip Schaff, trans. and ed., *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom: Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 1st series, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 10-54; Thomas Aquinas; Fr. Fabian L. Archer, O.P., trans., *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 2 vols. (Lander: The Aquinas Institute, 2013), 1:11-84; John Calvin; William Pringle, trans. and ed., *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 1:25-55; Ernst Haenchen, *John 1: Hermeneia, A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984), 101-40.

¹⁴⁷ Accad, *Tables*, 1:69.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:69; cf. 4:461-2.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, 1:75 (the translation is my own): '*qabla kull shay' kānat al-kalimah wa-tilka l-kalimah 'inda Allāh wa-Allāh kāna huwa l-kalimah hādhihi kānat qabla kull shay' kāna bihā kānat al-ḥayāh wa'l-ḥayāh huwa nūr al-bashr wa-dhālika l-dīyā' fī'l-ḥalām [wa'l-ḥalām] lam yadrakuhu [kāna ansān] kāna arsaluhu Allāh asmuhu Yūḥannā atā li'l-shahādat li-yashhadu 'alā l-nūr li-yahtadī l-nās wa-yu'minū 'alā yadhi wa-lam yakun huwa l-nūr fa-inna nūr al-ḥaqq lam yazul yuḍīru wa-yabīnu fī'l-'ālam.*'

¹⁵⁰ In the Qur'ān, the name 'John' is always rendered *Yaḥyā* (cf. Q 3:39, 6:85, 19:7, 12, 21:90); on the name 'Yaḥyā,' see Arthur Jeffrey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 290; see also s.v., 'Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā', *EL2*.

Ya‘qūbī’s sense of commitment to the presentation of a full Gospel narrative for the life of Jesus. As theologically — and philosophically — dense as this part of the prologue is, in terms of the Christian tradition, it is especially surprising to find it transmitted so well. The remaining verses of the prologue (John 1:10-18) are, according to Accad, an islamized translation, with the exception of 1:11 — ‘He came to his own (people), but his own (people) did not receive him’ (*ilā khāṣṣatihi atā wa-khāṣṣatuhu lam taqbalhu*).¹⁵¹ Those remaining verses, therefore, will be left aside. The literary genre of ḥadīth literature will be addressed next.

2.1.4. *Ḥadīth* Literature and the Bible

The biblical references that crop up in the canonical ḥadīth collections always present in a paraphrased form, seldom, if ever, in direct quotations attributed to biblical sources. Jewish referents appear by far the most in the ḥadīth literature, and Christians, less so.¹⁵² Sometimes, however, both groups appear together in an account used for parabolic teaching. One of the best examples of this kind of ‘reworking’ involves a close paraphrase of Matthew 20:1-16 in the *ḥadīth al-ijārah* (‘ḥadīth of the wage’):

‘The Messenger of God said, “Your end will only be like those communities who passed before you, like between the afternoon and the sunset. A parable of you and the Jews and the Christians is that of a man who hired workers and said, ‘Who will work for me until the middle of the day for a *qīrāt*?’ So the Jews worked until the middle of the day for a *qīrāt*. Then he said, ‘Who will work from the middle of the day till the late afternoon for two *qīrāts*?’ And the Christians worked. Then he said, ‘Who will work from the late afternoon prayers until the sunset for four *qīrāts*? But you who work from late afternoon prayers until the sunset for four *qīrāts*, are only receiving the wage double.’ So the Jews and the Christians were angered, and said ‘We have worked

¹⁵¹ The Arabic translation used by al-Ya‘qūbī for ‘his own (people)’ (*khāṣṣatuhu*) follows the Greek closely for ‘one’s own’ / ‘one’s own people or household’ (ἰδία/*idia* / ἰδιοὶ αὐτὸν/*idioi auton*). However, in the Syriac Peshittā, the cognate for the Greek ἰδία/ἰδιοὶ αὐτὸν is ܕܠܝܗ/*w-dileh*, meaning ‘his own’; a semantic correlation between Syriac *dileh* and Arabic *khāṣṣah* (E. Manna, *Chaldean-Arabic Dictionary* [Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2007], 147).s

¹⁵² Cook, ‘Christians and Christianity in *ḥadīth*,’ 80; cf., s.v., ‘Naṣārā, Naṣrānī’ with s.v., ‘Yahūd, Yahūdī,’ A.J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition musulmane. Les six livres, le Musnad d’al-Dārimī, le Muwaṭṭa’ de Mālik, le Musnad de Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Leiden: Brill, 1936).

more and received less! He said, 'Have I refused any of your rightful due?' They said, 'No.' He said, 'This is my generosity given to whom I wish.'¹⁵³

The similarity in structure and content of this ḥadīth with the Matthean text is undeniable. Only in this passage, there is no ascription to Jesus, and the 'labourers' are now Jews, Christians and Muslims. Moreover, the eschatological tone is more pronounced in this version compared with the biblical account.¹⁵⁴ This suggests some influence from the eschatological motifs found in the later layers of the qur'ānic corpus.¹⁵⁵

The shift in character to Jews, Christians and Muslims communicates a clear Islamic agenda for this passage. The two groups, Jews and Christians, comprise the naysaying and ungrateful crowd. Whether this reflects the proper religious and political context of the ḥadīths composition can never be known definitively. However, if these sayings are believed to reflect the development of Islamic maxims, albeit gleaned from the parables and wisdom literature of previous traditions, then the ḥadīth ought to be regarded as a window through which to look at the world of early Muslim discourse and its compositional milieu. In this vein, the next genre to consult is comprised of a body of wisdom and ascetic literature, known as *zuhd*, which, as it will be shown, reveals similar characteristics to the method of biblical quotation in the ḥadīth.

2.1.5. *Zuhd* Literature and the Bible

Early Islamic piety drew deeply from the biblical well of ascetic teachings, as Muslims searched for texts to supplement the ethical maxims of the Qur'ān. The figure of Jesus, in particular, became a

¹⁵³ Cook, 'Christians and Christianity in *ḥadīth*,' 81; the significance of this ḥadīth for both Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's interpretation of this Matthean passage will be explored fully in chapter 6. The translation is based on Cook's with minor deviations; see Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī; Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī; Khalīl Ma'mūn Shihā, eds., *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 2010), 205 (no. 557), 582-3 (nos. 2268-9, 2271), 887-8 (no. 3459).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁵⁵ See Qur'ān 77-92, 95-6, 99-104, 107 and 111; Nicolai Sinai, 'The Eschatological Kerygma of the Early Qur'an,' in Hagit Amirav, Emmanouela Grypeou and Guy Stroumsa, eds., *Apocalypticism and Eschatology in Late Antiquity: Encounters in the Abrahamic Religions, 6th-8th Centuries* (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 219-66.

standard biblical ‘sage’ espousing Islamic truisms in the *zuhd* literature.¹⁵⁶ While these sayings generally consist of paraphrased qur’ānic verse, some reflect a clear dependence on the Bible. In the following citation, no ascription is given to the author. However, the text is a remarkable example of the transmission of canonical biblical material.

In a work of ‘edifying tales,’ the Lord’s prayer from the Gospel of Matthew appears:

‘Our Lord, whose throne is in the heavens, our Lord who is in the heavens, may his name be holy. Your will is fulfilled in the heavens and on the earth; just as Your mercy is in the heavens, make it on the earth. Forgive us our sins and our misdeeds, for You are the Forgiving, the Merciful One. O God, cause mercy to descend from Your mercy, and healing from Your healing upon the pain suffered by so-and-so.’¹⁵⁷

The heart of Matthew 6:9-13 can be observed clearly here. The only part that gives any indication of a Muslim translation is the phrase ‘the Forgiving, the Merciful One’ (*al-Ghafūr al-Raḥīm*).¹⁵⁸ There are other examples of Gospel translations in the *zuhd* corpus that could be cited; however, the correlation between the form and content of this reference with the Matthean text suffices for the purposes of this section.¹⁵⁹ The relationship between the literary genre of *dalā’il al-nubuwwah* (proofs of prophethood) and the Bible will be examined in the section below.

2.1.6. *Dalā’il al-nubuwwah* Literature and the Bible

The development of Muslim apologetic around the biblical text occurred naturally as the newest Abrahamic tradition strove to establish itself — and its sacred book — as a genuine revelation and

¹⁵⁶ Khalidi, *Muslim Jesus*, 22.

¹⁵⁷ Cook, ‘New Testament Citations,’ 196; cf. Abū ‘Alī al-Muḥassin b. ‘Alī al-Tanūkhī (c. 3rd/9th), *al-Faraj ba’d al-shidda* (Beirut: 1978), 1:130.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁵⁹ In Khalidi’s *Muslim Jesus*, the following short saying is listed: ‘Jesus said, “Place your treasures in heaven, for the heart of man is where his treasure is” (71; cf. Aḥmad b. Hanbal (d. 241/855); Muḥammad Zaghul, ed., *Kitāb al-Zuhd* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1988), 95 (no. 313). This appears to be a close translation of Matthew 6:21 (Luke 12:34): ‘For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.’

confession of faith.¹⁶⁰ It is no coincidence, therefore, that in one of the earliest surviving recensions of Muḥammad's biography, a profession of his prophethood comes from a Christian, Waraqah b. Nawfal, a man 'who had become a Christian and read the scriptures and learned from those that follow the Torah and the Gospel.'¹⁶¹ Waraqah's testimony concerning Muḥammad's legitimacy as a prophet immediately follows the passage from the Gospel of John (15:23-16:1) discussed previously in section 2.1.2.2. Thus the biblical text is appropriated for apologetic ends, underscored by Waraqah's subsequent profession of faith.¹⁶² This example from the *Sīrah* demonstrates that, at a relatively early stage in the Islamic tradition, Muslim exegesis of the Bible emerged as a form of proof texting to validate Islamic doctrinal claims.¹⁶³

2.1.6.1. 'Abd al-Jabbār's *Critique* of Christianity

In what follows, the proofs genre will be exemplified by the first part of 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Asadābādī's (d. 415/1025) 'critique' of Christianity (hereafter, *Critique*).¹⁶⁴ The *Critique* is found in his larger work, *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa* (Confirmation of the Proofs of Prophecy), and is divided into three parts: *i*) introduction, *ii*) doctrine and *iii*) practice, and will be cited as such.¹⁶⁵ What makes the *Critique* an

¹⁶⁰ For early Muslim beliefs on the foretelling of Muḥammad's prophethood in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, see Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: the Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims. A Textual Analysis* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1995), 21-43; also Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 75-110.

¹⁶¹ Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 111.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 111.

¹⁶³ The two earliest extant works in the genre of apologetic literature are 'Alī b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī's (d. 251/865) *Kitāb al-dīn wa'l-dawla* (Rifaat Ebied, *The Polemical Works of 'Alī al-Ṭabarī* [Leiden: Brill, 2016]; and Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallah b. Muslim b. Qutayba's (d. 276/889) *A'lām al-nubuwwa*; Ibn Qutayba's text is preserved, in part, in Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 597/1200), Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Wāḥid, ed., *al-Wafā' bi-aḥwāl al-Muṣṭafā* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Ḥadītha, 1966); for the first 8 sections of this work, see Schmidtke, 'The Muslim reception of biblical materials,' 249-74. The work of Ibn Qutayba referenced by Schmidtke is a separate version from that found in Ibn al-Jawzī, which only exists in manuscript form in the Dār al-Kutub al-Zāhiriyya.

¹⁶⁴ The version of the *Critique* consulted here is Gabriel S. Reynolds' *Critique of Christian Origins: A Parallel English-Arabic Text* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2010); Reynolds refers to this 'critique' as 'the Critique of Christian Origins,' a title he has coined in another work on 'Abd al-Jabbār (*A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu: 'Abd al-Jabbār and the Critique of Christian Origins* [Leiden: Brill, 2004]).

¹⁶⁵ 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān, ed. *Tathbīt dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiyya, 1960).

interesting choice, and natural segue into the next section on polemics, is that ‘Abd al-Jabbār views polemics and apologetics as two sides of the same coin; that is, he realises that claims to prophethood are not solely about Muḥammad, but Jesus also. In the *Critique*, he seeks to deconstruct the Christian teachings on Jesus’ divinity — trinitarian doctrine included — in order to show that Christians have, in fact, contrived fallacious arguments about Jesus, thus demonstrating that Muḥammad was right to reject them.¹⁶⁶

Here in the first section of the *Critique*, ‘Abd al-Jabbār explicates the Christian doctrines found in the Qur’ān as a proof of Muḥammad’s prophethood.¹⁶⁷ He does this on the basis of Muḥammad’s ability to refute two claims, that Jesus, son of Mary, is God (Q 5:17, 72) and that ‘God is the third of the three’ (Q 5:73, 75, 116).¹⁶⁸ After providing a summary of Christian beliefs in support these two concepts, ‘Abd al-Jabbār argues for a miraculous impartation of this knowledge from God to Muḥammad that becomes the Qur’ānic refutation concerning these Christian teachings on the Trinity.¹⁶⁹ There was no other way for Muḥammad to know such things, according to ‘Abd al-Jabbār, since he did not read the Christian scriptures, nor were there said to be Christians in Mecca at that time.¹⁷⁰ This, he maintains, is

¹⁶⁶ Reynolds, *Critique of Christian Origins*, xlv.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Abd al-Jabbār, *Critique*, i.1-75; for an analysis of the historical milieu, the content and the structure of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s treatise, see Gabriel S. Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu: ‘Abd al-Jabbār and the Critique of Christian Origins* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

¹⁶⁸ The English translation consulted throughout this dissertation is Alan Jones’ *The Qur’ān* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007); any deviation from Jones will be noted.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, i.8-18.

¹⁷⁰ Reynolds appends this claim on historical grounds, rightly so, asserting that ‘Islamic sources mention the presence of Christians, among them Ethiopian slaves, in Mecca during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad’ (*Critique of Christian Origins*, 3 n.7). There is no shortage of modern scholarship, moreover, that contends for an extensive Christian presence in the Hijaz during that time; see Guy Stroumsa, ‘Jewish Christianity and Islamic Origins,’ in Benham Sadeghi, Asad Q. Ahmed, Adam Silverstein and Robert Hoyland, eds., *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 76-91; Jacques Waardenburg, ‘The Early Period: 610-650,’ *idem.*, ‘The Medieval Period: 650-1500,’ in Jacques Waardenburg, ed., *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 3-69; S. Trimmingham, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London: Longman, 1979); W. M. Watt, *Muḥammad at Medina* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956); Henri Lammens, *L’Arabie occidentale avant l’Hégire* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1928); Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment* (London: Macmillan, 1926).

one of the signs of Muḥammad's prophethood (*li-ta'lama anna wuqūfa Muḥammad 'alá hādhā innamā huwa min qibal Allāh 'azza wa-jalla wa-inna dhālika min āyātihi*).¹⁷¹

Next, 'Abd al-Jabbār cites the Nicene Creed, *in toto* (i.47-56), albeit of East Syrian provenance, as a true articulation of Christian belief, which then serves as a jumping off point for his own, extensive biblical reconnoitering.¹⁷² The central claims of the Creed concerning the divine and trinitarian natures of Christ are quoted and then refuted, in dialectic fashion, from a myriad of texts in all four canonical Gospels, Acts and the epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians and Hebrews.¹⁷³ 'Abd al-Jabbār's use of the biblical corpus in his literary one-two punch against Christian doctrine demonstrates the multifaceted ways Muslim exegetes of the Bible incorporated material into their treatises to meet their specific apologetic needs. In the case of 'Abd al-Jabbār, he wed the two genres of polemics and apologetics in one distinctive critique. This leads to the discussion on the Bible in Islamic polemical literature.

2.1.7. *Al-Radd alá l-naṣārā* Literature and the Bible

As the Islamic tradition developed, Muslim scholars further propagated the method of interpretation observed in both the *sīrah* and *dalā'il al-nubuwwah* literature. The scriptures of the *ahl al-kitāb* proved instrumental for establishing a variety of methods for bolstering the qur'ānic message and securing Muḥammad's place as the final prophet. With the continued use of the Bible in several literary contexts, the hermeneutics employed began to produce a robust set of theological and philosophical counterarguments to Christianity within the genre of polemical treatises.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Critique*, i.24.

¹⁷² Reynolds, *Critique of Christian Origins*, 5 n.14, 6 n.17 and 7 n.18; a similar version of the Creed can be found in the Egyptian Mālikī jurist, al-Qarāfi's treatise, the *Ajwiba*, which will be treated below in section 2.1.7.

¹⁷³ 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Critique*, i.131-226: Matt. 1:1, 3:16-17, 11:27, 12:8, 13:16-17; Mark 1:9-11, 2:28, 12:35-7; Luke 1:26-7, 31-5, 39-44, 3:21-2, 6:5, 10:23-4; John 1:1, 5:18, 8:14, 56-8, 9:35-8, 10:38, 14:10-11, 20, 28, 17:21-3; Acts 10:38; Philippians 2:5-6; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2.

¹⁷⁴ Adang notes that from the first four Islamic centuries, there are no extant polemical works against Judaism, only Christianity ('Medieval Muslim Polemics against the Jewish Scriptures,' in *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions*, 143).

In this section, Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Ṣanhājī al-Qarāfī's (d. 684/1285) treatise, the *Ajwiba*, will be used. The *Ajwiba* was composed in response to a letter in Arabic written originally by the Melkite Bishop of Sidon, Paul of Antioch, who was corresponding with a Muslim friend; the letter would be revised a century later (ca. 13th CE) by a Cypriot Christian.¹⁷⁵ Al-Qarāfī's treatise was the first of three Muslim refutations provoked by this letter, the second and third being Ibn Taymiyyah's (d. 728/1328) *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-masīḥ* and Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī's (d. 727/1327) *Jawāb risālat ahl jazīrat Qubruṣ*, respectively.¹⁷⁶ The *Ajwiba* is comprised of four parts, the third of which contains a section on the topic of sin, repentance and salvation that will be used here to exemplify al-Qarāfī's polemic.¹⁷⁷

2.1.7.1. Al-Qarāfī on Primordial Sin

The polemic used by al-Qarāfī against the Christian doctrine of 'Original Sin' will be addressed in what follows.¹⁷⁸ He begins to break apart this theory with two crucial blows using the biblical text. First is

¹⁷⁵ On the general reception history of Paul's letter, see P. Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche, évêque melkite de Sidon (xii^e s.)* (Beirut: 1964), 8-18; S.K. Samir, 'Notes sur la "Lettre à un musulman de Sidon" de Paul d'Antioche,' *OLP* 24 (1993): 180-90; for a more detailed analysis of its substance, see Alexander Treiger, 'The Christology of the *Letter from the People of Cyprus*,' *J ECS* 65 (2013): 21-48; David Thomas, 'The Letter from Cyprus or Letters from Cyprus?' in S. Torallas Tovar and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, eds, *Cultures in Contact: Transfer of Knowledge in the Mediterranean Context: Selected Papers* (Córdoba: CNERU; Beirut: CEDRAC; Oriens Academic, 2013), 263-74; idem, 'Christian-Muslim Misunderstanding in the Fourteenth Century: The Correspondence between Christians in Cyprus and Muslims in Damascus,' in M. Haddad et al, eds., *Towards a Cultural History of the Mamluk Era* (Beirut: Orient-Institut; Würzburg: Ergon, 2010), 13-30.

¹⁷⁶ Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics across the Mediterranean: The Splendid Replies of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1; for Ibn Taymiyyah's *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*, see 'Ali b. Ḥasan b. Nāṣir et al, ed., *al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-masīḥ*, 7 vols. (Riyadh: Dār al-Āṣima, 1993-99), partial trans., Thomas F. Michel, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's al-Jawab al-sahih* (Delmar: Caravan, 1984); for al-Dimashqī's reply, see Rifaat Y. Ebied and David Thomas, ed. and trans., *Muslim Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The Letter from the People of Cyprus and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī's Response* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

¹⁷⁷ While the first (53-176) and second parts (179-283) of the *Ajwiba* address the questions from Paul's *Letter* as a systematic response to the mainly Christian objections, the third part (287-413) moves from defence to offence as al-Qarāfī launches into counterarguments to his opponents queries; part four (417-63) contains a selection of texts from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament offered up as a proof for Muḥammad's prophethood; for the structural arrangement of the *Ajwiba*, see Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics*, 65-8.

¹⁷⁸ Here the general outline of topic comes from Cucarella's treatment on this section of al-Qarāfī's text, which follows the latter's flow of thought point-by-point; the Arabic edition was also consulted — the translations, my own — and cited with a single reference to *Ajwiba*.

the question of Adam's repentance for his transgression in the Garden (Genesis 3). A disjunctive proposition is presented by al-Qarāfi to expose the theological conundrum: did Adam repent to God or not (*Adam alayhi l-salām tāba wa-anāba am lā*)?¹⁷⁹

An affirmation of Adam's repentance, Qarāfi argues, strips the doctrine of the crucifixion of its efficacy, and thus nullifies Jesus' payment; if, however, the Christians conclude that Adam did not repent, this would contradict Jesus' own words in Mark 1:14b-15, which he understands to be a confirmation of Islamic doctrine: 'Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming that the time had drawn near, and the kingdom of God had come; repent and believe in the Gospel.'¹⁸⁰ Aside from adducing this text, he does not offer any scriptural evidence for Adam's repentance in the Bible.

Here al-Qarāfi explains to his Muslim audience that, according to the Christians, the ransom Jesus pays can be equated with the slain ram that ransomed Isaac in Genesis 22:13; he uses Ishmael in his example rather than Isaac, and then qualifies it later with the caveat 'and in *their writings* God, most High, ransomed Isaac with a ram.'¹⁸¹ Qarāfi suggests, moreover, that Abel, as a son of Adam, or even another ram, would have done the job to pay for Adam's transgression, and, going one step further, contends that the best way to redeem Adam and his descendants would have been to punish the disbelievers rather than using innocent blood.¹⁸²

The second polemical blow issued by al-Qarāfi challenges the transferability of Adam's sin, which, he argues, is not biblical at all. To accomplish this he quotes from several texts. First he quotes Genesis 4:7, where God speaks to Cain: 'If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door.' Next, he marshals a quotation from Ezekiel 18:20, 'A child shall not

¹⁷⁹ Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics*, 205-9 (*Ajwiba*, 299-302).

¹⁸⁰ Al-Qarāfi, *Ajwiba*, 300: '*kharaja yasū' alayhi l-salām ilā l-Jalīl wa-ja'ala yunādī qad qaraba l-zamān iqtaraba malakūt Allāh ta'ālā fa-tūbū wa-aminū bi'l-bushr.*'

¹⁸¹ Cf. Al-Qarāfi, *Ajwiba*, 299, 300: '*kamā [Allāh] fadā Ismā'īl bi'l-kabsh; wa-fī kutubhum an Allāh ta'ālā fadā Ishāq bi-kabsh.*'

¹⁸² Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics*, 207-8 (*Ajwiba*, 301-2).

suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor the parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own'; he uses this to support the qur'anic maxim from *sūrat al-Fāṭir* (Q 35:18): 'No laden soul bears the burden of another.'¹⁸³ Qarāfi also cites a passage from Psalm 4:2-5 to further argue for the individual nature of sin and repentance: 'O sons of men, how long will you [bear] my weight on (your) hearts? Will (you) then love vain [words] and go after lies? Be angry, but do not sin; think on these things in your hearts; repent of it while lying on your side (in bed); make righteous sacrifices to God, and put your trust in the Lord.'¹⁸⁴ These biblical texts, continues al-Qarāfi, demonstrate that sin and repentance are personal matters, and thus no crucifixion was required of the Lord, nor is any future atonement for sin incumbent upon the children of Adam.¹⁸⁵

He follows this with an argument looking back to Abel as a more suitable ransom, mainly because it seems illogical for God to trap people in disbelief during the five thousand years between the time of Abel and the time of Jesus without any chance of redemption, that is, without the work of the cross, if, in reality, the Christian view is correct. Further, al-Qarāfi cites two texts from Matthew to wrap up this section, stating that Jesus was only sent to save the lost (sheep) of Israel (Matt. 15:24) and that the healthy are in no need of care, but only the sick (Matt. 9:12). Therefore, either Jesus' salvific work on the cross would exclude many of Adam's children or those people did not require any payment for their sin, which would then contradict the Christian claim — in the form being refuted here — of universal redemption.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Al-Qarāfi, *Ajwiba*, 301-2.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 302 (translated from Qarāfi's text).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 302.

¹⁸⁶ Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics*, 209; *Ajwiba*, 302.

2.2. Concluding Remarks

A selection of texts have been examined from six Islamic literary genres in order to provide some background and scene setting for Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible. While both authors' quotation of biblical material could, at times, align with some of these genres, what will be argued for in subsequent chapters is a shift in the tradition of Muslim biblical scholarship beginning with Ibn Barrajān and followed by al-Biqā'ī three centuries later. This 'shift' amounts to looking beyond the established methods of interpreting the Bible, as well as the Qur'an, within the Islamic tradition and attempting to bring each scripture in line with the other rather than rejecting the biblical revelation out of hand. Their particular intellectual bent towards a more holistic approach to the scriptures of the *ahl al-kitāb* is, furthermore, precipitated by their distinctive hermeneutical methods, which they share in common — this looks forward to chapter 4.

While the survey in this present chapter was not exhaustive, it did however provide details in each genre that revealed nuances to each author's exposition of the biblical corpus. Several remarks can be made on the value of these texts for understanding the development of Muslim biblical scholarship in Islamic literary contexts, which further elucidates the tradition that Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī entered into with their use of the Bible.

The *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq (*via* Ibn Hishām) illustrates how the stories in that biographical work mirror the previous narratives found in the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels. It also stands as an early example of Muslim exegesis of the Bible that attributes an actual quote, not a paraphrase, from a canonical Gospel text to its author. Further, the *Ta'rikh* of al-Ya'qūbī was one of the first in the genre of Islamic historical writing to recapitulate the apocryphal, Syriac Christian story of Adam and Eve, which became common stock later in other Islamic literature. For the history of Jesus, moreover, al-Ya'qūbī relies on canonical Gospel material, furnishing a passage of the highest Christological caliber to be found in the New Testament. Even though the excerpt from the Johannine Prologue supports a

multitude of Christian doctrines, al-Ya‘qūbī nevertheless admits it into his *ta’rīkh* where it becomes Islamic historical truth.

The ḥadīth cited in section 2.1.4. follows the structure and content of Matthew 20:1-16, with the exception of a switch in the *dramatis personæ*. The parabolic teaching in the Matthean text provides the author(s) of that ḥadīth an opportunity to tell their own story that extends to all three Abrahamic traditions, with the Muslim character in the lead role. As noted by Cook, the eschatological quality of the parable is also more pronounced here than in the original biblical record. Further, the passage from the *zuhd* literature exemplifies the far-reaching affect that the simple, biblical prose of the Lord’s Prayer had on the Muslim ascetic who transmitted it. And its very presence in such a vast corpus of wisdom literature speaks to the enduring quality of that biblical text.

Furthermore, the selection from ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Critique* demonstrates that the line between some genres can, at times, become blurred. The biblical proofs and creeds marshaled by the author were done so in an attempt to refute Christian dogma (polemics) on the one hand, and to defend Muḥammad’s prophetic role (apologetics) on the other. He succeeds at bringing the full weight of Muslim polemics against Christianity to bear on his defence of Muḥammad’s prophethood by engaging Christian doctrine through its reception in the tradition, in the form of the Nicene Creed, as well as appropriating the Bible. Lastly, the genre of polemical literature was explored using the treatise of al-Qarāfī. He offers up a more philosophically challenging form of polemic with the use of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. The connections made between biblical passages from both Testaments against the abiding nature of sin and the need for repentance highlights al-Qarāfī’s keen eye for biblical theology, even if his conclusions would not be persuasive to a Christian interlocutor.

For the remainder of this dissertation, attention will be on the tafsirs of the two main subjects, Ibn Barrajan and al-Biqā‘ī. Given the importance of the Bible in both authors’ works, the next chapter will consist of a comparative study between a selection of Arabic Bible manuscripts and Ibn Barrajan

and al-Biqā'ī's biblical quotations. The choice of manuscripts is based upon their perceived circulation in and around the milieu of each author. The primary aim of this analysis is to identify the version(s) adopted by Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī, but it will also shed light on the transmission and dissemination of the Arabic Bible in two distinct Muslim communities, al-Andalus and Cairo, respectively.

Chapter 3

Identifying the Arabic Versions of the Bible Used by Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī: A Comparative Analysis

Identifying Ibn Barrajān's and al-Biqā'ī's source text for their biblical quotations will be the subject of this chapter. To discover the Arabic translation adopted by each author will provide a more transparent view of the relationship between the Arabic Bible tradition, or *Biblia Arabica*, and the Islamic tradition of biblical interpretation as demonstrated in the texts of these two authors. Various manuscripts of the Arabic Bible ranging in date from the 4th/9th-10th/15th century will be used to compare with the biblical quotations found in their works.

The selection of test passages from Ibn Barrajān's and al-Biqā'ī's quotations is based primarily on one factor: the passage must be a direct quotation, not a paraphrase. Some of the verses selected will also overlap between their works, which will provide details for further discussion in subsequent chapters. The Arabic Bible manuscripts will generally predate the epoch of each author as well. Further, the relevant *sigla* delineated in Ronny Vollandt's *Arabic versions of the Pentateuch*¹⁸⁷ will be adopted herein when analysing the book of Genesis. Here Vollandt provides categories for various Arabic versions of the Torah according to their perceived *Vorlage*. When investigating Arabic Gospel manuscripts (AGM), Hikmat Kachouh's seminal work will be utilised.¹⁸⁸ The representative manuscripts for each group will be described in more detail below.

For Ibn Barrajān's quotations from the Book of Genesis, two of Vollandt's MS categories will be used: Arab^{Syr}Hex^{1a} refers to the Arabic version based on the *Syro-Hexaplaric* version of Paul, bishop of

¹⁸⁷ Ronny Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch: A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

¹⁸⁸ Hikmat Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: the Manuscripts and Their Families* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012); both the published version and Kachouh's dissertation (*The Arabic Versions of the Gospels and Their Families*, 2 vols., Ph.D. Thesis; Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham, 2008) are used in this paper and will be cited accordingly (hereafter abbreviated as *Diss.*).

Tella (c. 617 CE), which was subsequently transmitted in the name of the West-Syriac scholar al-Hārith ibn Sinān; this version is believed to have circulated among the Mozarab community of al-Andalus and is therefore a possible influence on Ibn Barrajān's version.¹⁸⁹ The representative manuscript for Arab^{Syr}_{Hex1a} is Sinai MS Ar. 10 (c. 630-1/1233-4). The second group that will be used to identify Ibn Barrajān's version of the Torah will be Arab^{Syr}₂, which refers to the second Arabic version based on a Syriac *Vorlage*. The representative manuscript for this group is München Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234 (c. 898-9/1493). Although this text is of Syriac origin and postdates the author, it contains an *andalusī* script and Castilian *marginalia* and is thought to have been disseminated in an earlier version among the Mozarabs.¹⁹⁰

Ibn Barrajān's quotations from the Gospels, namely Matthew,¹⁹¹ will be compared with two manuscripts: München Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 238 (c. 796/1393) and München Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234 (c. 898-9/1493). In Ibn Barrajān's context, three Arabic versions of the Gospels are believed to have circulated: Ishāq b. Balashk al-Qurṭubī's 4th/10th c. translation based on the *Vetus Latina*; one translation from the *Biblia Vulgata (Iuxta Hebraicam Veritatem)* by Hieronymus; and a third version that contained Ibn Balashk's translation with corrections added — a revision of his original

¹⁸⁹ Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 72; for several studies on 'Mozarabs' and Arabization among Christians in Islamic Spain, see A. Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus, 711-1000* (Richmond: Curzon, 2002); M.A. Gallego, 'The languages of Medieval Iberia and their religious dimension', *ME* 9/2003: 105-37; H. Kassis, 'Arabic-speaking Christians in al-Andalus in an age of turmoil (fifth-eleventh until a.h. 478/a.d. 1085)', *AQ* 15/1994: 401-22; Mikel de Epalza, 'Mozarabs: an Emblematic Christian Minority in Islamic al-Andalus' in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, eds. Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Manuela Marín (Leiden: Brill, 1992); M^a J. Viguera Molins, 'Cristianos y judíos en al-Andalus', *Cuadernos de Estudios medievales y Técnicas Historiográficas* 20-3/1995-8: 619-33; 'Ubāda Kuḥayla, *Ta'rikh al-Naṣārā fī al-Andalus* (Cairo: np, 1993), 115-38.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁹¹ Ibn Barrajān only quotes from the Gospel of Matthew, therefore my analysis is limited to Matthean quotations; see Casewit, 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 8 n.43. There has been some preference for the Gospel of Matthew in the Islamic tradition; see, for example, al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī's *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā l-Naṣārā* (c. 210/826) (Imām Ḥanafī 'Abdallah, ed. [Cairo: NP, 2000]), one of the first Muslim polemical engagements with the Gospels, where he includes lengthy quotations, paraphrased in rhymed prose, from Matthew, especially the 'Sermon on the Mount'; see also, I. di Matteo's 'Confutazione contro i Christiani dello Zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm,' *RSO* 9 (1921-3): 301-64.

translation with that of Hieronymus's *Vulgate*.¹⁹² Kachouh, following the work of Goussen and Vööbus, confirms the existence of seven manuscripts that are a direct witness, or have a direct familial link, to Ibn Balashk al-Qurṭubī's¹⁹³ version. Munich MSS Ar. 234 and Ar. 238 represent two of those seven manuscripts.¹⁹⁴

When examining al-Biqā'ī's quotations from the book of Genesis, two groups will be used: Arab^{Heb}_{1a} and Arab^{Syr_Heb}_{1b}. The first group designates Syriac-Orthodox adaptations of Sa'adiah Gaon's *Tafsīr*;¹⁹⁵ and the second refers to later adaptations of the *Syro-Hexaplaric* version (Arab^{Syr_Heb}_{1a}) previously mentioned, which eventually supplanted the earlier translation.¹⁹⁶ The representative manuscript for Arab^{Heb}_{1a} is Cairo, MS Cop. Bibl. 22 (c. 630-1/1233-4)¹⁹⁷; the representative manuscript for Arab^{Syr_Heb}_{1b} is Sinai, MS Ar. 3 (c. 759-60/1358).¹⁹⁸ Both MSS, however, are believed to reflect a Syriac *Vorlage*.

For al-Biqā'ī's Gospel quotations, two AGM families will be referenced: families *k* and *l*.¹⁹⁹ The manuscript witness for family *k* will be Oxford, Bodleian Libraries MS Huntington 17 (c. 568-9/1173); and family *l* will be represented by Oxford, Bodleian Libraries MS Huntington 118 (c. 657-8/1259-60).

¹⁹² P. S. Van Koningsveld, 'Christian-arabic manuscripts from the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa: A historical interpretation,' *AQ* 15/2 (1994): 425-6.

¹⁹³ Kachouh, *Diss.*, 1:309; for Goussen's assessment, see *Die christlich-arabische Literatur der Mozaraber* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1909); for Vööbus's list, see *Early Versions of the New Testament* (Stockholm: Estonian Theological Society, 1954).

¹⁹⁴ Of these seven manuscripts (BL, Add. 9061, Biblioteca Nacional Madrid, MS Cod. 4971, Cathedral of León, MS Cod. 35, München, Staatsbibliothek MSS Ar. 234 and Ar. 238, Leipzig MS 1059b, and Fez, Qarawiyyin Library MS 730), Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala excludes Leipzig MS 1059b from this family, and constructs a more critical stemma for the remaining six manuscripts (*Evangelio árabe fragmentario de Marcos (Ms. Qarawiyyin 730): Una traducción árabe adalusí del siglo X. Edición diplomática y estudio preliminar* [Cordoba: UCO Press/CNERU-CEDRAC, 2016], 56).

¹⁹⁵ Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 221.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 226.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 260.

¹⁹⁹ For families *k* and *l*, see Kachouh, *Diss.*, 1:214-87 and 1:288-308, respectively.

Bodleian MS Hunt. 17 is the earliest extant and dated copy for family *k*, and Kachouh uses Bodleian MS Hunt. 118 as the second of two representative copies for family *l*; thus both will serve as a trustworthy version to consult. Details will now be provided for individual manuscripts under each author. The manuscripts are listed according to the order in which they will appear in the subsequent analysis: the Torah and the Gospels.

3.1. The Manuscripts for Ibn Barraġān²⁰⁰

3.1.1. Torah

(a) *Sinai, MS Ar. 10*

Contents: 205 folios (fols.); chapter summaries (1r-4v), translation of (trans.) Genesis (5r-56v); introduction to Exodus (57r-57v), chapter summaries (58r-60v), trans. Exodus (61r-100r); introduction to Leviticus (100v-101r), trans. Leviticus (101v-128r); trans. Numbers (129r-170v) and trans. Deuteronomy (171r-205v).

Date: 630-1/1233-4

Bibliography: Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai: A hand-list of the Arabic Manuscripts and Scrolls microfilmed at the Library of the Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai*, 3; idem, *al-Fahāris al-tahlīliya*, 37-9; Nasrallah, 'Deux versions Melchites partielles de la Bible du IX^e et du X^e siècles' in *Oriens Christianus* 64 (1980): 206-8; *GCAL* 1:107.

(b) *München, Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234*

Contents: 128 fols. (a) Pentateuch: trans. Genesis (1r-19r), trans. Exodus (19r-34r), trans. Leviticus (34v-46r), trans. Numbers (46r-62v) and trans. Deuteronomy (62v-77r).

Date: 898-9/1493

²⁰⁰ Two of the following manuscripts that contain the Pentateuch have been outlined in detail in Vollandt's recent work *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch* (Brill: 2015): München Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234 (250) and Sinai, MS Ar. 10 (253); however, I will outline the Gospel material found in München Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234; details on the Gospels found in München Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 238 are my own.

Bibliography: Aumer, *Die Arabischen Handschriften*, 75; Graf, 'Ein arabischer Pentateuchkommentar'; Vööbus, 'Der Einfluss des altpalästinischen Targums' in *Le Muséon* 68 (1955): 215-18; Monferrer-Sala, 'A Nestorian Arabic Pentateuch Used in Western Islamic Lands' in David Thomas, ed. *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, 351-68; *GCAL* 1:108.

3.1.2. Gospels

(d) *München, Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 238*

Contents: 104 fols. (a) incipit (Ir-IIr); (b) introduction to Matthew (IIv), chapter summaries (IIv-IVr), trans. Matthew (1v-27r); introduction to Mark (27r-27v), chapter summaries (27v-28v), trans. Mark (29r-45r); introduction to Luke (45r-45v), chapter summaries (45v-46v), trans. Luke (47r-70v); introduction to John (71r), chapter summaries (71v-72r), trans. John (72r-85r); explicit (85r-87r).

Date: 796/1393

Bibliography: Taeschner, 'Die monarchianistischen Prologe zu den vier Evangelien in der spanisch-arabischen Bibelübersetzung des Isaak Velasquez nach der Münchener Handschrift Cod. Arab. 238' *Oriens Christianus* 10 (1935): 80-99; Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels (Diss.)*, 1:29, 1:309-11; Roisse, 'Los Evangelios traducidos del latín al árabe por Ishāq b. Balashk al-Qurṭubī en 946 d.C.' in Concepción Castillo Castillo, Inmaculada Cortés Peña and Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, eds., *Estudios árabes dedicados a D. Luis Seco de Lucena (En el XXV Aniversario de su muerte)*, 147-64; *GCAL* 1:168.

(e) *München, Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234*

Contents: 128 fols. Gospels: introduction to Matthew (78v), chapter summaries (78v-79v), trans. Matthew (79v-91v); introduction to Mark (91v-92r), chapter summaries (92r-92v), trans. Mark (92v-101r); introduction to Luke (101r), chapter summaries (101r-102r) trans. Luke (102r-116r); introduction to John (116r-116v), chapter summaries (116v-117r), trans. John (117r-128v).

Date: 898-9/1493

Bibliography: Kachouh, *Arabic Versions of the Gospels (Diss.)*, 1:309-11; Baumstark, 'Markus Kap. 2 in der arabischen Uebersetzung des Isaak Velasquez' in *Oriens Christianus* 31 (1934): 226-39; *GCAL* 1:168.

3.2. The Manuscripts for al-Biqā'ī²⁰¹

3.2.1. Torah

(a) *Sinai, MS Ar. 3*

Contents: 373 fols. (a) incipit with chapter summaries (2r-23v); (b) trans. Genesis (24v-104r), trans. Exodus (104v-175r), trans. Leviticus (175r-207v), trans. Numbers (208v-272r), trans. Deuteronomy (272v-330v) and trans. Joshua (331v-372r).

Date: 759-60 AH/1358 CE

Bibliography: Atiya, *The Manuscripts of Mount Sinai*, 3; idem, *al-Fahāris al-tahliliya*, 24-7; *GCAL* 1:108.

(b) *Cairo, MS Cop. Bibl. 22*

Contents: 249 fols.; trans. Genesis (2r-61r), trans. Exodus (61v-109v), trans. Leviticus (110r-146r), blank (146v-147v), trans. Numbers (147b-198r) and trans. Deuteronomy (199v-246r).

Date: 630-1 AH/1233-4 CE

Bibliography: *GCAL* 1:103; Graf, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes chrétiens*, 96; Simaika, *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts*, 2:4; Atalla, *Illustrations from Coptic Manuscripts*, 18-19.

3.2.2. Gospels

(d) *Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hunt. 17*²⁰²

Contents: 452 fols. Gospels: trans. Matthew (2r-119r), closing formula (119r), blank (119v); opening formula and icon of Mark (120r-120v), trans. Mark (121r-196r), closing formula (196r), doctrinal summary (196v); opening formula and icon of Luke (197r-197v), trans. Luke (198r-331r), closing formula

²⁰¹ Two of the following manuscripts that contain the Torah have been outlined by Vollandt in *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch* (Brill: 2015): Sinai, MS Ar. 3 and Cairo, MS Cop. Bibl. 22; I will provide details for the remaining four manuscripts.

²⁰² Bodleian MS Hunt. 17 is a bilingual, Coptic-Arabic manuscript containing a two-column format with Coptic on the left and Arabic on the right.

(331r), blank (331v), doctrinal summary (332r); opening formula and icon of John (332r-332v), trans. John (333r-432r), closing formula (432r-433r); calendar of liturgical readings (433v-452r), colophon (452v).

Date: 568-9/1173

Bibliography: Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels*, 214-87; Johannes Uri, Alexander Nicoll and Edward Bouverie Pusey, eds. *Bibliothecæ Bodleianæ codicum manuscriptorum Orientalium, videlicet Hebraicorum, Chaldaicorum, Syriacorum, Æthiopicorum, Arabicorum, Persicorum, Turcicorum, Copticorumque catalogus*, 319; G. Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect Otherwise Called Memphitic and Bohairic with Introduction, Critical Apparatus, and Literal English Translation: Vol. 1, The Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Mark Edited from MS. Huntington 17 in the Bodleian Library*, xxxviii-xli; on this version, see *GCAL* 1:155-7.

(e) Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hunt. n8

Contents: 343 fols. chapter summaries (1v-8v), blank (9r), trans. Matthew (9v-93v), closing formula (93v); chapter summaries (94v-96r), blank (96v), incipit to Mark (partially covered) (97r), trans. Mark (97v-150v), blank (151r); chapter summaries (151v-157v), opening formula (157v), trans. Luke (158r-251v), colophon (251v); chapter summaries (252r-256v), blank (257r), trans. John (257v-330v); *Vorlagen* apparatus (331r), explicit (331v-339r), calendar of liturgical readings (339v-343r).

Date: 657-8/1259-60

Bibliography: S. K. Samir, 'La version arabe des évangiles d'al-As'ad Ibn al-'Assāl' in idem, ed., *Actes du 4e Congrès International d'études Arabes Chrétiennes (Cambridge, Septembre 1992)*, 441-551; Kachouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels*, 288-308; Macdonald, 'Ibn al-'Assāl's Arabic Version of the Gospels' in *Homenaje a D. Francisco Codera en su Jubilacion Del Profesorado: Estudios de Erudicion Oriental*, 375-92; Moawad, *Al-As'ad Abū al-Farağ Hibat Allāh ibn al-'Assāl, Die arabische Übersetzung der vier Evangelien (1252/3), Kritische Edition und Einleitung (704 pp.)*; on this version, see *GCAL* 1:162-3.

3.3. A Verse-by-Verse Analysis of Arabic Bible Manuscripts and Biblical Quotations in the *Tafsīrs* of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī

The following analysis will consist of three lines of text: the first line will be a transcription of quoted text from one author, and the second and third lines will consist of a transcription from two different manuscripts. An analysis of Ibn Barrajān's quotations from Genesis and Matthew and the selected manuscripts will be first followed by al-Biqāʿī's texts. Affinities between the quotations and manuscripts will be commented on verse-by-verse. An English translation of the biblical quotations from each author will be provided before the Arabic transcriptions.²⁰³

It should be noted, however, that the aim of the preceding analysis is to determine the degree to which the authors' biblical quotations relate to the manuscript witnesses, which will take into consideration the perceived *Vorlage* of the manuscripts. Therefore the task here is not to provide evidence for the *Vorlage* of a given manuscript, but rather to use the theories for the *Vorlage* of the Pentateuch and Gospels presented by Vollandt and Kachouh, in their respective works, to determine the 'familial' connection between Arabic translations. This will be accomplished by observing the features of all three texts and outlining some of their converging and diverging syntactic and lexical tendencies. The general format that will be followed for grammatical comments in the paragraph analyses will be an English transliteration of the Arabic text followed by the English translation; all other languages commented on will include the English translation first, followed by a transcription and its transliteration, e.g. in the Syriac, 'paradise' (ܦܪܕܝܣܐ/*pardaysā*).²⁰⁴

²⁰³ The English translation of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī's biblical quotations belong to the present author, as does the work involving Coptic; credit must be given, however, to Joshua Falconer for help with the Syriac vocalization only, not the grammatical observations provided throughout.

²⁰⁴ The versions of the *Peshiṭta* (both Old and New Testaments) consulted throughout this dissertation are, respectively, Micheline Albert, ed., *The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta version/Part 1, fasc. 1, Preface; Genesis; Exodus=Vetus Testamentum Syriace iuxta simplicem syrorum versionem/ex auctoritate Societatis ad studia librorum Veteris Testamenti provehenda edidit Institutum Peshittonianum Leidense* (Leiden: Brill, 1977); and Philip Pusey and George Gwilliam, eds., *Tetraeuangelium Sanctum: juxta simplicem syrorum versionem ad fidem codicum, massorae editionum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1901).

By taking into account these linguistic features, it will be possible to determine the level of correspondence between the version of the Bible each author quotes and the various Arabic translations available to them, which are represented by the manuscripts selected for each biblical book. Identifying the source of Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqā'ī's biblical quotations will contribute to a greater understanding of the transmission and dissemination of the Arabic Bible in two different Islamic milieux, and show whether or not these particular Christian Arabic texts have any linguistic influence over the two main authors' interpretations.

3.3.1. Ibn Barraĵān: Genesis 3:1-7

The following quotations consist of the opening lines from chapter three of the Book of Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit, which is found in verses 1-7. This is the first of three genres of biblical literature adduced herein: historical narrative in the Hebrew Bible. The biblical quotation is located in the immediate context of Ibn Barraĵān's exegesis of *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7:18-19).²⁰⁵ Ibn Barraĵān's quotations (IB) will be compared with München, Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234 (M₂₃₄) and Sinai, MS Ar. 10 (S₁₀). Focus will be on the grammatical features between all three texts, with special attention on the syntax (word order) and lexical semantics (vocabulary) of each verse, linguistic elements that will help to determine the source of Ibn Barraĵān's translation.

Now the serpent was more cunning than all the earthly beasts which the Lord God created. And he said to the woman, 'Why has God forbidden both of you from eating every fruit of the garden?' And the woman said to him, 'We eat every fruit of the garden, but not the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden; for God has commanded us that we should not eat from it nor touch it lest we die.' And the serpent said to her, 'You both shall not die; for God knows that the moment both of you eat from it, both of your eyes will open, and both of you will be like God in knowing good and evil.' And when the woman saw the beauty of the tree and was pleased by the goodness of it, she took of its fruit and ate from it; then she gave it to her husband, and he ate it. And then both of their eyes were opened;

²⁰⁵ Q 7:18-19: 'He said, "Leave it, despised and banished. Those of them who follow you — I shall fill Jahannam with you all." And, "O Adam, inhabit the Garden, you and your wife, and eat wherever you wish; but do not approach this tree lest you be of the wrong-doers."'

and when both of them realised that they were both naked, they pieced together fig leaves and made themselves aprons with it.²⁰⁶

Genesis 3:7²⁰⁷

IB: وكان التين أحببت جميعها ثم الأرضية التي خلق السيد الله، فقال للمرأة لمبها كما الله
 عن أكل جميع فواكه الجنان؟³¹
 M234: والحية كانت اعروم وادى من جميع سباع البر التي خلق الله الرب وقالت الحية للمرأة احققا قال الله
 لانا كلا من جميع شجر الفردوس؟³¹
 S10: الفردوس؟³¹
 احققا قال الله لكما لانا كلا من جميع شجر
 فاما الحية وكانت اعروم ولحيث من جميع سباع الارض الذي خلق الرب الاله فقال الحية للمرأة

(V.1) Both MSS used here to compare with IB are from groups that have a Syriac ‘source text’ (ST); S10 belongs to the Arab^{Syr}Hex1a group, and M234 belongs to the group Arab^{Syr}2. The syntax of Biblical Syriac is known to be quite ‘free’ when compared to Classical Arabic (CA).²⁰⁸ As such, the grammatical rigidity of CA with, for example, word order presents a translational issue when going from ST, in this case Syriac, to the ‘target text’ (TT). However, if commonality exists between ST and TT, the structure is maintained under certain circumstances.

This occurs in v.1a with the fronting of the subject *al-ḥayyah* (‘the serpent’) in S10 and M234. While the basic *verb-subject* (VS) word order of verbal clauses in CA is maintained in IB, S10 and M234 use *subject-verb* (SV) word order. In both cases, SV order can be understood as *extraposition* for the purpose of emphasis or contrast, indicating a shift in the ‘narrative boundary’ of a topic.²⁰⁹ This is

²⁰⁶ This English translation, and all subsequent translations of the biblical quotations from each tafsīr, as well as the manuscripts, are my own.

²⁰⁷ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶ 379-80; M²³⁴: f.1v; S¹⁰: f.7r.

²⁰⁸ Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 163. This is observed as well in the relationship between Biblical Aramaic (BA) and the syntax of the Hebrew in the Masoretic text (MT) (Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* [Otto Harrassowitz: Weisbaden, 1961], 56 §183; see Theodore Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1904), 258-62.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 165-6.

Further, there is another interesting observation to note concerning vocabulary in the opening phrase between the text of A₁ and IB. Both texts include a single attribute for the serpent's nature, *aḥkam* ('wiser') and *akhbath* ('more wicked'), respectively. S₁₀ and M₂₃₄, however, exhibit what are known as 'alternative renderings', which are introduced into the translation in the same sequence and strung together by the conjunctive particle *wa-* or *fa-*.²¹³ Here S₁₀ agrees with IB in its use of the (secondary) alternative rendering, that of *wa-akhbath*. S₁₀ and A₁, therefore, agree with IB against M₂₃₄ in this instance.

The second phrase 'all the earthly beasts' (*jamīʿ bahā'im al-arḍīyah*) differs slightly between the texts. IB lacks the particle *min* before *jamī'a* and it uses *bahā'im* for 'beasts' rather than *sibā'* ('beast of prey'); S₁₀ and M₂₃₄ agree in syntax and word usage here. However, IB agrees with S₁₀, as well as A₁, on the word used for 'earth' (*al-arḍ*) against M₂₃₄, which employs *al-barr* ('dry land'). The remaining syntax of the verse is in general agreement with the exception of the word used to translate 'paradise'; M₂₃₄ and S₁₀ both use *al-faradūs*,²¹⁴ a literal rendering of what appears to be from the Syriac (*Peshitta* =P), 'paradise' (ܦܪܕܝܫܐ/*pardaysā*). The word *al-jinān* ('garden, paradise') in IB appears to follow the Masoretic text (MT) throughout, which uses the geminate root *g-n-n* (Arab. *j-n-n*) for 'garden.'²¹⁵ In all three instances, however, the Arabic TT reflects a syntactic influence from the Syriac ST by rejecting

²¹³ Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 190.

²¹⁴ The typical vocalisation for 'paradise' in Arabic is الفِرْدَوْس (*al-firdaws*) (see Q 18:107, 23:11) but, as it will appear in passages from other manuscripts examined here, for example Sinai MS. Ar. 3, the reading is الفِرْدَوْس (*al-faradūs*) (f. 27v) with a *ḍammah* on the /*dāl*/; with the Syriac rendering *paradysā*, *al-faradūs* is preferred to *al-firadūs* or *al-faridūs*. Further, even though Sinai MS. Ar. 10 (Arab^{Syr}.Hex1b) is not vocalised here, it does, however, share a familial relation to Sinai MS. Ar. 3 of the Arab^{Syr}.Hex1a group (Vollandt, *Arabic Versions*, 72), and will thus be transliterated bearing that in mind. Similarly, it has been demonstrated that M₂₃₄ is from a Syriac *Vorlage*, therefore it will be transliterated as *al-faradūs* as well.

²¹⁵ The common Qur'ānic term used for 'garden' appears as *jannah*, specifically at Q 7:27, the general context wherein Ibn Barrajān quotes this passage from Genesis. Here the Qur'ān recalls the seduction of Satan that led to the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden: 'children of Adam, do not let Satan tempt you, like he expelled your parents from the Garden.' It seems Ibn Barrajān uses the familiar term *jinān* rather than adopting *al-firdaws/faradūs*.

the Hebrew *wāw*-consecutive construction and retaining the perfect tense throughout the entirety of the verse.²¹⁶

IB: قالت له المرأة أنا كل من جميع فواكه الجنان (3:2)
 M234: فقالت المرأة للحية نحن اكلون من ثمار جميع شجر الفردوس (3:2)
 S10: فقالت الامراة للحية فانا ناكل من شجر الفردوس (3:2)

(V.2) With the opening phrase of M234, ‘the woman said to the serpent’ (*fa-qālat al-mar’ah li’-ḥayyah*), the syntax agrees with S10 in *verb-subject-object* (VSO) word order. In IB, however, *verb-object-subject* (VOS) word order emphasises *explicative apposition* between the verb and the subject (lit. ‘she said to him, the woman’).²¹⁷ Neither MT nor P use this construction in the opening phrase of v.2a.²¹⁸ IB and S10 have verb agreement in v.2b, while M234 uses the detached first-person plural pronoun *naḥnu* preceding a different form of the same verb. M234 agrees, however, in its use of *jamī‘* before ‘trees of the garden’, which S10 lacks. Again, S10 and M234 translate ‘garden’ with *faradūs* and IB with *jinān*.

IB: ما عدا الشجرة التي في وسطها، فإن الله أمرنا ألا نأكل منها ولا نمسها لئلا نموت (3:3)
 M234: واما ثمر الشجرة التي وسط الفردوس قال الله لا تاكلا منها ولا تقربا فيها (3:3)²¹⁹ لمتي لا تموتا (3:3)
 S10: فاما من الشجرة التي في وسط الفردوس فان الله قال لنا لا تاكلا منها ولا تقربا منها لئلا تموتا (3:3)

(V.3) The conversation between the woman and the serpent continues in v.3. Here IB uses the form *mā ‘adā* to express *exception* (‘with the exception of the tree which is in the midst of it [...]’), while S10 and M234 remain consistent with *fa-ammā* and *wa-ammā*, respectively, to express ‘but, as for [...]’ (‘as

²¹⁶ Here the Hebrew introduces the narrative using the perfect tense *hāyāh* (‘to be’) followed by the imperfect consecutive *wayyō‘mer* (‘to say’), ‘the serpent *was* (וַיִּשֶׁר) more subtle [...] and *he said* (וַיֹּאמֶר)’ (Cowley, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909], 326 §111 a). P employs the perfect tense throughout v.1, abandoning the Hebraic construction frequently used in MT.

²¹⁷ Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 2 Vols. in 1 (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1981), 2:286-7 § 139.

²¹⁸ Cf. (Gen. 3:2a) MT: ‘and the woman said to the serpent’ (וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה לְהַיָּהּ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הַחַיָּה וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הָאִשָּׁה) *wattō‘mer hā’ishshā ‘el-hannāḥshā* with P: ‘and the woman said to the serpent’ (وَعَمْرَأَتُ الْاِنْسَانِ تَلَا لِحَيَّةٍ) *w-emrat ‘a(n)tālā l-ḥewyā*); in both cases, the syntax follows VSO word order.

²¹⁹ The syntax here is unclear; it is difficult to discern what falls between *fihā* and *lā-tamūtā*.

for [the fruit of]²²⁰ the tree which is in the midst of paradise [...]’) with the negation appearing in the next phrase. The three texts generally agree in v.3b with IB and S10 introducing the phrase with *fa-inna* (‘for/because’) and M234 lacking this conjunction. IB also uses the verb *amara* (‘to command’) in his translation, ‘because God commanded us that we not eat from it,’ rather than using *qāla* (‘to say’) to express the direct speech of God, as is the case with S10, ‘because God said to us, “You shall not eat from it,”’ and M234, ‘God said, “You shall not eat from it.”’

The same syntactic structure is maintained between the three texts in the final phrase. Here IB continues, ‘and (that) we not touch it (*namassuhā*) lest we die’; S10 “and you both shall not come near to it (*lā-taqrabā minhā*) lest you both shall die”; and M234 “and you both shall not come near to it (*lā-taqrabā fihā*) [lest] you both shall die.” The choice of verb for ‘touching’/‘coming near’ to the tree deviates here. On the one hand, IB uses *namassuhā*, the sense of which is overwhelmingly attested in its semantic range as ‘touch,’ ‘strike’ and the like.²²¹ There is one example of ‘touching’ that implies proximity, in which case it is rendered as ‘to come near’. But this is one, rare usage among a litany of others that generally renders *m-s-s* as ‘to touch.’ On the other hand, S10 and M234 use *taqrabā* (Arab. *q-r-b*), which follows the Syriac at Gen. 3:3 with the lexical cognate ‘come near’ (ܩܪܒܘܢ/*tetqarbon*) (Syr. *q-r-b*), ‘do not approach it, lest you die’.²²² The use of *namassuhā* in IB, however, comes closer, semantically, to MT ‘you (do not) touch’ (לֹא תִגַּע/ *tiggəʿû*) and LXX ‘you (do not) touch’ (ἀψησθε/ *hapsēsthe*) on this occasion. The last linguistic feature to note is the form used for ‘lest’ (*li-matā?*) in M234, which appears to be a defective construction.²²³

²²⁰ M234 includes the term *thamar* (‘fruit’).

²²¹ Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., *m-s-s*.

²²² An interesting overlap in text and context occurs here. The word *taqrabā* is used in the Qur’an’s Garden account in *sūrat al-Aʿrāf* (7:19) for ‘not approaching’ the tree.

²²³ What may occur here is a defective form of *lā + matā*, ‘lest when (you come near to it) you both will die.’

IB: فقال لها التنين لا تموتان أبداً (3:4)

M234: فقالت الحية للمرأة ان كما لا تموتان موتاً (3:4)

S10: قالت الحية لئلا مراًة ماتموتان من ذلك (3:4)

(V.4) Here the use of *qāla* in IB matches the subject *al-tinnīn* and, as observed in v.2, VOS word order is used in *explicative apposition* for the purpose of emphasis (*qāla lihā l-tinnīn*). M234 and S10 both exhibit VSO word order with *qālat al-ḥayyah li'l-mar'ah/li'l-imra'h* ('and the serpent said to the woman [...]').²²⁴ The final phrase differs slightly in structure: IB, 'both of you will never die'; S10, 'both of you will not die from this'; M234, 'surely both of you will never die.' The text of M234 is doubly emphatic with the use of the detached dual pronoun *kumā* with the dual form *tamūtāni* of the verb *māta* (Arab. *m-w-t*) and an objective complement for 'strengthening' or 'magnifying' the verb, *tamūtāni mūtan* (lit., 'both of you will not die a death').²²⁵ Here M234 stays true to its Syriac ST, using the same construction found in P: 'to die a death' (ܡܡܡܐܬܐ ܬܡܘܬܘܢ/*māmāt tamutun*). The infinitive absolute construction appears quite often in the *Peshittā*, as compared to Targumic Aramaic, as a Hebraizing form.²²⁶

IB: قد علم الله انكم امتي اكلتما منها نفتح ابصار كما وتكونان كالإله في معرفة الخير والشر (3:5)

M234: بل قد علم الله ان في اليوم الذي تاكلان منها نفتح اعينكما وتكونا مثل الاله العارفة بالخير والشر (3:5)

S10: لان الله عالم ان في اليوم الذي تاكلان منها نفتح اعينكما وتصيران كاله عارفان بالخير والشر (3:5)

(V.5) The serpent's discourse continues in v.5a. All three texts have verbal agreement with the use of '*alima* ('to know') with the subject 'God.' Both IB and M234 use VS word order here while S10 has SV

²²⁴ P reflects the same VSO order: 'and the serpent said to the woman' (ܡܡܡܐܬܐ ܠܗܝܘܬܐ ܠܗܝܘܬܐ/*wemar hēwyā la(n)tātā*).

²²⁵ Wright, *A Grammar*, 2:53-7 §26.

²²⁶ Cf. P ܡܡܡܐܬܐ ܬܡܘܬܘܢ and MT מוֹתַתְּ תַּמּוּתֵינִי (*môt tamūtūn*); Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, 235 §295: 'This Inf. serves to give more emphasis to the verb, by contrasting the action with some other one, or by giving expression to its intensity.'

order with the conjunction *li-anna* ('because'). The syntactic structure between all three texts is consistent throughout v.5.

The main difference, however, is in the use of vocabulary. The first phrase in S₁₀ and M₂₃₄ includes *fīl-yawm* ('on the day'), signifying the *time* of God's 'knowing' while IB lacks this text. IB uses *abṣār* for 'eyes', moreover, but S₁₀ and M₂₃₄ employ the more common word *aʿīn*; the second-person pronominal suffix '-*kumā*' occurs in all three texts to indicate the dual form ('both of your eyes').

The final phrase, 'and both of you will be like God in knowing good and evil' (*wa-takūnāni ka'l-ʾillah fī maʿrifat al-khayr wa'l-sharr*), has minor deviations between all three texts. IB and M₂₃₄ use the dual form *takūnāni* ('both of you will be') from the imperfect tense of the auxiliary verb *kāna*, while S₁₀ uses the same form of the verb *ṣāra* ('to become'). Being 'like God' is represented the same in IB and S₁₀, but M₂₃₄ uses *mithl* ('like') rather than the particle *ka-*. The form of the word used for Adam and Eve's 'knowing' good and evil differs slightly as IB uses *maʿrifah*, S₁₀, *ʿarīfah* and M₂₃₄, *ʿarīfān*.

IB: فلما بصرت المرأة جمال الشجرة وأعجبها حسنها أخذت من فاكهتها

وأكلت منها، ثم ناولت زوجها منها فأكلها^{3:6}

M₂₃₄: فابصر المرأة أن الشجرة شبيهة المأكل حسنة المنظر يشبه الناظر أن ينظر إليها فناولت من ثمرها

وأكلت وأعطت زوجها أيضا معها فأكل^{3:6}

S₁₀: ورأت المرأة أن الشجرة طيبة المأكل وشبيهة لمنظر العين عربة المراق فأخذت من ثمرتها

فأكلت وناولت بعلها فأكل معها أيضا^{3:6}

(V.6) The syntax of the opening phrase in v.6 agrees in VSO word order between the three texts. However, the verb 'to see' varies. IB and M₂₃₄ use *baṣurat/abṣura* ('to look, see') and S₁₀ reads *raʿat* ('to see'). The rest of v.6 in IB is abbreviated in that it lacks all three elements associated with Eve's perception of the tree. IB includes 'beauty of the tree' (*jamāl al-shajarah*) and 'pleased by the goodness of it' (*aʿjibahā ḥasanahā*); S₁₀ and M₂₃₄ follow the standard reading and include all three descriptions ('good for food,' 'desirous to the observer's eyes,' and 'good for knowledge') in various forms.

The construction of the next phrase differs between the three texts, but the sense remains the same. Both IB and S₁₀ use *akhadha* ('to take') to indicate Eve's 'taking' of the fruit, while M₂₃₄ uses the sixth form *tanāwalat* ('to reach, take') of the verb *nāla* (Arab. *n-w-l*). Whereas M₂₃₄ and S₁₀ use the more common *thamar* ('fruit'), IB has *fākihah* ('fruit'). Here the Qur'ān may be affecting the choice of vocabulary used in the translation. In Q 36:55, the use of the plural participle of *fākih* (= *fākihūn*) could be translated as follows: 'the People of Paradise today are occupied *eating fruit*' (*inna aṣḥāba l-jannat al-yawm fī shughul fākihūn*). Also, Q 43:73 reads: 'and in [Paradise] there will be for you abundant fruit from which you eat (*lakum fīha fākihah kathīrah minha ta'kulūna*). In both cases, the context of 'Paradise', even though it is describing the future state, is accompanied by the presence of 'fruit,' which uses *fākihah*, not *thamar*. Whether Ibn Barraġān is acting as the redactor, adding his own 'alternative rendering,' or the text he is copying includes this reading is impossible to determine.

Further, there is little deviation between all three texts in the concluding scene of v.6. The 'eating' of the fruit is expressed the same, but the 'giving' of it to Adam varies. IB and S₁₀ agree in the use of the third form *nāwalat* ('she gave') of the verb *nāla*; S₁₀ uses the fourth form of *aṭawa* (= *aṭut*). IB agrees, however, with M₂₃₄ against S₁₀ with the use of the direct object *zawjahā* ('her husband'); S₁₀ uses the less common *ba'l* ('husband').

IB: وانفتحت أبصارهما، وإذعلمتا أنهما عريانان لفقار ورق التين واترأبه^{3:7}
M₂₃₄: فانفتحت أعينهما جميعا وعلما أنهما عاريتان فطفقا يلققان ورق التين ليسير منهما عوز إليهما^{3:7}
S₁₀: فانفتحت أعينهما للوقت وعلما أنهما عريانان فوصلا من ورق الشجر وعملا لهما ما روا^{3:7}

(V.7) IB remains consistent with the use of *a'ḥṣār* for 'eyes' as observed in v.5 rather than *a'yun* in M₂₃₄ and S₁₀. Both M₂₃₄ and S₁₀ also use a *hāl* construction to express different states of the main verb's action. In M₂₃₄, *jamī'ān* is used to indicate the *manner in which* their 'eyes' were opened, i.e., 'entirely,' 'completely,' or 'totally'; S₁₀ uses *li'l-waqt* to describe the *point at which* their 'eyes' were opened, i.e., 'at once,' 'immediately,' or 'at that moment.'

The main verb of the next phrase ('and both of them realised [...]') is consistent with *'alimā* used in all three cases. IB, however, departs in its syntactic structure by introducing the clause with the temporal conjunction *idh* ('when both of them realised [...]'). The word for 'naked' (Arab. *'r-y*), moreover, is consistently rendered in the nominative dual form as *'uriyānāni* between IB and S₁₀. But M₂₃₄ uses the oblique dual form *'uriyānayni* instead.

Lastly, the verb for 'sewing', here rendered as 'to piece together' (*laffaqā*) in IB and M₂₃₄, differs in S₁₀ with *waṣalā* ('to join together'), though the sense remains the same. IB and M₂₃₄ agree again with the use of *al-tīn* for 'tree', which specifically refers to a fig tree;²²⁷ S₁₀ uses the more common *al-shajar* referring to a tree in general. IB agrees with S₁₀, however, against M₂₃₄ in the final clause. The word used here for 'apron' (lit. 'loincloth') is in the verbal form *ittazarā* ('to fashion a loincloth') in IB and the verb *'amalā* ('to do, make') followed by the participial form *māzarā* ('loincloth') in S₁₀; M₂₃₄ includes the second form of the verb *sāra* (= *yusīra*) followed by *'awizā* ('a garment').

3.3.1.1. Conclusion

The evidence from comparing Ibn Barrajān's quotations with M₂₃₄ and S₁₀ (and A₁) suggests that (i) he used a version that can be considered 'in transition' between the Arab^{Syr}-Hex_{1a} group (S₁₀) and Arab^{Syr2} (M₂₃₄), with more dependence on the former. This is evidenced by the syntax and vocabulary of S₁₀ and A₁ in Genesis 3:1. There syntactic agreement between the Syriac ST and the Arabic TT, as well as the choice of vocabulary between S₁₀, A₁ and IB, suggests more dependence on the Arab^{Syr}-Hex_{1a} group than Arab^{Syr2}. As demonstrated clearly in v.7 as well, IB shares syntactic traits and vocabulary with both MSS at different points, but a stronger affinity exists between IB and S₁₀/A₁. However, Ibn Barrajān's translation also shows signs of influence from Qur'ānic Arabic at points in which the text does not agree with either MS; and, similarly, the MSS agree with the Qur'ān's reading under certain circumstances against IB, as observed in v.3.

²²⁷ Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., *t-y-n*.

This could also indicate that (ii) Ibn Barrajān used a version that circulated in one of the above groups but had been checked against the qur'ānic version of a biblical story on some occasions; or (iii) he personally altered his quotations as needed when the word usage and the syntax from certain qur'ānic contexts related directly to the text he was quoting. These kinds of questions are nearly impossible to answer without finding an explicit statement by the author indicating his method of citation, which is found wanting in the case of Ibn Barrajān. The reader is directed to the text of Matthew 19:30-20:9 for the Gospels section.

3.3.2. Ibn Barrajān: Matthew 19:30-20:9

The test passage for Ibn Barrajān's Gospel quotations will be Mt 19:30-20:9, a selection from 'the parable of the labourers in the vineyard.' This is the longest, continuous citation from Matthew in Ibn Barrajān's commentary — the full quotation extending to 20:16. Mt 19:30 is included because in München Staatsbibliothek MSS Ar. 234 (M₂₃₄) and Ar. 238 (M₂₃₈), this verse appears as the opening for the parable rather than being attached to the end of the previous pericope; Ibn Barrajān's quotation seems to follow the same format as the manuscript tradition. Ibn Barrajān invokes this particular text at Q 57:28²²⁸ in order to challenge a commonly used ḥadīth for the interpretation of this verse, though some of the comments he interjects have a polemical tone as he tries to demonstrate how Islam was foretold by these previous scriptures.²²⁹ Nevertheless, both he and al-Biqā'ī use this passage to their own hermeneutical ends, the latter marshaling all sixteen verses of this parable in his tafsīr on two separate occasions.

The two categories of 'syntax' and 'lexical semantics' that are used for assessing the correlation between texts of the Hebrew Bible will also be used here with the canonical Gospel of Matthew. Both Munich MSS belong to *family l* (of Latin *Vorlage*), which is believed to share the same hereditary line

²²⁸ Q 57:28: 'O you who believe, fear God and believe in His messenger, and He will give you a double portion of His mercy, and make for you a light, by which you can walk; and He will forgive you; God is Forgiving and Merciful.'

²²⁹ Casewit, 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 31.

with Ibn Balashk al-Qurtubī's 3rd/9th c. Arabic translation of the Gospels.²³⁰ This version of the Gospels is the most likely candidate for Ibn Barrajān's source text as it gained prominence in al-Andalus, being of Latin descent, and was widely disseminated before and during his epoch.

And many that are last will come before the first; and the first will be at the rear of the last. That is why the kingdom of heaven is like a wealthy man who went out to hire labourers for his vineyard in the early morning. And everyone agreeing with each other for a denarius a day, he then brought them into his vineyard. During the third hour, he saw others standing in the courtyard idle; and he said, 'You go also into the vineyard, and I will give you your rightful dues.' And so they did, and again he repeated in like manner in the sixth hour and the ninth hour. And when the eleventh hour came, he found others standing, and he said, 'Why do you stand here all the day without work?' They responded, 'because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'you go as well and I will multiply for you your rightful dues.' And when the day had come to an end, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the labourers and pay them their hire, and begin with the last and end with the first.' So he began with those that were brought in at the eleventh hour and he gave every man a denarius.

*Matthew 19:30-20:9*²³¹

:IB وكثيراً يتقدم الآخرون الأولين، ويكون الأولون ساقية الآخرين (19:30)

:M238 ومميتقدم المؤخرون الأولين ويكون الأولون ساقية للآخرين (19:30)

:M234 وسيتقدم وكثير من المؤخرين الأولين ويكون الأولون ساقية للآخرين (19:30)

(V.30) With the exception of 'many' (*kathīr*), which is fronted in IB, excluded from M238 and used in the adverbial phrase *kathīr min al-muwakharīna* ('many of the last ones') in M234, the syntax and language of all three texts is nearly verbatim. The first general observation concerns phraseology. M234, M238 and IB use *al-muwakharīna*, *al-muwakhirūna* and *al-akhirūna* ('the last'), respectively, as the subject lead in the opening clause rather than *al-awwalīna* ('the first'): 'And many that are *last* will come before the *first*.' Here 'last' in P (قَدْمَايَ/qadmāyē) and the *Vulgate* (*primi*) follow the Greek

²³⁰ Kachouh, *Diss.*, 1:309.

²³¹ Ibn Barrajān, *Tanbih*, 5:308; also *Tanbih*, 2:93-4; *Sharḥ*, 2:346-9; M²³⁸: f.18v; M²³⁴: f.87r.

original, 'But many that are *first*, will be *last* [...]' and are calqued on 'first' (πρῶτοι/*prōtoi*) as the subject lead.

The syntax and language of the second clause agrees between IB, M₂₃₈ and M₂₃₄ with, 'And the first will be at the rear of the last' (*wa-yakūna l-awwalūna sāqat al-akhirīna*); VS word order is maintained in all three texts. The only deviation is the use of an *idāfah* construction in IB in the final phrase *sāqat al-akhirīna* (lit., 'at the rear of the last'). M₂₃₈ and M₂₃₄, however, place *sāqah* in the accusative *ḥāl* state (*sāqatan*) to express the *circumstance* of the subject's 'being' (*kāna* + accusative), 'the first will be *at the rear* [...]' with the use of *li* + genitive noun construction (*li'l-akhirīna*) '[...] of the last.'

IB: ولذلك يشبه ملك السماوات برجل ملي خرج في استجارة الأعوان لحفر كرمه في أول النهار^{20:1}
M₂₃₈: ولذلك يشبه ملك السموات برجل ملي خرج في الاستجارة أعوان لحفر كرمه في أول النهار^{20:1}
M₂₃₄: وذلك يشبه ملك السموات برجل ملي خرج في الغد لأستجارة اعوان لحفر كرمه في أول النهار^{20:1}

(V.1) Here IB and M₂₃₈ are almost identical in language and form, the exception being the use of the article for *al-a'wān* ('labourers') in IB, which is missing in M₂₃₈ and M₂₃₄, and the article for *al-istijārah* ('seeking help') in M₂₃₈ that appears as *li-* in M₂₃₄ and is not used in IB. The subject *bi-rajul malīya* precedes the verb *kharaja* in all three texts (SV word order) for the purpose of *extraposition* in order to emphasise the subject (lit. 'a wealthy man, he went out [...]'); this appears to follow the syntax of Syriac which also uses SV word order.²³²

IB: وعامل كل واحد منهم في نهاره على درهم، ثم أدخلهم كرمه^{20:2}
M₂₃₈: وعامل كل واحد منهم في نهاره بدرهم ثم أدخلهم كرمه^{20:2}
M₂₃₄: وعامل كل واحد في نهاره على درهم ثم أرسلهم كرمه^{20:2}

(V.2) Once again, very little deviation in syntax and language occurs here. All three texts use VS word order *wa-āamala kull wa-aḥad minhum*; M₂₃₄ lacks *minhum*. The last clause of this phrase also

²³² Cf. P: 'a man, the lord of the house, who went out' (ܘܥܡܠ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܒܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܘܥܡܠܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܒܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ / *l-gabrā mārē baytā da-npaq*).

agrees with the exception of M238, which omits the preposition *‘alá*. The last phrase of the sentence *thumma adkhalahum karmahu* (‘then he brought them into his vineyard’) agrees between IB and M238, while M234 uses *arsalahum* (‘he sent them’) in place of *adkhalahum*. M234 appears to be following the Syriac here which uses ‘to send’ (ܫܕܪܐ/*shadar*). The sense of the verse, however, remains consistent despite the varied use of language here.

IB: فَلَمَّا كَانَ فِي السَّاعَةِ الثَّلَاثَةِ بَصُرَ بغيرهم في الرحاب لا تشغل لهم (20:3)
M238: فَلَمَّا كَانَ فِي السَّاعَةِ الثَّانِيَةِ بَصُرَ بغيرهم في الرحاب لا تشغل لهم (20:3)
M234: فَلَمَّا خَرَجَ فِي السَّاعَةِ الثَّلَاثَةِ بَصُرَ بغيرهم وقوما في الرحاب لا تشغل لهم (20:3)

(V.3) Here M234 follows P with the use of *kharaja* (‘he went out’) in the opening phrase rather than *kāna* (‘it was’). M238, moreover, mistakenly uses *al-thāniyah* (‘second’) for the time of day instead of *al-thālathah* (‘third’), the latter being the standard reading. The second phrase agrees between all three texts with the exception of M234. Again, it would appear that the text follows P — and the rest of the witnesses — by including *qawman* (‘standing’). The syntax remains consistent between the three texts as well.

IB: فَقَالَ اذْهَبُوا أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا إِلَى الْكَرْمِ وَسَاْمِرْ لَكُمْ بِحَقِّكُمْ (20:4)
M238: فَقَالَ لَهُمْ اذْهَبُوا أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا إِلَى كَرْمِ وَسَاْمِرْ لَكُمْ بِحَقِّكُمْ (20:4)
M234: فَقَالَ لَهُمْ اذْهَبُوا أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا إِلَى كَرْمِي وَسَاْمِرْ لَكُمْ بِحَقِّكُمْ (20:4)

(V.4) Minimal orthographic deviation occurs here. M238 and M234 both use the object *li-hum* following the verb *qāla* (‘he said to them’). All three texts agree syntactically in the next phrase *idhhabū antum aydan ilá l-karm* (‘you go also into the vineyard’). The only difference is the use of the article *al-* in IB for *al-karm* and the addition of an *alif maqsura* in M234 on *karm* (= *karmī*) for the first-person possessive pronominal suffix *-ī* (‘my vineyard’). The last clause *wa-sāmura li-kum bi-ḥuqūqkum* (‘and I will multiply for you your rightful dues’) differs only in the final word *ḥaqq* between the three texts. Whereas IB uses *ḥuqūq* + the attached pronominal suffix *-kum* (pl. ‘you’), M234 and M238 read *ḥaqq* + *kum*. However, the sense of the verse remains intact.

IB: ففعلوا، ثم فعل مثل ذلك في الساعة السادسة والتاسعة (20:5)

M238: فذهبوا ثم فعل كذلك في الساعة السادسة والتاسعة (20:5)

M234: فذهبوا ثم خرج في الساعة السادسة والتاسعة وبعد كذلك ايضا (20:5)

(V.5) IB uses the verb *fa-fa'alū*, 'so they did,' in the concluding statement while M238 and M234 follow the ST with *fa-dhahabū*, 'so they went.' IB and M238 agree, however, against M234 in both syntax and language for the remainder of the verse. The only exception being the use of *mithl*, 'like, same,' in IB and *kadhālika* 'just as, like,' in M238. In the last phrase, M234 appears to remain true to the ST with *kharaja*, which follows more literally the Syriac 'to go, depart' (*ܒܗܘܢ/ܢܦܩ*). The 'sixth and ninth hour' is represented the same across all three texts (*fīl-sā'ah al-sādisah wa'l-tāsi'ah*). Again, M234 is the only text that retains the final clause *wa-ba'du kadhālika aydan*, 'then also [he did] the same,' which follows the ST.

IB: فلما كان في الساعة الإحدى عشرة، وجد غيرهم وقوفاً فقال لهم: لِمَ وقفتُم هنا طولَ نهارٍ كمَ دونَ عملٍ؟ (20:6)

M238: فلما كان في الحادي عشرَ خرجَ ووجد غيرهم وقوفاً (20:6)

M234: فلما كان في الحادي عشرَ خرجَ ووجد غيرهم وقوفاً فقال لهم ولمَ وقفتُم هنا طولَ نهارٍ بلا عملٍ؟ (20:6)

(V.6) The opening sequence 'And when it was the eleventh hour' (*fa-lammā kāna fīl-sā'ah al-iḥdā 'asharah*) generally agrees between the three texts; IB is the only one to include 'the hour' (*al-sā'ah*). M238 and M234 agree with the ST against IB with the inclusion of the verb *kharaja*, 'he went out,' which IB lacks altogether. However the syntax between all three texts is uniform. The word used for 'standing still' (*qūfan/qawfan*) in the second clause is also the same in all three texts.

M238 lacks the remainder of the verse. The verb form of *w-q-f* (= *waqafa/yaqifu*) agrees between IB and M234 in the last phrase, 'Why do you stand here all the day without work?' (*lima waqaftum hāhunā ṭul nahārkum dūn 'amal*). There are two deviations in language, however. M234 uses *hunā* ('here') rather than the form *hāhunā* found in IB, the meaning of which is the same; and *bi-lā*, 'with not' (=without) is employed in M234 rather than *dūn* ('without') in IB.

IB: فقالوا له، لأننا لم يستأجرنا أحد، فقال اذهبوا أنتم وسآمر لكم بحقكم^{20:7}

M238: فقال لهم اذهبوا أنتم أيضا إلى الكرّم ففعلوا^{20:7}

M234: فقالوا لأننا لم يستأجرنا أحد فقال لهم اذهبوا أنتم أيضا إلى كرّمي وسآمر لكم بحقكم^{20:7}

(V.7) The opening sequence is missing from the text of M238. There is little orthographic deviation between IB and M234, however. In the opening sequence, IB includes the prepositional phrase *lihu* 'to him' which is not found in M234. And M234 retains the reading *ayḍan ilā karmā*, ('also into the vineyard') that is lacking in IB, but agrees with M238. What exactly occurs here in the second phrase of M238 is unclear. It is most likely an instance of *homoioteleuton* as *fa-qāla lahum idhabū antum ayḍan ilā l-karm* ('and he said, "You also go into the vineyard"') is found in the middle of v.4. The fact that the beginning of v.5, *fa-fa'alū* ('and they did'), also appears in this context supports this view. However, M238 lacks the phrase *wa-sāmuru likum bi-huquqkum/bi-haqqkum* ('And you will receive your rightful dues'), which is common to both IB and M234.

This final phrase, *wa-sāmuru likum bi-huquqkum/bi-haqqkum* ('And you will receive your rightful dues'), is interesting. As mentioned, it already occurred in v.4, and is represented in the Greek original at that location.²³⁴ But it does not appear in the Greek of v.7. However, it is found in v.7 in P: 'and what is right you will receive' (ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲩⲉⲙ ⲉⲛⲁⲛⲧⲟⲛ / *w-medem d-wālē nāsbin a(n)ton*). M234 follows the Syriac ST and IB follows that particular reading on this occasion.

IB: فلما اتقضى النهار قال صاحب الكرّم لو كيّله: ادع الأعوان وأعطيهم أجرهم، وابدأ بالآخرين حتى ينتهي إلى الأولين^{20:8}

M238: فلما اتقضى النهار قال صاحب الكرّم لو كيّله ادع الأعوان وادفع لهم أجورهم وابدأ بالآخرين حتى ينتهي إلى الأولين^{20:8}

M234: فلما اتقضى النهار قال صاحب الكرّم لو كيّله ادع الأعوان وادفع لهم أجورهم وابدأ بالآخرين حتى إلى الأولين^{20:8}

(V.8) Given the length of this verse, the syntactic and semantic correlation between all three texts is profound. VS word order is maintained between IB, M234 and M238 in the opening phrase, 'And when

²³³ The attached letter after the letter /*nūn*/ in the manuscript creates a defective form for *li-annā*; it is illegible in this instance.

²³⁴ The Greek reading of v.4 is as follows: 'and whatever is right, I will give to you' (καὶ ὅ ἐὰν ἦ δίκαιον δώσω ὑμῖν / *kai ho ean ē dikaion dōsō humin*).

the day had come to an end' (*fa-lamma anqaḍaya l-nahār*). The subject *ṣāhibu l-karm* ('the owner of the vineyard') follows the subject verb *qāla* ('he said') as well in the second clause, which is then followed by the direct object *li-wakīlihi* ('to the trustee') for VSO word order.

The remainder of the verse differs between the three texts on two accounts. First, IB uses *a'atihim*, 'give them' rather than the more familiar *adfa' ilayhim*, 'pay to them,' in M₂₃₈ and M₂₃₄. IB also includes *ujratihim* for 'their hire,' while M₂₃₈ and M₂₃₄ use *ujūrahum*, 'their wages,' a minor deviation in vocabulary leaving the sense of the verse intact. Second, IB and M₂₃₈ have the additional phrase (Arab. *n-h-w*) *tantahū/yantahī* ('you end/it ends'), respectively, in the second clause of the last phrase, 'begin with the last until *you end/it ends* with the first.' The syntax between these texts remains uniform.

IB: فبدأ بالذين أدخلوا في الساعة الإحدى عشرة وأعطى كل واحد منهم درهماً (20:9)

M₂₃₈: فبدأ بالذين دخلوا في الساعة الحادي عشر وأعطى كل واحد منهم درهماً (20:9)

M₂₃₄: فبدأ بالذين دخلوا في الساعة الحادية عشر وأعطى كل واحد منهم درهماً (20:9)

(V.9) This final verse agrees nearly verbatim with respect to syntax and language. The first phrase *fa-bid'a bi'l-dhīna dakhalū fi'l-sā'ah al-iḥdā 'asharah* ('so he began with those that entered in the eleventh hour [...]') only differs in the forms used for 'the eleventh hour'; IB, *al-iḥdā 'asharah*; M₂₃₈, *al-ḥādiya 'asharah*; M₂₃₄, *al-ḥādiyah 'ashara*. The sense, however, remains the same. The last phrase, *wa-a'tā kull wāḥid minhum dirham* ('and he gave every man among them a denarius') is orthographically identical between the three texts.

3.3.2.1. Conclusion

Given the high degree of correlation between the text of IB and the two Munich manuscripts, it appears that Ibn Barrajān's version of the Matthean Gospel is directly related to Ibn Balashk al-

Qurtubī's 3rd/9th c. Arabic translation.²³⁵ The syntactic and lexical affinities between the three texts, moreover, suggests that Ibn Balashk's version remained the 'standard reading' in al-Andalus until the time of Ibn Barrajān, and possibly after. This further demonstrates that the Latin based Arabic translation flourished in its western-Islamic milieu. In the next section, attention is turned to al-Biqā'ī and the analysis of his biblical quotations with a selection of manuscripts that suit his context. The first genre will be historical narrative in the Hebrew Bible: Genesis 3:1-7.

3.3.3. Biqā'ī: Genesis 3:1-7

The first Qur'ānic reference to the creation of Adam in *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2:31-5)²³⁶ affords al-Biqā'ī (B) the opportunity to quote the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis between his exegesis of vv. 34-35.²³⁷ How his quotations from Genesis are used will be discussed in chapter 4. Here the focus is on the text he transmits through direct quotation. The two manuscripts consulted will be Sinai, MS Ar. 3 (S₃) and Cairo, MS Cop. Bibl. 22 (C₂₂). The reader is reminded that it has been demonstrated by Vollandt that the ST of both MSS is of Syriac *Vorlage*. Therefore the grammar (syntax and lexical semantics) should reflect this linguistic relationship.

Now the serpent was more destitute than any of the small beasts of the desert. And the serpent said to the woman, 'Is it true that God said to both of you, "Do not eat from any tree of the garden?"' And the woman said, "Truly, we may eat any fruit of the garden; and what concerns the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the Garden, God said to us,

²³⁵ Further evidence for this conclusion can be found in Roy Michael McCoy III, "What Hath Rome to do with Seville?": Exploring the Latin-to-Arabic Translation of the Gospel of Matthew in Ibn Barrajān's (d. 536/1141) Qur'ān Commentary,' in Miriam Hjälms, ed., *Senses of Scripture, Treasures of Tradition: The Bible in Arabic among Jews, Christians and Muslims* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 240-51.

²³⁶ Q 2:31-5: 'He taught Adam the names of all things. Then He put them before the angels, and said, "Tell me the names of these if you are truthful." They said, "Glory be to You. The only knowledge we have is what You have taught us. You truly are the Knowing and the Wise." He said, "Adam! Tell them their names;" and when he had told them their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know what is Invisible in the heavens and the earth and that I know what you disclose and what you have been hiding?" And [recall] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves to Adam"; and they [all] prostrated themselves, apart from Iblis. He refused and was haughty and was one of the unbelievers. And We said, "Adam, dwell in the Garden with your wife, and the two of you eat in plenty from it wherever you wish; but do not approach this tree lest you become wrong-doers."

²³⁷ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:96-8.

“Do not eat from it nor come near to it lest both of you die.” But the serpent said, “Both of you will not die. Because God knows that when both of you eat from it, the eyes of both of you will be opened, and both of you will become like God, knowing good and evil.” Then the woman saw that the tree was choicest for food and appetizing to the eyes, so she took from the fruit of it and ate, and gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and both knew that they were naked.

Genesis 3:1-7²³⁸

B: وكانت الحية أعر دواب البر كلها فقالت الحية للمرأة: أحق أن الله قال لكما

لاتأكلان من جميع شجر الجنة؟³²¹

S3: وكانت الحية أكثر عزمه أي أحببت من جميع حيوانات الأرض التي عمل الرب الإله فقالت الحية للمرأة: ما الذي نهاكم

الله لاتأكلان من جميع شجر الفردوس؟³²¹

C22: والحياة كانت أحكم من جميع وحوش الأرض التي خلقها الرب الإله فقالت الحية للمرأة: لماذا قال

الله لاتأكلان من جميع شجر الفردوس؟³²¹

(V.1) The text of B and S3 agree in VS word order in the opening phrase *wa-kānat al-ḥayyah* ('the serpent was [...]'). C22, however, fronts the subject *al-ḥayyah* for SV word order in the grammatical structure of *extraposition* for the purpose of emphasis or contrast, indicating a shift in the 'narrative boundary' of the topic. As observed in the previous analysis of M234 and S10, both of which follow a Syriac ST as well, C22 reveals more commonality with the ST than B and S3.²³⁹

All three texts, moreover, differ in their expression of the elative form ('[...] more than [...]'). B uses *a'aza* ('more destitute'); S3, *akthara arimhu* ('more wicked'); and C22 reads *aḥkam* ('wiser'). While S3 appears to follow P, which uses 'clever' (חַיִּים/*rym*), the root of which directly follows the Hebrew 'crafty' (אַרְוּם/*ārûm*), C22 comes the closest with *aḥkam* to the intended meaning of the text here.

The semantic range of both the Hebrew and the Syriac carries the sense of 'crafty, shrewd or sensible,'

²³⁸ Al-Biqā'i, *Nazm al-durar*, 1:97-8; S3: f.27v-28r; C22: f.3v.

²³⁹ As also observed in the previous analysis at Genesis 3:1, all three texts reflect syntactic agreement with the Syriac ST by adopting the perfect tense throughout v.1 rather than an imperfect construction (see n.31 above).

i.e., for a predatory animal, not solely ‘ill-natured, evil or wicked’ as in the Arabic.²⁴⁰ However, *‘arim* can denote ‘terrific’ or ‘powerful,’ but that does not fit the context. The language used here demonstrates the degree to which S₃ is related to the Arab^{Syr_Hex1a} group and its Syriac ST.

S₃ also reflects another feature of Arabic translations of the Bible, that of ‘alternative renderings,’ which appears here as a clarification of the previous description *akhthara ‘arimhu* with *ay* + *akhbatha* (‘that is, more wicked’). This secondary, alternative rendering appears alongside the ‘standard’ reading rather than replacing it, which is common in the manuscript tradition. The sense of the second clause is slightly nuanced between the three texts as well. Whereas B uses *dawābb al-barr* (‘small beasts of the desert’), S₃ reads *min jamīʿ ḥayawānāt al-arḍ* (‘from all the animals of the earth’) and C₂₂ includes *min jamīʿ wuhūsh al-arḍ* (‘from all the wild beasts of the earth’).

S₃ and C₂₂ agree with the inclusion of the phrase *allatī ‘amala/khalaqahā l-rabb al-allahu* (‘which the Lord God made’); the only deviation between S₃ and C₂₂ is the verb used for ‘made’ (*‘amala/khalaqahā*, respectively) both of which denote the same meaning. The beginning of the next clause agrees between all three texts: *fa-qālat al-ḥayyah li’l-mar’ah* (‘and the serpent said to the woman [...]’). VSO word order is maintained across the texts of B, S₃ and C₂₂.

The final phrase differs among the three texts syntactically and lexically. First, B uses the phrase *a-ḥaqq an* (‘is it true that [...]’) with the fronted subject *Allāh* + (verb) *qāla* (‘God said [...]’) for what appears to be an instance of *extraposition* for the purpose of emphasis (lit. ‘is it true that God, *he* said [...]’).²⁴¹ The emphasis is being placed on the serpent’s question, which follows *qāla*, rather than the subject, ‘God,’ which precedes the verb. S₃ uses *mā lladhī nahākum Allāh* (‘is God not the one who forbid you [saying] [...]’); and C₂₂, *lammā dhā qāla Allāh* (‘is not God the one who said [...]’). Both S₃ and C₂₂ follow VS word order in this instance. The final clause only diverts at the last word used for

²⁴⁰ Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., ‘r-m.

²⁴¹ The qur’ānic use of *a-ḥaqq an* as ‘is it true’ occurs four times: Q 9:13, 62, 108; 33:37. It is difficult to discern if any influence from the Qur’ān takes place here.

'paradise.' The reading in B is *jannah*, 'garden, paradise'; S₃ uses *faradūs*, as does C₂₂.²⁴² In the previous analysis on Ibn Barrajān's texts, IB uses the same word, *jannah*, at this location. Some evidence points toward the qur'ānic influence of the term *jannah* here since the parallel account given in the Qur'ān adopts this word for 'paradise' or 'garden' in *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2) v. 35 and regularly throughout.²⁴³

B: فقالت المرأة: إنا نأكل من كل ثمر الجنة^{3:2}

S₃: فقالت المرأة للحية: فانا نأكل من شجر الفردوس^{3:2}

C₂₂: فقالت المرأة للحية: اما من جميع ثمرات الشجر التي في الفردوس فانا نأكل^{3:2}

(V.2) All three texts follow VSO word order in the opening sequence, *fa-qālat al-mar'ah li'l-ḥayyah* ('the woman said to the serpent [...]'). and the language is the same; B, however, lacks the object *li'l-ḥayyah*. The next phrase differs slightly between B, S₃ and C₂₂. B and S₃ use *inna/fa-inna* ('truly'), respectively, followed by the verb *na'kulu* ('we may eat'). C₂₂, however, reflects OV word order in CA *ammā* [...] *fa* construction, following the Syriac ST (P) and MT:

C₂₂ اما من جميع ثمرات الشجر التي في الفردوس فانا نأكل

ammā min jamī' thamarāt al-shajar allatī fī'l-faradūs fa-innā na'kulu C₂₂

P
 d-men piray 'ilānē dab-pardaysā kolhon nekol P

מִפְרֵי עֵץ הַגָּן נֹאכְלִי MT²⁴⁴

mipparī 'ēṣ-haggān nō'kēl MT

P/MT *from the fruit of the trees of Paradise/the Garden, we may eat*

C₂₂ *and what concerns all of the fruit of the trees which is in the Garden, we may eat [of it]*

²⁴² As noted above with S₁₀ and M₂₃₄, Sinai MS. Ar. 3 (S₃) comes from a Syriac *Vorlage*, and with the appearance of the short vowel 'u' (*ḍammah*), the transliteration used here is *al-faradūs*.

²⁴³ While *jannah* appears more consistently throughout the Qur'ān's corpus, the term *al-firdaws* is used, however, on two occasions: Q 18:107 *jannāt al-firdaws* ('the gardens of paradise') and Q 23:11 *al-firdaws* ('paradise').

²⁴⁴ The construction here in MT is discussed under the syntactic functions of the imperfect tense, described as the *permissive sense* (Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, §107 s).

B: فأما من ثمرة الشجرة التي في وسط الجنة فإن الله قال لنا: لا تأكلوا منها ولا تقربوا هاك كيلا تموتا^{3:3}

S3: وأما من الشجر التي في وسط الفردوس فإن الله قال لا تأكلوا منها ولا تقربوا هاك كيلا تموتا^{3:3}

C22: وأما من ثمرة الشجرة التي في وسط الفردوس قال الله لا تأكلوا منها ولا تقربوا هاك كيلا تموتا^{3:3}

(V.3) The syntax of B and S₃ match almost identically, both exhibiting the *ammā* [...] *fa* construction in OSV word order: *fa-ammā min thamrat al-shajarah allatī fī waṣṭ al-jannah* [...] *fa-inna Allāh qāla/wa-ammā min al-shajar allatī fī waṣṭ al-faradūs* [...] *fa-inna Allāh qāla* ('and what concerns the fruit of the tree which [is] in the middle of the Garden, God said [...] /and what concerns the tree which [is] in the middle of Paradise, God said [...]'). C₂₂ follows the same pattern, corresponding in language with the text of B, more precisely than S₃, but lacking the *fa-*, which is not uncommon.²⁴⁵ There is little orthographic deviation in the final phrase. B, S₃ and C₂₂ all read *lā ta'kulā minhā wa-lā taqrubāhā li-kay-lā/kay-lā tamūtā* ('Do not eat from it nor come near to it lest both of you die').

B: قالت الحية: ليس²⁴⁶ تموتان^{3:4}

S3: فقالت الحية للمرأة: ماتموتان من ذلك^{3:4}

C22: فقالت الحية للمرأة: ليس تموتان موتاً^{3:4}

(V.4) VS word order is maintained in the opening phrase between the three texts. B, however, lacks the object *li'l-mar'ah* ('to the woman') that both S₃ and C₂₂ retain. The sense of the second clause remains consistent though the grammar differs slightly. B uses the negative *laysa* + the verb *tamūtāni* ('both of you will not die'); S₃ uses the negative *mā* + the verb *tamūtāni* with an additional phrase *min dhālika* ('both of you will not die from this'); C₂₂ agrees with B the closest with *laysa tamūtāni mawtan*, 'both of you surely will not die' (lit. 'both of you will not die a death'), using *mawtan* as an objective complement for 'strengthening' or 'magnifying' the verb.²⁴⁷ The same construction was observed

²⁴⁵ J. Blau, *A Grammar*, 3:482, §377.

²⁴⁶ Here *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.) lists two manuscripts with the reading *laysa*: one with *laysat*, and one with *lasatuma*(?) (1:269); the majority reading of *laysa* is preferred.

²⁴⁷ Wright, *A Grammar* 2:53-7 §26.

under the analysis of Ibn Barrajān's quotations here at Genesis 3:4 in M234, which also has a Syriac ST.²⁴⁸

- B: ولكن الله علم أنكما إن تأكلان منها تفتح أعينكما وتكونان كالإله تعلمان الخير والشر^{3:5}
- S3: لان الله عالم في اليوم الذي تاكلان منها تفتح أعينكما وتكونان كالأله تعرفان الخير والشر^{3:5}
- C22: ولكن الله يعلم إن في اليوم الذي تاكلان منها تفتح أعينكما ونسيران كالأله وتعرفان الخير والشر^{3:5}

(V.5) B, S3 and C22 are all similar grammatically in the opening clause. While B and C22 open with *wa-lakin*, S3 uses *la-inna*, but the meaning remains the same. Each text follows SV word order (*Allāh* 'alima|'ālama|ya'lamu, respectively) for emphasis: 'Because God, he knows [...]'. S3 and C22, however, include *fī'l-yawm alladhī* ('on that day'). B alone uses *an-kumā inna* ('that both of you') to introduce the second clause. The remaining syntax between the three texts is almost identical. There are three exceptions, however. B uses the imperfect *subjunctive* tense *takūnā* ('both of you may be') and S3, the imperfect *indicative* tense *takūnāni* ('both of you will be'), each using the auxiliary verb *kāna*. C22, on the other hand, includes *tasīrāni* ('both of you will act [in such a way that you become]') from the verb *sāra*.²⁴⁹ Adam and Eve's 'knowing' good and evil, moreover, is expressed the same in S3 and C22 with *ta'rifāni*, but B uses *ta'lamāni*; the meaning remains consistent.

- B: فرأت المرأة الشجرة طيبة المأكل شبيهة في العين فأخذت من ثمرتها فأكلت وأعطت بعلها فأكل^{3:6}
- S3: ورات المرأة ان الشجر طيبة للمأكل شبيهة المنظر عذبة للشقتين فأخذت المرأة من ثمرها واكلت وناولت بعلها ايضاً معها منها^{3:6}
- C22: ورات المرأة ان الشجرة طيب المأكل شبيهة لنظر العين عذبة المراق فأخذت من ثمرها وناولت بعلها الاخر ايضاً فأكل معها^{3:6}

(V.6) VS word order is maintained in all three of the texts. B introduces the opening phrase with *fa-ra'at al-mar'ah al-shajarah* ('then the woman saw the tree [...]'); the only deviation is C22's *wa-ra'āt*

²⁴⁸ See n.41 above.

²⁴⁹ Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., s-y-r.

with a medial *maddah*. S₃ and C₂₂ follow B with minor grammatical changes: *an* + the direct object *al-shajarah* ('that the tree [...]'). In the narrative, Eve then provides three affirmations about the tree:

MT: טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמֵאֲכָל תַּאֲוָה הוּא לְעֵינַיִם וְנִחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל
 MT: *tôb hā'ēš lama'ekāl ta'ewāh-hû' lā'ênayim wānehmād hā'ēš lahaškîl*:MT

MT: *the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to give one insight*

B and S₃ agree on the first affirmation with *ṭayyibah al-ma'kal/li'l-ma'kal*, but C₂₂ uses the perfect passive verbal form of *ṭāba* (=ṭibat *al-ma'kal*). The second affirmation also agrees between the three texts with minor variations. B reads *shahiyyah fī'l-'ayn* ('appetizing to the eyes'), while S₃ and C₂₂ use *shahiyyat al-manẓar* ('appetizing appearance, or look') and *shahiyyah li-naẓar al-'ayn* ('appetizing to the eye's glance'), respectively. The third affirmation, which is omitted in B, agrees in part between S₃ and C₂₂. Both texts use *'adhbah* ('pleasant'), but differ on what exactly is 'pleasant' about the tree. S₃ reads *li'l-shuqtīna* and C₂₂, *al-murāq*.

The sense of the final clause remains consistent between B, S₃ and C₂₂. However, S₃ lacks the verb *akala* ('to eat') in the closing portion: *fa-akhdhabat al-mar'ah min thamarhā wa-akalat wa-nāwalat ba'lhā ayḍan ma'ahā minhā* ('so the woman took the fruit of [the tree] and she ate [it] and gave to her husband also [and he ate] from it with her'). C₂₂ includes *wa-nāwalat ba'lhā l-akhar ayḍan fa-akala ma'ahā* ('then she gave the other [part] to her husband also and he ate [it] with her'). Whereas S₃ and C₂₂ use *nāwalat*, B reads *a'ṭat ba'lhā fa-akala* ('she gave [it] to her husband and he ate'); B abbreviates the text by omitting several prepositional phrases that S₃ and C₂₂ retain.

B: فَانْفَتَحَتْ أَبْصَارَهُمَا وَعَلِمَا أَنَّهُمَا عَرِيَانَانِ، فَوَصَلَا مِنْ وَرَقِ التَّيْنِ وَصَنَعَا مَا زَر^{3:7}

S₃: فَانْفَتَحَتْ أَعْيُنَهُمَا وَعَلِمَا أَنَّهُمَا عَرِيَانَانِ فَوَصَلَا مِنْ وَرَقِ شَجَرِ التَّيْنِ وَعَمَلَا لَهُمَا مَا زَر^{3:7}

C₂₂: فَانْفَتَحَتْ أَعْيُنَهُمَا كَلَّاهُمَا وَعَلِمَا أَنَّهُمَا عَرِيَانَانِ فَوَصَلَا مِنْ وَرَقِ التَّيْنِ وَصَنَعَا لَهُمَا مَا زَر^{3:7}

(V.7) Minor orthographic deviations occur in the opening clause. All three texts use *fa-infataḥat* to express the 'opening' of Adam and Eve's eyes. B differs, however, with the inclusion of *absārhumā* for

‘both of their eyes,’ while S₃ and C₂₂ both read *a‘yanhumā* with the same meaning. C₂₂, moreover, includes *kala‘ahumā*, which appears odd upon first reading. It could either refer to the ‘eyes’ as now being ‘wakeful’ and ‘cautious,’²⁵⁰ or it is a defective form of *kulluhumā*, again referring to the ‘eyes’ as being ‘entirely’ open.

The second clause in B, S₃ and C₂₂ is identical: *wa-‘alamā anhumā ‘uryānāni* (‘and both knew that they [were] naked’). The next clause agrees as well, with a few differences in the final phrase. All three texts use *fa-waṣalā min waraq (shajar) al-tīn* (‘both of them attached fig leaves together’); S₃ provides the complement to *waraq shajar al-tīn* (lit. ‘the leaves of the tree of the fig’). The final phrase differs only in the use of the main verb. B and C₂₂ read *wa-ṣana‘ā (lahum) ma‘āzīr/mā‘āzīr* (‘and they both made a coverings’); C₂₂ includes *lahum* to express ‘both of them made for themselves coverings.’ S₃ uses *wa-‘amilā lahumā mā‘zīr* (‘and they both made for each of them a covering’).

3.3.3.1. Conclusion

Strong textual affinities exist between the quotations of B and the two manuscript witnesses. The syntax remains consistent in each verse and the language contains minor deviations at certain points. The preceding analysis confirms that the Arabic translation al-Biqā‘ī consulted directly relates to the version exemplified by the text of S₃ and C₂₂. Given the prolonged period of composition for his commentary, it is reasonable to conclude that al-Biqā‘ī consulted more than one edition of Genesis as he revised his work over a twenty-year period.

3.3.4. Biqā‘ī: Matthew 19:30-20:9

Matthew 19:30-20:16 (‘the parable of the labourers’) is quoted twice by al-Biqā‘ī on two separate occasions; first in *sūrat al-A‘rāf* (Q 7:157) and again in *sūrat al-Ḥadīd* (Q 57:27);²⁵¹ here a sample from this parable (19:30-20:9) will suffice rather than analysing the entire pericope. Quite often al-Biqā‘ī

²⁵⁰ Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., *k-l-a*.

²⁵¹ Al-Biqā‘ī, *Nazm al-durar*, 7:466-7.

painstakingly avoids repeating himself as some passages from the Gospels are cut short mid verse only to find continuation at the same precise location fifty or more sūrahs later in the commentary.²⁵² With this parable, however, he does a curious thing. He uses Ibn Barrajān's quotation of Matthew 19:30-20:16 in his commentary at Q 57:27 rather than repeating the same Matthean text at Q 7:157.²⁵³ Therefore the transcribed text provided here will be taken from al-Biqā'ī's quotation at sūrah 7.²⁵⁴

The two manuscripts consulted will be Oxford, Bodleian Libraries MSS Huntington 17 (H17) and Huntington 118 (H118). These Oxford manuscripts represent two of Kachouh's AGM families: family *k* and *l*, respectively. While the perceived *Vorlagen* of both families overlap, — family *k* being either from Syriac/Greek and checked against the Coptic or from Syriac and checked against the Greek/Coptic, and family *l* being from Coptic/Latin and a mixture of those *Vorlagen* noted in family *k* — it may be possible to demonstrate how widely these translations were disseminated based on how closely the Arabic TT of the quotations from B follow each manuscript.

Many that are first will be last, and the last will be first. "The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a lord of a house, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. So making a contract with the tillers (of the land) for a denarius only for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. Then going out in the third hour, he saw others standing (idle) in the middle of the market place; and he said to them, 'You go into my vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. And also going out again at the sixth hour and the ninth, he did likewise. And he went out at the eleventh (hour) and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand idle the whole day?' So they said to him, 'No one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go in with haste to the vineyard, and I will give you what you have rightfully earned.' And when it was evening, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the labourers and pay them the wages,

²⁵² For example, he quotes the Gospel of John 2:1-13a *sub* Q 2:87 and returns to John 2:13b-15 *sub* Q 57:27.

²⁵³ I have checked the quotations between Ibn Barrajān's version of Matthew 19:30-20:16 and that which al-Biqā'ī borrows from his tafsīr, and the texts are identical.

²⁵⁴ Q 7:157: "Those who follow the messenger, the prophet of his community, whom they will find mentioned in the *Torah* and the *Gospel* in their possession. He will order them to do what is recognised as right and forbid them to do what is disapproved of. He will make the good things lawful for them and make the bad things unlawful for them. He will relieve them of their burden and of the fetters that have been upon them. Those who believe him and support him and help him and follow the light that was sent down with him — they are the ones who will prosper."

and begin with them from the last to the first.' So those hired came at the eleventh hour, and each of them received a denarius.

Matt. 19:30-20:9²⁵⁵

B: كثيراً أولون يصيرون آخريين وأخرون يصيرون أولين (19:30)

H17: كثيرون أولون يصيرون آخريين فأخرون يصيرون أولين (19:30)

H18: وان أولين كثيرين سيصيرون آخريين وأخرون يصيرون أولين (19:30)

(V.30) All three texts are nearly identical in the opening sequence. B and H17 vary in the form of 'many' employed. B uses *kathīrān* and H17, *kathīrūna*, followed by *awlūna yasīrūna akhirīna* ('first will be last'), but the sense of each text remains the same. H18, however, uses *wa-inna* ('truly') to introduce the saying, and fronts the subject of the verb *sayasīrūna* ('will be') with the adjective *kathīrīna* ('many') preceding the verb, which is then followed by *akhirīna* ('last') to conclude the first clause.

The only orthographic deviation to occur in the second clause is the use of *fa-* ('so') in H17. Otherwise the texts agree verbatim with respect to both syntax and word choice: *wa/fa-akhirūna yasīrūna awwalīna* ('the last will be first'). Moreover, all three texts exhibit SVO word order. Fronting the subject of the verb places emphasis on it in relation to the object. As noted above, this follows a frequent syntactic form in Biblical Syriac called *extraposition*.²⁵⁶

B: بشبه ملكوت السموات إنساناً رب بيت خرج بالغداة يستأجر فعلة لكرمه (20:1)

H17: نشبه ملكوت السموات إنساناً رب حقل خرج بالغداة يستأجر فعلة لكرمه (20:1)

H18: نشبه ملكوت السموات إنساناً مالك حقل خرج بالغداة²⁵⁷ يستأجر فعلة لكرمه (20:1)

(V.1) The syntax of the first clause agrees between the three texts, but the word choice differs slightly based on what appears to be the *Vorlage* of the ST. B opens with *yushbihu malakūt al-samāwāt*

²⁵⁵ Al-Biqā'i, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:127; H17: f.75r-76v; H18: f.61r-63r.

²⁵⁶ Geoffrey Khan, *Studies in Semitic Syntax* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 123-46.

²⁵⁷ Here the use of the second root letter */dhāl/* rather than */dāl/* is conspicuous since the dot above *د* is worn and shifted slightly to the left; possibly a scribal error of repetition of the dot that immediately preceded this letter on the letter */ghayn/*.

(‘the kingdom of heaven is like [...]’). H₁₇ and H₁₁₈, however, use the feminine form *tushbihu* here. Both texts also follow the Coptic *Vorlage* with *rabb/mālik ḥaql* (‘lord/master of a field’) — the Coptic Bohairic (CB) reading is ‘master of a field’ (ⲛⲉⲃⲓⲟⲩⲓ /*nebiohi*), ²⁵⁸ agreeing semantically with (Arab.) *ḥaql*. The text of B, *rabb bayt* (‘lord of a house’), follows the Syriac ST, which is ‘house’ (ⲃⲏⲧⲁⲛ/*baytā*) in P. The second clause *kharaja bi’l-ghadāh yast’ajira fa’alah li-karmihi* (‘he went out in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard’) agrees syntactically and lexically between B, H₁₇ and H₁₁₈.

:B فشارط الأكرّة على دينار واحد في اليوم وأرسلهم إلى كرمه ^{20:2}

:H₁₇ فشارط الفعلة أن يعطين في النهار ديناراً لكل واحد وأرسلهم إلى كرمه ^{20:2}

:H₁₁₈ وقرّم مع الفعلة أن يعطي كل واحد ديناراً في النهار وأرسلهم إلى كرمه ^{20:2}

(V.2) B agrees with H₁₇ in the opening sequence with the use of *fa-shāraṭa* (‘So he made a contract’) against H₁₁₈, which uses *wa-qarrara* (‘and he confirmed’). The second phrase, however, agrees between H₁₇ and H₁₁₈ with *al-fa’alah an yu’tayna/yu’tá* (‘the labourers that were obtained’); B simply uses the object *al-akarah* (‘the tillers [of the land]’) without introducing a new verb. The syntax and vocabulary of the second phrase deviates between all three texts. B reads *alá dīnār wāḥadin fīl-yawm* (‘for a denarius, only for the day’); H₁₇ uses *fīl-nahār dīnāran li-kull wāḥidin* (‘for the day a denarius to each one’); and H₁₁₈, *kull wāḥidin dīnār fīl-nahār* (‘each one a denarius for the day’). The final clause is identical between B, H₁₇ and H₁₁₈: *wa-arsalahum ilá karmihi* (‘then he sent them to his vineyard’).

²⁵⁸ W. E. Crum, *A Coptic Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 89; the Coptic text referenced and transcribed here is from Oxford Bodleian Libraries, MS Huntington 17, which is compared with G. Horner’s *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Northern Dialect Otherwise Called Memphitic and Bohairic with Introduction, Critical Apparatus, and Literal English Translation: Vol. 1, The Gospels of S. Matthew and S. Mark Edited from MS. Huntington 17 in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 170-5.

B: ^{20:3} ثم خرج في ثالث ساعة فأبصر آخرين قياماً في السوق بطالين
H17: ^{20:3} وخرج في ثالث ساعة ابصر اخرين قياماً في السوق بطالين
H18: ^{20:3} ولما خرج وقت الساعة الثالثة راى اخرين قياماً في السوق بطالين

(V.3) There is little grammatical difference between the three texts in v.3. While the syntax remains consistent, H18 opens with *wa-lammā kharaja waqt al-sā'ah al-thālathah* ('When he went out at the time of the third hour [...]'); B and H17 omit *waqt* here and use *thumma* and *wa-*, respectively, to introduce the opening sequence. The only variation in the second clause is the verb used for 'seeing'. H18 uses *raʿā*, and B and H17 agree with *abšara* ('he saw').

B: فقال لهم: امضوا انتم الى كرمي وأنا أعطيك ما تستحقون^{20:4}
H17: فقال لهم: امضوا انتم الى كرمي والذي تستحقوه انا اعطيكمه^{20:4}
H18: فقال الاخرين اذهبوا انتم ايضاً الى الكرم فسا اعطيكم ما تستحقون^{20:4}

(V.4) The syntax and lexical choices deviate slightly between the three texts in the opening sequence and second clause, with B and H17 being grammatically closer. H18 uses *al-akharīna* ('the other ones') in the first clause, following the CB usage 'these others' (ⲛⲏⲏⲓⲕⲉⲭⲟⲟⲩⲏⲓ/*nnikečōuni*), which, on this occasion, corresponds with the Greek 'those ones' (ἐκεῖνοις/*ekeinois*);²⁵⁹ and in the second clause, H18 reads, *idhhabū antum ayḍan ilá l-karm* ('you go also into the vineyard'). B and H17, rather, both use the imperative *imḍū* ('you go') with the first-person possessive pronominal suffix *-ī* attached to *al-karm* (= *karmī*) for 'my vineyard.'

The third clause differs between B, H17 and H18 syntactically and with respect to word choice. B reads, *wa-anā u'ṭikum mā tastaḥiqqūna* ('and I will give you what you have rightfully earned'); H17 uses *wa-lladhī tastaḥiqqūhu anā u'ṭikumhu* ('and that which you rightfully earn I will give to you'); and H18, *fa-sa-u'ṭikum mā tastaḥiqqūna* ('and I will give to you what you have rightfully earned'). Here the

²⁵⁹ Crum, *Dictionary*, s.v., κε-; H18 includes this superscripted notation in Coptic above the Arabic text.

syntax of B and H118 is more closely related, while H17 reflects the syntax of both P and CB, which follows the standard reading in the Greek:

καὶ ὃ ἐὰν ἦ δίκαιον δώσω ὑμῖν :GNT
kai ho ean ē dikaion dōsō humin :GNT

وَأَمَّا مَضُوا فَمَدَّوْا لِيَمِينِ الْمَدَّامِ :P
w-medem d-wāle yāheb (')nā l-kon :P

ΟΥΟΘ ΦΗ ΕΤΣΕΜΠΩΑ ΤΝΑΤΗΙΦ ΝΩΤΕΝ :CB
ouoh p^hē etsempsha t'natêif nôten :CB

GNT: *and whatever is right, I will give to you.*

P: *and what is right, I will give to you.*

CB: *and that which is right, I will give to you.*²⁶⁰

فَمَضُوا وَخَرَجُوا أَيْضاً فِي السَّاعَةِ السَّادِسَةِ وَالتَّاسِعَةِ فَصَنَعَ كَذَلِكَ (20:5) :B

وَأَمَّا مَضُوا وَخَرَجُوا أَيْضاً فِي السَّاعَةِ السَّادِسَةِ وَالتَّاسِعَةِ وَصَنَعَ هَكَذَا (20:5) :H17

فَأَمَّا هُمْ فَذَهَبُوا ثُمَّ خَرَجُوا أَيْضاً وَقَدْ سَاعَتِ السَّادِسَةَ وَقَدْ سَاعَتِ التَّاسِعَةَ فَصَنَعَ أَيْضاً كَذَلِكَ (20:5) :H118

(V.5) Here at the beginning of v.5 the scene depicted in v.4 comes to a close with *fa-maḏū/wa-innahum maḏū/fa-ammāhum fa-dhahabū* ('So they went'), respectively. All three texts express this action with varying word choice, H17 and H118 using the pronominal suffix *-hum* before the main verb for emphasis. H118, moreover, continues to use *dhahaba* as in v.4 while B and H17 remain consistent as well with *maḏā*.

The next clause begins similarly in each text with *wa-/thumma kharaja ayḏan* ('and/then going out again [...]'), followed by *fī'l-sā'ah al-sādisah wa'l-tāsi'ah* ('in the sixth hour and the ninth'); as observed previously in H118, the use of the time indicator *waqt* is applied here as well for *waqt al-sā'ah al-sādisah wa-waqt al-sā'ah al-tāsi'ah* ('at the time of the sixth hour and at the time of the ninth hour').

²⁶⁰ Horner, *The Coptic Version of the New Testament*, 172-3.

The syntax of the final clause agrees, with H₁₁₈ adding *ayḍan* ('also') and H₁₇ using *hakadhī* ('in this manner') in *fa-/wa-ṣana'a (ayḍan) ka-dhālika/hakadhī* ('thus he [also] did likewise').

B: *وخرج في الحادية عشرة فوجد آخرين قياماً، فقال لهم: ما قيامكم كل النهار بطالين؟*^{20:6}
H₁₇: *وخرج في الحادى عشرة فوجد اخرين قياماً فقال لهم ما بالكم قياماً ها هنا كل النهار بطالين؟*^{20:6}
H₁₁₈: *ولما خرج وقت الساعة الحادية عشرة فوجد اخرين قياماً بطالين فقال لهم ما بالكم قياماً ها هنا النهار اجمع بطالين؟*^{20:6}

(V.6) The three texts are in general syntactic agreement throughout the verse. H₁₁₈ opens with the conjunction *lamma* ('when') followed by *kharaja waqt al-sā'ah al-ḥādiyah 'ashrah* ('he went out at the time of the eleventh hour'); B and H₁₇ use *wa-kharaja fī'l-ḥādiyah/al-ḥādiya 'ashrah* ('and he went out in the eleventh [hour]'). The next clause contains the same wording between B, H₁₇ and H₁₁₈: *fa-/wajada akharīna qiyāman (baṭṭālīna)* ('and/he found others standing [idle]'). H₁₁₈, however, explicates the the manner in which the 'others' were 'standing' by adding 'idle,' which occurs here in P but not the standard reading of the Greek, where it only appears in the concluding phrase.

The remainder of the verse includes similar lexical choices in each text. B reads, *fa-qāla lahum mā qiyāmakum kull al-nahār baṭṭālīna* (and he said to them: Why do you stand idle the whole day?), and both H₁₇ and H₁₁₈ use *fa-qāla lahum mā bālukum qiyāman hāhunā (kull) al-nahār (ajma' baṭṭālīna* ('and he said to them: Why do you stand here idle the whole/all the day?');²⁶¹ H₁₁₈ uses *ajma'* ('whole, all') rather than *kull*, but the sense remains the same.

B: *فقالوا له: لم يستأجرنا أحد، فقال لهم: امضوا انتم بسرة إلى الكرم وأنا أعطيك ما نستحقون*^{20:7}
H₁₇: *فقالوا له: لم يستاجرنا احد قال لهم امضوا الي الكرم*^{20:7}
H₁₁₈: *قالوا له: لا نه لم يستاجرنا احد فقال لهم امضوا انتم ايضا الي الكرم فستأخذون ما يجب لكم*^{20:7}

(V.7) B, H₁₇ and H₁₁₈ follow the same syntax in the opening clause with *fa-qālū lahu (li-annah) lam yasta'jirnā aḥad* ('So they said to him: "[Because] no one hired us"). In the second clause, *qāla lahum*

²⁶¹ The phrase *mā bālukum* ('Why do you/are you [...]?') has a cognate expression in CB here: 'why do you [...]?' (ⲕⲉ ⲁⲃⲱⲧⲉⲛ/če axōten).

imḏū ilá l-karm ('and he said to them: "You go on into the vineyard)'), H17 follows the reading found in the Greek and CB:

ὑπάγετε καὶ ὑμεῖς εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα :GNT
hypagete kai hymeis eis ton ampelōna :GNT

מאדע נותען צוטען עפאחאלולי :CB
maše nôten hôten epiahaloli :CB

GNT: *You go also into the vineyard.*

CB: *Go, you also to the vineyard.*

The text in B and H18 agree here with minor additions; B includes the second-person pronoun *antum* after the verb for emphasis, as well as *bi-sur'ah* ('with haste'), indicating the manner in which they are to 'go on'; H18 also uses *antum* after the verb with *ayḏan* ('also') for *imḏū antum ayḏan ilá l-karm* ('You go on also into the vineyard').

Whereas the preceding phrase concludes v.7 in H17, the text of B and H18 continues on, revealing an affinity with the Syriac ST. The text previously observed at the close of v.4 appears again here in P: 'and whatever is right, you will receive' (ܘܡܕܡܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܨܝܕܝܩܘܬܐ /w-medem d-wāle nāsbin a(n)ton), which B and H18 follow with the inclusion of the final phrase, *wa-anā u'ṭikum mā tastahiqqūna* ('and I will give you what you have rightfully earned') and *fa-sata'khudhūna mā yuḥabbu lakum* ('and you will receive that which is preferred to you'), respectively.²⁶²

B: فلما كان المساء قال رب الكرم لو كيلاه: ادع الفعلة واعطهم الأجرة وابدأهم من الآخر بن إلى الأولين (20:8)

H17: ولما كان المساء قال رب الكرم لو كيلاه: ادع الفعلة واعطهم اجرتهم وابدأهم من الآخر بن إلى الأولين (20:8)

H18: فلما كان العشي قال رب الكرم لو كيلاه: ادع الفعلة واعطهم اجرتهم مبتدأ من الآخر بن إلى الأولين (20:8)

(V.8) Few orthographic deviations occur between the three texts. The syntax and word choice agrees in the opening sequence with the exception of H18, which uses *al-ishá* ('evening') rather than *al-masā'* in *fa-lamma kāna l-masā'* ('and when it was evening'). The second clause is in perfect

²⁶² Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., *ḥ-b-b*.

agreement with *qāla rabb al-karm li-wakīlihi* ('and the lord of the vineyard said to his steward [...]'), B, H₁₇ and H₁₁₈ all using the same terms in the same order. The next clause also remains consistent between the three texts: *ud'u l-fa'alah a'tihum al-ajrah/ajrahum/ujratahum* ('Call the labourers and pay them the wages/their wages/their hire'). The final clause only differs in H₁₁₈, which includes *mubtadan* ('beginning') rather than *wa-ibdan* ('and begin'); the last phrase also agrees with *min al-akhirīna ilá l-awwalīna* ('from the last to the first').

B: فجاء أصحاب الساعة الحادية عشرة فأخذوا ديناراً كل واحد (20:9)

H₁₇: فجاء أصحاب الاحدى عشرة فأخذوا ديناراً كل فاحدٍ (20:9)

H₁₁₈: فلما جاء أصحاب الساعة الحادية عشرة أخذوا ديناراً كل واحد (20:9)

(V.9) The syntax and semantics of all three texts is in general agreement. H₁₁₈ opens with *fa-lamma jā'a aṣḥāb* ('so when those hired came'), while B and H₁₇ use *fa-jā'a aṣḥāb* ('so those hired came'). B and H₁₁₈, however, share more commonality in the second phrase *al-sā'ah al-ḥādiyah 'ashrah* ('at the eleventh hour'); H₁₇ reads *al-aḥadā 'ashrah* ('the eleventh') without the time reference *al-sā'ah*.

The syntax of the final clause exhibits VOS word order in B, H₁₇ and H₁₁₈ in *explicative apposition* for emphasis between the verb and subject: *fa-/ukhidhū dīnār kull wa-/fa-aḥad* (lit., 'they received a denarius, each of them'). Here the syntactic influence on the Arabic TT appears to be from a Coptic ST:

αΥΘΙ ΝΟΥΣΑΘΕΡΙ ΕΦΟΥΑΙ :CB
auci nousat^heri ep^houai :CB

CB: (*they*) received a stater, each one

3.3.4.1. Conclusion

The level of correspondence between B, H₁₇ and H₁₁₈ demonstrates a clear dependence of al-Biqā'ī's quotations on these AGM traditions. Although H₁₇ and H₁₁₈ represent two different language 'families,' according to Kachouh's divisions — family *k* and family *l*, respectively — the text of B sometimes agrees with one against the other reading and vice versa. This further shows how widely disseminated

these manuscripts became in the context of late Mamlūk Cairo, where al-Biqā'ī quoted these texts over the course of twenty years.

3.4. Concluding Remarks

The preceding analyses demonstrate that the two authors used, at least initially, one of the representative manuscript witnesses from the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels as their base text. In some cases, the biblical quotation is identical to the Arabic version. Ibn Barrajan's interaction with the passage from Genesis 3 indicates that he retained a majority of the ST in his translation with some minor qur'ānic influences in language choice. Thus it is safe to say that Ibn Barrajan possessed a manuscript in the Arab^{Syr_Heb1a} group that he used for his quotations from Genesis 3:1-7.

The analysis between al-Biqā'ī's quotations from Genesis 3 and the manuscript witnesses produced mixed results. In the majority of verses, B agreed with S₃ and C₂₂, but the latter two would also agree against the reading in B. One can conclude, therefore, that al-Biqā'ī consulted more than one version common to the Arab^{Heb1a} and Arab^{Syr_Heb1b} groups, both of which are of Syriac *Vorlage*; this seems even more probable when considering the twenty-year period he spent writing his commentary. He then most likely made his own changes to the translation when deemed necessary.²⁶³

The most exciting results on both counts come from the analyses of Matthew 19:30-20:9. The strongest correlations between the authors' quotations and the manuscript witnesses occur here. With Ibn Barrajan, his version of Matthew directly relates to that of Ibn Balashk al-Qurtubī, thus providing another viable witness to Kachouh's *family m* of Latin *Vorlage*, and further contributes to understanding the pervasiveness of this particular version of the Andalusian Bible. Every verse agreed between IB, M₂₃₄ and M₂₃₈, with minor semantic deviations in a small number of cases. As for al-Biqā'ī's transmission of Matthew, he too quoted the biblical text with the utmost care, retaining the Christian-Arabic character of the text. Moreover, the high degree of orthographic dependence

²⁶³ These kind of changes from the source text to the target text are confirmed by explicit comments made by al-Biqā'ī (see chapter 5, section 5.6.2.).

observed between his Matthean quotations and the two manuscripts demonstrates that, despite having consulted the Gospel material numerous times over a long period, the translation remained relatively the same, that is, without becoming an islamised version. This further speaks to the integrity with which al-Biqā'ī transmitted the biblical text.

One question to anticipate from each author's quotation of biblical material would be to see whether their interpretation of either scriptures has been affected by the version they use. First, however, the hermeneutics of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī will be explicated in chapter 4. The methods of interpretation used by each author in their tafsīr contexts will shed light on their hermeneutical approach to the previous revelations of the *Torah* and the *Gospel*.

Chapter 4

The Scriptural Hermeneutics of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī

As discussed in chapter 1, Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī each had a particular way of viewing reality that, to lesser or greater degrees, informed their theological sensibilities when it came to the Qur'ān. Chapter 4 seeks to further unpack each author's qur'ānic hermeneutics with an eye to the Bible as well. It will be demonstrated that the methods of interpretation they employ in reading the Qur'ān are not only important to comprehend their place in the Islamic tradition of scriptural exegesis, but also provide *some* intellectual motivation for their reading of the biblical corpus.

While no explicit link may exist between Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's hermeneutics of the Qur'ān and their quotation of biblical texts, still it will be important to discover the role the Bible plays in their tafsīrs. How precisely the Bible functions in their commentaries — whether 'tangentially' or otherwise — will be the primary question to answer here and in chapters 5 and 6. The 'tangential' use of the Bible refers to the use of biblical materials to supplement and illuminate an author's reading of the Qur'ān. Moreover, with tangential quotation the relationship between the Bible and Qur'ān is asymmetrical as the Qur'ān remains the central text to which an author's exegesis is anchored.

With Ibn Barrajān's commitment to the qur'ānic hermeneutic of *naẓm al-qur'ān*, and al-Biqā'ī to that of *ilm al-munāsabāt*, these methodologies function as one possible means of framing their attitude toward the Torah and the Gospel as legitimate texts worthy of exploring.²⁶⁴ Therefore, the biblical passages cited became a source of illuminating and adding dimension to their reading of the

²⁶⁴ For a recent conversation on *naẓm* and *munāsabāt* in the Islamic tradition, see Stefan Wild, 'Unity and Coherence in the Qur'ān,' in Georges Tamer, Regina Grundmann, Assaad Elias Kattan and Karl Pinggéra, eds., *Exegetical Crossroads: Understanding Scripture in Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Pre-Modern Orient* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 303-18; also see Giuliano Lancioni and Raoul Villano, 'Self-similarity as Form and Structure: Reading Strategies in Medieval and Contemporary Exegesis of the Qur'ān,' 251-72.

Qurʾān. The biblical quotations of Ibn Barrajan and al-Biqāʿī from the Hebrew Bible, namely Genesis, and the Gospels, namely Matthew, are presented as case studies in chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

Ibn Barrajan's formulation of qurʾānic harmony and coherence, known as *naẓm al-qurʾān*, and his emphasis on *iʿtibārī* exegesis will be assessed using three of his works, the *Īdāh*, the *Sharḥ* and the *Tanbīh*.²⁶⁵ Each text provides valuable insight into his hermeneutical theory. Biqāʿī's method of interpretation is drawn from two sources: his treatise in defence of using the Bible, the *Aqwāl*²⁶⁶ and his tafsīr, interestingly titled, *Naẓm al-durar* ('String of Pearls'). Together these two texts support a number of approaches used by al-Biqāʿī for exegeting both the Qurʾān and the Bible. Further, al-Biqāʿī's primary methodological tool for interpreting the Qurʾān, known as *ʿilm al-munāsabāt* (science of connections) and his exegesis of *sūrat Āl Imrān* (Q 3) strongly resembles Ibn Barrajan's earlier formulation of *naẓm* and his treatment of *muḥkam* (fixed) and *mutashābih* (self-similar) from *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 3:7).²⁶⁷

The importance of Q 3:7 in the tafsīr tradition cannot be overstated. It has functioned, historically, as a paradigm for distinguishing between two different forms of qurʾānic verses; *muḥkam* describes those verses that are 'fixed' or 'clear' and *mutashābih* represents those that are 'self-similar' or 'mutually resembling,' or as it is typically rendered, 'ambiguous.' This latter term, however, is problematic for Ibn Barrajan and, to some degree, al-Biqāʿī, which will be discussed in detail below.

²⁶⁵ Böwering and Casewit, *A Qurʾān Commentary by Ibn Barrajan of Seville (d. 536/1141)*; De la Torre, ed., *Sharḥ asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*; al-Mazyadī, *Sharḥ asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*; idem, *Tafsīr Ibn Barrajan*.

²⁶⁶ The critical Arabic edition referenced throughout is Saleh's *In Defense of the Bible* (henceforth referred to as the *Aqwāl* when quoting the Arabic edition contained therein).

²⁶⁷ For a recent discussion on the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*, see Berenike Metzler, 'Qurʾānic Exegesis as an Exclusive Art — Diving for the Starting Point of Ṣūfī Tafsīr,' in Georges Tamer, Regina Grundmann, Assaad Elias Kattan and Karl Pinggéra eds., *Exegetical Crossroads: Understanding Scripture in Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Pre-Modern Orient* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 319-27; Joseph Witztum, 'Variant Traditions, Relative Chronology, and the Study of Intra-Quranic Parallels,' in Asad Q. Ahmed, Behnam Sadeghi, Robert G. Hoyland and Adam Silverstein eds., *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1-50; also, Nicolai Sinai, *The Qurʾān: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 52-4; idem, *Fortschreibung und Auslegung: Studien zur frühen Koraninterpretation* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 81-5.

Therefore, due to the hermeneutic value placed on Q 3:7, a section on its historical reception will be provided in what follows.

Biqā'ī's *apologia*, the *Aqwāl*, will be addressed first, independent of Ibn Barrajan's hermeneutics. The *Aqwāl* is a special treatise in the Islamic tradition that presents a unique argument for using biblical quotations in qur'ānic exegesis. Then both authors will be situated in the intellectual milieu for the interpretation of Q 3:7 using the tafsīrs of Abū l-Ḥasan Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Balkhī (d. 150/767), Abū Ja'far b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and Abū l-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144). These three tafsīrs represent a broad range of qur'ānic hermeneutical development from the early exegesis of Muqātil to the commentary of al-Ṭabarī, then, to the work of al-Zamakhsharī, whose commentary, *al-Kashshāf*, became one of the most popular and often glossed textbooks for teaching the genre of tafsīr in the *madrasas*.²⁶⁸ For the remaining sections of this chapter, however, Ibn Barrajan's method of scriptural exegesis will be examined in tandem with that of al-Biqā'ī. An analysis of the similarities and dissimilarities of their approaches to scripture works better in a joint conversation per topic rather than separate, as the reader will observe.

4.1. Biqā'ī's Defence of the Bible:

The Aqwāl

One of the most intriguing contributions by al-Biqā'ī to Muslim biblical scholarship is his treatise, the *Aqwāl*. As noted in chapter 2, the primary reasons Muslims have used the Bible in the Islamic tradition have been either to engage in polemics to refute the reliability and authenticity of the Jewish and Christian scriptures or apologetically to defend Muḥammad as the final prophet predicted in those same texts. Biqā'ī offers to provide a kind of corrective to this general approach and gives a defense for quoting biblical material in his tafsīr.²⁶⁹ The arguments from the *Aqwāl* and their relevance to al-Biqā'ī's hermeneutical approach to both the Qur'ān and the Bible will be the first of two sources used

²⁶⁸ Walid A. Saleh, "The Gloss as Intellectual History: The *Ḥāshiyahs* on *al-Kashshāf*," *O* 41 (2013): 218.

²⁶⁹ Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 33.

to formulate his method of biblical interpretation, the second source being his Qurʾān commentary. An overview of the *Aqwāl* will be provided for the reader followed by an exposition of the relevant sections of the treatise for the discussion here.

The *Aqwāl* is composed of a preface, an introduction (*muqaddimah*), eight chapters and a conclusion (*khātimah*), the last part comprising nearly one-third of the entire work. The *Aqwāl* also includes an ‘appendix’ (*mulḥaq*) in Saleh’s edition,²⁷⁰ which contains an unpublished argument excluded from the final, or clean copy (*mubayyaḍah*). Chapters five, seven and eight are the most relevant for assessing al-Biqāʿī’s scriptural hermeneutics of the Bible. Chapters one to four and six provide information that al-Biqāʿī uses to inform his audience about where his approach fits within the broader Islamic tradition of biblical interpretation.

Chapter one contains all of the *fatwāhs* and endorsements al-Biqāʿī could muster for his Qurʾān commentary. The arguments in chapter two attest to the historical use of the Bible among Muslims for polemic purposes. In chapter three, al-Biqāʿī presents proofs from the Qurʾān and ḥadīths for quoting the Bible on polemical grounds to support further his discussion in chapter two. Chapter four then continues with the same line of argument from chapters two and three, providing more examples of the use of the Bible by Muḥammad. These first four chapters function simply as a preliminary account before the real argument begins in chapter five. Then in chapter six, al-Biqāʿī presents something of an excursus from the argument in chapter five; it would function better, actually, with the first four chapters. Here he provides a detailed survey of Muslim biblical scholarship that preceded him. Lastly, the conclusion (*khātimah*) consists of al-Biqāʿī’s defence of his Qurʾān commentary as a legitimate work in the genre of tafsīr; here he goes so far as to make a synoptic

²⁷⁰ Al-Biqāʿī, *Aqwāl*, 187-91.

comparison with the tafsīr of Ibn al-Naqīb (d.698/1298), whose commentary, at that time, was considered to be the most extensive.²⁷¹

4.1.1. *Aqwāl* 5: Suspending Judgment (*tawaqquf*) on the Biblical Text

One of the foundational arguments presented by al-Biqā'ī for using the Bible centres on the legal right to 'suspend judgment' (*tawaqquf*) on a matter.²⁷² Early in the Islamic tradition, the ninth-century scholar and littérateur Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr al-Jāhīz (d. 255/869) discusses *tawaqquf*.²⁷³ His discussion on *tawaqquf* appears to be the earliest treatment on the doctrine in the tradition, and becomes common stock in subsequent Islamic formulations.²⁷⁴ Jāhīz's notion of 'suspending judgment' arose out of a context in which Muslims wrestled with the literalness of the Qur'ānic text and how to understand anthropomorphic language about God. Confusion around how one should interpret the language of the Qur'ān, according to al-Jāhīz, stemmed from Christian influence in cities like Baghdad, and the more astute, theological formulations employed by them in those contexts; this posed a

²⁷¹ Al-Biqā'ī, *Aqwāl*, 138; see Saleh, 'A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist,' 650 n.110. Here Saleh highlights the only relevant comments in the conclusion for the present discussion, statements by al-Biqā'ī concerning his abandonment of the *isrā'īlīyāt* material. According to al-Biqā'ī, this 'Islamised Jewish lore' was an aberration in the Islamic tradition, having been introduced by converts from Judaism, and was thus avoided throughout his commentary (Saleh, 'A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist', 650).

²⁷² Ibid., 90. For establishing *tawaqquf* on jurisprudential grounds in theological discourse, see the *muqaddimah* in Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustasfā min 'ilm al-uṣūl*, 2 vols. (Bulāq: al-Maṭba'ah al-Amīriyah, 1904-6), 1:5; Abū al-Ḥasan al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām fī usūl al-aḥkām*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1983), 1:9; Ibn al-Ḥājib, *Mukhtaṣar Muntahā al-wusūl wa-l-amal fī 'ilmay al-uṣūl wa-l-jadal*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 2006), 1:33; Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-fuḥūl ilā taḥqīq al-ḥaqq min 'ilm al-uṣūl* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, n.d.), 20; see also, Bernard G. Weiss, *The Spirit of Islamic Law* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 24-37; Intisar A. Rabb, *Doubt in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 150, 288, 290; for its development in the context of Shī'a jurisprudence, see Robert Gleave, *Scripturalist Islam: The History and Doctrines of the Akhbārī Shī'ī School* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 81-4, 91, 100 *passim*.

²⁷³ Al-Jāhīz; 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, ed., *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, 8 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1996), 6:35-7.

²⁷⁴ Paul L. Heck, *Skepticism in Classical Islam: Moments of Confusion* (London: Routledge, 2014), 14-15.

hermeneutical problem for the Muslim community, who, compared to the Christians, had only begun to scrutinise their sacred texts and basic tenets of anthropomorphist positions.²⁷⁵

In al-Biqā'ī's milieu, the situation is similar as he, too, handles a text and how to interpret it, grappling with the insufficiency of the Bible and its Christian misinterpretation based on literal readings of the Gospels.²⁷⁶ The motivation for drawing on this juridical position, that is, his appeal to *tawaqquf*, also mirrors that of al-Jāhīz. The way al-Jāhīz intended *tawaqquf* to function centred on one's ability to move from doubt (*shakk*) to certainty (*yaqīn*), a process that necessarily involved suspending judgment on matters deemed abstruse, or, more specifically, subjects one could not have *a priori* knowledge about; he labels this part of the transition as 'the third state' (*al-ḥāl al-thālitha*).²⁷⁷ The point was not to remain in doubt but first to assess the nature of what was being studied or argued for before making a decision in order to reach clarity, then if possible, certainty, rather than remaining in a state of confusion (*ḥayra*) or uncertainty (*irtiyāb*).²⁷⁸

It is exactly on this state of uncertainty concerning the Bible that al-Biqā'ī wishes to focus his attention with the use of *tawaqquf*. As will be shown below, he develops this legal argument based on the obscurity (*shakl*) of the Bible. Not knowing the precise status of the biblical text, according to al-Biqā'ī, leads to this need for *tawaqquf*.²⁷⁹ But rather than it being a medial, or transitional state as with al-Jāhīz, *tawaqquf* becomes the *terminus ad quem* when handling abstruse biblical material so that the Muslim community would not unknowingly 'become deniers of that which [they] had been

²⁷⁵ Heck, *Skepticism in Classical Islam*, 14-15. Heck demonstrates that the tradition of 'suspending judgment' on certain philosophical questions can be traced through Greek thought in the works of early Sceptics writing in that genre of literature; Heck does, however, delineate categorical distinctions between the formulation of *tawaqquf*, which developed in an Islamic context, and that of *aporeia*, for example, which finds root in Greek philosophy (*Skepticism*, 16-17).

²⁷⁶ Al-Biqā'ī engages the Bible at Q 3:7 where he challenges the Christians's literal interpretation of 'sonship' (*al-bunuwwah*) and 'fatherhood' (*al-ubuwwah*) language in the Gospels (*Naẓm al-durar* [Hyderabad Ed.], 4:226-7).

²⁷⁷ Al-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, 6:37.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 6:36-7.

²⁷⁹ Al-Biqā'ī, *Aqwāl*, 90.

commanded to believe in'.²⁸⁰ Moving from doubt to clarity, or certainty, with respect to the Bible finds no support in al-Biqā'ī's equation; rather, it is a matter of guarding oneself against committing sin by heedlessly rejecting what might be *ipsissima verbum Dei*.²⁸¹ That is to say, *tawaqquf* becomes a means by which al-Biqā'ī, or any Muslim cleric for that matter, can protect himself from unknowingly rejecting revelation that could be from God.

Biqā'ī begins to construct his defence for quoting the Bible by using the concept of *tawaqquf* as the edifice upon which to build. Though the language of doubt (*shakk*) and certainty (*yaqīn*) seldom appears in the context of *Aqwāl* 5,²⁸² the principle laid out by al-Jāhīz for first assessing a matter, in this case the Bible, before either rejecting or affirming it, finds support in al-Biqā'ī's protracted discussion on Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Kirmānī's (d. 786/1384) interpretation of a ḥadīth by al-Bukhārī. A well-known Cairene scholar and Shafī'ite, Kirmānī gained recognition as a muḥaddith, composing what would become one of the most well-known commentaries on al-Bukhārī's work.²⁸³

Kirmānī's quotation of the following ḥadīth precipitates a conversation on what could be classified as *the* Islamic rationale for handling matters of uncertainty regarding the biblical text: 'Do not trust the Scripture people, but do not impugn them (*lā tuṣaddiqū ahl al-kitāb wa-lā*

²⁸⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Aqwāl*, 90: 'wa-lā nukdhdhibuhum fa-la'allahu yakūnu ṣaḥīḥā fa-nakūnu munkarīna li-mā umirnā anna nu'manu bihi.'

²⁸¹ Here in *Aqwāl* 5, Biqā'ī fervently upholds the holiness of the Decalogue on exactly these grounds, opining, 'It is obvious that no Muslim, let alone a scholar of Islam, would maintain that [the Decalogue] can be used to clean (oneself) of excrement; for instance, God said all of this [...],' and Biqā'ī then proceeds to quote the Decalogue from Exodus 20:2ff. (*Aqwāl*, 96: 'li-annahu lā yakḥfā 'alā aḥad anna musliman faḍlan 'an 'ālim lā yaqūlu innahu yastanjī bi-naḥw mā fī-hā min naḥwa qāla Allāh jamī'a hādhihi [...]'). He further elaborates on this point in the *tafsīr* context of *sūrat al-Baqara* (*Naẓm al-durar*, 1:101; see chapter 5 of this dissertation).

²⁸² Only the term *shakk* ('doubt') occurs in *Aqwāl* 5, a total of four times (95, 98-9); the terms *shakk* and *yaqīn* do not import the same meaning into al-Biqā'ī's formulation of *tawaqquf*.

²⁸³ Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Bukhārī bi-sharḥ*, 25v. in 9v. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1981); see Saleh, 'A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist', 646.

tukadhdhibūhum).²⁸⁴ Kirmānī then explicates the quote and provides the juridical basis for *tawaqquf*, stating:

[T]his is the grounds for the permissibility of suspending judgment (*tawaqquf*) on any affair that is obscure; thus a verdict should not be made against it with respect to the soundness/legal validity or falsity [of a claim], and neither with respect to making it lawful or unlawful. We have been commanded to believe in the books that were sent down to the prophets. Otherwise we would be incapable of discerning the truth communicated by these books from that which is false. So we suspend judgment.²⁸⁵

The quote from al-Kirmānī uses the language and concepts of Muslim jurisprudence, a strategic move by al-Biqā'ī who was aware of the position of his opponents, notably al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497).²⁸⁶ Sakhāwī claimed that the shari'ah clearly states the impermissibility of using the Bible in any sense.²⁸⁷ Therefore al-Biqā'ī wanted to provide a plausible, legal stance on handling the Bible that allowed not only for its reading, but also its use; this is the reason al-Biqā'ī composed his *apologia* for quoting the Bible.²⁸⁸

Biqā'ī then continues his argument for *tawaqquf* by appealing to the *salaf*, or first generations who heard Muḥammad. The first example he provides concerns the question asked of 'Uthmān about joining in marriage, or sex with two sisters who were slave girls. He comments that the verse, which is unnamed in the treatise but refers to the context of *sūrat al-Nisā'* (Q 4) vv. 23-5, 'declares both of them

²⁸⁴ Al-Biqā'ī, *Aqwāl*, 9.92.460; cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Aqwāl*, 90.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 90.

²⁸⁶ For al-Sakhāwī in the context of fifteenth-century Cairo among other historians, see M. Ziyāda, *Mu'arrikhūn fi Miṣr fi l-Qarn al-Khāmis 'Ashar al-Milādī, al-Qarn al-Tāsi' al-Hijri* (Cairo: n.p., 1954), 41-4; see also, Donald P. Little, 'Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk epochs' in Carl F. Petry, ed., *The Cambridge History of Egypt*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1:412-44.

²⁸⁷ Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-lāmī li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'*, 12 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1934-6), 1:101-11.

²⁸⁸ Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 1.

lawful and [these verses] prohibit both of them.²⁸⁹ The second example of *tawaqquf* involves Ibn ʿUmar and the question he was asked about a man who vows to fast, but one of the days he vows to do so corresponds with Eid.²⁹⁰ It is said that God commands keeping one's vow, but he forbids Muhammad from abstaining the day of Eid. So in both cases there is ambiguity regarding the qur'ānic text and the traditions, and thus legal precedent is established for the suspension of judgment concerning only those things in which there is obscurity.

With respect to the books of Moses and Jesus (*kutub sharīʿah*), moreover, this kind of inclining²⁹¹ toward *tawaqquf* is recommended if the life stories and the trustworthy stories about Moses and Jesus are unclear with respect to the soundness of the narrative; in this case suspended judgment is permitted because it has been related in the Qur'ān also. However, if what is abstruse relates to the regulations of the *tawrāh* — e.g., the Decalogue — and the *injīl* — e.g., alms, fasting and prayer²⁹² — then *tawaqquf* is not permitted. Thus the Qur'ān makes the decisive ruling in every case.²⁹³ This argument stands as the foundational legal position al-Biqāʿī wishes to springboard from in order to establish reason for using the Bible in his commentary, a stance that challenged the *de riguer* position of the *sharīʿah* against simply reading the Bible, let alone quoting it.

Biqāʿī finishes his treatment of *tawaqquf* by reflecting on another ḥadīth that, though stated differently, supports the previous saying: 'Do not ask [the Scripture people] about anything lest they

²⁸⁹ Al-Biqāʿī, *Aqwāl*, 90. For the legal reasoning behind these verses, see various interpretations by Qur'ān commentators and legal scholars in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, ed., *The Study Qur'ān: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Harper Collins, 2015), 199-203; on pre-Islamic tribal principles and the emergence of qur'ānic legal identity, see Wael B. Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 19-28, esp. 23.

²⁹⁰ Al-Bukhārī, 3.67.1994

²⁹¹ Al-Biqāʿī, *Aqwāl*, 91: '*qabil al-sayida*' (lit., bending of the neck).

²⁹² For a comparative analysis between the 'regulations' observed in Jewish and Christian contexts and that of the Qur'ān's pre-Islamic Arabian context see Holger Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013) 55-76.

²⁹³ Ibid., 91: '*wa-ʿalā kull ḥāl fa-qad jaʿala l-fayṣal fī maʿrifat al-saḥīḥ min ghayrihi kitābunā.*'

inform you of the truth and you impugn it, or [they tell you] something wrong and you affirm it (*lā tas'alūhum 'an shay' li-yukhbirūkum bi-ḥaqq li-tukadhdhibū bihi aw bi-bāṭil fa-tuṣaddiqū bihi*).²⁹⁴ He analyses this text with the aid of both strong and weak lines of transmission, a task that occupies several pages of chapter five.²⁹⁵ Then he concludes with a comment on *tawaqquf* and the *salaf* that brings his discourse full circle. He began discussing *tawaqquf* with an appeal to the interpretation of the *salaf* since they were the earliest community to wrestle with abstruse portions of sacred texts. Here at the close of his conversation on suspending judgment, Biqā'ī looks again to the opinion, or belief (*al-ẓann*) of the first generation of Muslims in order to strengthen his doctrine. With the two above sayings now labelled as the 'suspending judgment ḥadīth' (*al-ḥadīth al-tawaqquf*), al-Biqā'ī affirms that answering variegated questions on abstruse texts requires basing one's opinion on the interpretation of the *salaf*,²⁹⁶ who established *tawaqquf* as a valid position to take in matters of uncertainty.

Chapters seven and eight of the *Aqwāl* will be addressed next. Herein al-Biqā'ī delineates four categories of biblical alteration (*tabdīl*) and three classes (*aqsām*) of biblical material. While his classifications of biblical alteration add nothing unique to the conversation in the Islamic tradition, his 'classes' for understanding the biblical text shed light on the often neglected subject of the Bible's place of legitimacy alongside that of the Qur'ān.

4.1.2. *Aqwāl* 7 & 8: Categories of Alteration (*tabdīl*) and Classes (*aqsām*) of Biblical Material

In *Aqwāl* 7, Biqā'ī delineates four categories of biblical alteration (*tabdīl*). Under the first category, the Bible has been completely changed, which he labels as 'excessive' (*ifrāt*).²⁹⁷ The second category

²⁹⁴ Al-Biqā'ī, *Aqwāl*, 91.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 91-3.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 92: '*wa-yu'khadhu min hādihā l-ḥadīth al-tawaqquf 'an al-khawḍ fī'l-mushkilāt al-jazm fī-hā bi-mā wuqī'a fī'l-ẓann wa 'alā hādihā yuḥmalu mā jā'a 'an al-salaf min dhālika*'.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 124.

maintains that most of the Bible has been altered, a position al-Biqā'ī understands as merely a variation of the first.²⁹⁸ With the third category, the Bible has undergone minimal change, a position on the text al-Biqā'ī presents as al-Shāfi'ī's own and one with which he aligns himself with.²⁹⁹ Lastly, the fourth category considers the Bible to be textually uncorrupted, but rather Jews and Christians have misinterpreted that text.³⁰⁰ Even though al-Biqā'ī adopts the third category, he also believes the text has been misinterpreted in some cases.³⁰¹ Thus his notion of an altered text encompasses both the third and the fourth categories.

Biqā'ī then presents three classes (*aqsām*) for biblical material in *Aqwāl* 8. The validity of the *aqsām* is determined by using the Qur'ān as the ultimate proof text. The first class consists of fabricated material (*mawḍū'āt*), the second, material whose status cannot be determined, or weak (*ḍa'if*) reports, and the third, then, is genuinely divine material (*ghayr dhālika*).³⁰² Divine material can be quoted as a proof (*ḥujjah*); material whose status cannot be determined can be quoted for admonitory purposes (*targhib*) only; fabricated material can be quoted only to warn people against it so as not to be misled, and it must be accompanied by a cautionary note if used.³⁰³ He links this kind of tripartite division to an analogy between the Bible and ḥadīth stating that weak prophetic

²⁹⁸ Al-Biqā'ī, *Aqwāl*, 124; '*anna l-tabdīl waqa'a wa-lakinna fī wa-mu'ẓamiha*'.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 124; '*waqa'a fī'l-yasīr minhā*'; cf. Joseph E. Lowry, ed. and trans., *The Epistle on Legal Theory: Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 2-3. Here, Shāfi'ī uses stronger language than al-Biqā'ī when assessing the *ahl al-kitāb* and their 'mixing together' of lies with 'the truth of God that he had revealed to them' (*'fa-ifta'lū kadhiban ṣāghūhu bi-alsanatihim fa-khalaṭūhu bi-ḥaqq Allāh alladhī anzala ilayhim*').

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 125.

³⁰¹ Both concepts of *tabdīl* surface explicitly in al-Biqā'ī's interpretation of the Bible *sub* Q 3:7, the context of which will be addressed below.

³⁰² Ibid., 130.

³⁰³ Ibid., 131.

traditions whose authenticity was doubted could be cited for admonitory purposes.³⁰⁴ Therefore the biblical text should be afforded the same status according to al-Biqā'ī's argument here.

In all of the passages of the Bible that al-Biqā'ī cites, however, he never issues such a cautionary note or warning, in fact it is quite the opposite. He is rather adamant about his audience knowing that the scripture he uses is the same scripture that the Jews and Christians use in his day. Before quoting the Gospels, for example, he comments that, 'This is what is mentioned from the four Gospels that the Christians have with them presently, at this time' (*dhukira dhālika min al-anājil al-arba'a l-mawjūdah al-ān bayna aḡhur al-Naṣārā*).³⁰⁵ This statement demonstrates al-Biqā'ī's willingness to authenticate the quotations he used from the Bible in his commentary.

The only parallel that can be noted here between al-Biqā'ī's treatise and Ibn Barrajān's method of scriptural exegesis centres on the use of ḡadīth. In both the *Tanbīh* and the *Īdāḡh*, Ibn Barrajān incorporates ḡadīths into nearly every interpretation of a qur'ānic verse.³⁰⁶ In a statement on the use of weak ḡadīths, an objection Ibn Barrajān anticipated from possible critics, he clearly communicates his position, which also relates to the intellectual motivation behind using material from the *Banī Isrā'īl*:

'Proof (*dalīl*) for this [weak ḡadīth] is not to be sought after, nor should ḡadīth narrators look for a reliable chain of transmission (*sanad*) as one would normally for legal commands, prohibitions and penalties. For its [qur'ānic] foundations (*uṣūl*) confirm its veracity, and the totality of revelation substantiates its necessarily existent truth [...] for the Prophet said: "convey on my behalf even if it be a single verse, and feel free to transmit from the People of Isrā'īl." He said this with respect to their states in this world, so what about an abode whose measure (*miqdār*) is unfathomable?'³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Al-Biqā'ī, *Aḡwāl*, 131.

³⁰⁵ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naḡm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:380; in another context he adds, 'which is among them right now, at the end of this ninth century (*al-qarn al-tāsi'*) (4:227).

³⁰⁶ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 241.

³⁰⁷ Quoted from Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus*, 244; cf. Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāḡh* ¶729-30. Casewit's publication is key for unpacking Ibn Barrajān's scriptural hermeneutics, and will be used extensively below.

These reports are used primarily for admonitory purposes, but also to underpin mystical doctrines and to clarify and expound non-differentiated (*mujmal*) qur'ānic texts; he frequently uses sound (*ṣahīḥ*), weak (*ḍa'īf*) and fabricated (*mawḍū'*) material *as long as* it can be corroborated by the Qur'ān.³⁰⁸

4.1.3. Conclusion

Biqā'ī produces a masterful *apologia* for the Bible using Islamic traditions to achieve his goal. In so doing, he turns the tables on al-Sakhāwī — his most virulent detractor — using *tawaqquf* as his method of retribution. 'Suspending judgment' lifts the onus of deciding the Bible's legitimacy from al-Biqā'ī by placing it, rather, on individual exegesis in a given context. His extensive use of biblical material is thus presented under the umbrella of *tawaqquf* which is supported by al-Kirmānī, one of the most celebrated muḥadīth of al-Biqā'ī's day. While he managed to get the upper hand in the intellectual debate surrounding his use of the Bible in his day, the effects of al-Biqā'ī's arguments, however persuasive, have failed to endure the test of time, leaving little impression on subsequent Muslim exegetes of the Bible.

The central arguments from the *Aqwāl* for biblical quotation have now been addressed. The interpretation of Q 3:7 by three other *mufasssīrūn*, that of Muqātil b. Sulaymān, al-Ṭabarī and al-Zamakhsharī, will be presented next in order to situate the two main authors' thought within the intellectual ambience for this passage. Then the scriptural hermeneutics of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī will be investigated. Biqā'ī's tafsīr contains several relevant sections to consider when looking at his relationship to Ibn Barrajān's method of qur'ānic interpretation. An extended discussion from the prolegomena (*muqaddimah*), for example, and one statement at the beginning of al-Biqā'ī's interpretation of *sūrat al-Fātiḥa* both provide valuable insights into similar hermeneutic traits, namely the connection between Ibn Barrajān's theory of qur'ānic harmony and coherence (*naẓm al-qur'ān*) and al-Biqā'ī's science of qur'ānic connections, or sūrah holism (*'ilm al-munāsabāt*). With Q 3:7,

³⁰⁸ Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus*, 242; see section 4.3. below on Ibn Barrajān's scriptural hermeneutics.

moreover, these principles become more clearly defined in their exposition of the *muḥkamāt* and the *mutashābihāt*. The importance of Q 3:7 for Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāṣī's scriptural hermeneutics warrants a brief survey of its historical reception in the Islamic tradition.

4.2. Reception History of *Sūrat Āl Imrān* (3:7)

It is He who has sent down this Scripture, in which are firm (muḥkamāt) signs which are the Root (umm)³⁰⁹ of the Scripture, whilst there are others that are self-similar (mutashābihāt). As for those in whose hearts is deviation, they follow [the verses] that are like one another, seeking mischief and seeking its interpretation. Only God knows its interpretation. Those who are well-grounded in knowledge say, "We believe in it. All is from our Lord." Only men of understanding are reminded (Q 3:7).

In the nascent period of qur'ānic interpretation, the exegesis of Q 3:7 involved concepts and formulæ imbibed from previous traditions. This method would soon be replaced, though not entirely, with a *cri de cœur* to other emerging genres of Islamic literature. Before this appeal begins, however, exegetes needed recourse to an external source of authority in order to read between the qur'ānic lines. The tafsīr of Muqātil is representative of this methodological stance.³¹⁰

4.2.1. Muqātil b. Sulaymān on Q 3:7

In his commentary on Q 3:7, Muqātil sets the stage with a brief account of the occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) on sūrah 3: 'the Christians of Najran agreed [...] saying: "We bear witness that Jesus is God." So God revealed, as a refutation for their claim, "Alif Lam Mim."³¹¹ He then continues by placing the first six verses in the context of Jewish and Christian *Heilsgeschichte*, and describes the sense of *al-*

³⁰⁹ Jones, 'Matrix.'

³¹⁰ Abū l-Ḥasan Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Balkhī; 'Abdallah Maḥmūd Shihāta, ed., *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān* 5 vols. (Beirut: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb, 1979-89).

³¹¹ Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 1:262; the significance of the 'mysterious letters' (*hurūf al-muqatta'a*) and the interpretation of Q 3:7 will be addressed in the discussion on al-Ṭabarī below.

furqān (Guiding Light) (Q 3:4) in view of those traditions.³¹² Uri Rubin provides a good argument for reading *al-furqān* as ‘light.’ He examines Muqātil’s interpretation and comments,

‘This shift from the worldly to the spiritual meaning is evidently inspired by the local Arabian sense of *furqān* as light of dawn; it is encountered already in the comments of Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) on Q 8:29. Muqātil defines the term *furqān* as a *makhraj* (way out) [that] leads one out of *shubuhāt* (doubts). Muqātil has applied the same meaning to other Quranic occurrences of *furqān* in which it stands for revealed Scripture. This is seen in his comments on Q 2:185, 3:4 and 25:1.’³¹³

As noted, the same language is used by Muqātil at Q 3:4: “al-furqān”: He means by it, the way out (*makhraj*) by faith from doubts (*shubuhāt*) and error (*ḍalāla*).³¹⁴ The importance of Muqātil’s comments on this verse is to show that he interprets the text in a consistent way, which is in line with his understanding of *umm al-kitāb* in Q 3:7 as being inclusive of earlier revelations. Muqātil links ‘root of the Scripture’ with the *muḥkamāt*, stating,

“The [*muḥkamāt*] are the *umm al-kitāb*,” meaning, the root of the Scripture (*aṣl al-kitāb*), because they are written down on the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*) in which they are made sacred (*muḥarramāt*) for all people in their book. And they are called *umm al-kitāb* only because they are written down in all of the books that God revealed to all of the prophets.’³¹⁵

His interpretation of Q 3:7 underscores the cross-traditional perspective evinced in his position on *al-furqān* in Q 3:4, which is illustrated by the concept of a ‘guiding light.’ This is brought together when he comments on the *muḥkamāt*: ‘Nothing in all the books abrogates these *muḥkamāt* verses. They are

³¹² Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 1:262-3; for discussions on the different meanings of ‘al-furqān,’ see s.v., ‘Furqān,’ *EI2*; Fred M. Donner, ‘Quranic Furqān,’ *JSS* 52 (2007), 279-300; Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, 225-29; Daniel Madigan, *The Qurʾān’s Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam’s Scripture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 125-7; idem., ‘The Limits of Self-referentiality’ in Stefan Wild, ed., *Self-Referentiality in the Qurʾān* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2006), 65-7). The translation of ‘al-furqān’ as ‘Guiding Light’ is based on the findings of Uri Rubin, ‘On the Arabian Origins of the Qurʾān: The Case of Al-Furqān,’ *JSS* 54/2 (2009), 421-33, esp. 430, which are in agreement with Muqātil’s comments on Q 3:4.

³¹³ Rubin, ‘On the Arabian Origins of the Qurʾān,’ 430.

³¹⁴ Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 1:262.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 1:263-4; for the usage of the term ‘al-lawḥ’ (tablet) in the phrase *al-lawḥ al-mahfūz* in pre-Islamic literature and its subsequent association with ‘umm al-kitāb’ in the qurʾānic corpus, see Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, 253; also s.v., ‘Preserved Tablet,’ *EQ*.

muḥkamāt for the entirety of the children of Adam, all of them. They are the *umm al-kitāb*, i.e., the *aṣl al-kitāb*. They are called the *aṣl al-kitāb* simply because they are written in the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*) and in all of the books.³¹⁶ The commonality between the two contexts supports the notion of a ‘revelatory core’ shared by the Qurʾān, the Torah and the Gospel.³¹⁷

In his work on Qurʾānic exegesis, Claude Gilliot observes that the criteria of transmission in Muqātil’s commentary do not align with later standards found in the genre of tafsīr. The reason for this distinction, Gilliot proceeds, is because ‘he quoted extensively from the biblical legends. The *qiṣṣa* and Jewish traditions are also essential sources of his commentary. At this time, scholars did not use the Qurʾān necessarily to justify their views, as they pretend to do later.’³¹⁸ Moreover, Muqātil’s inclusion of biblical stories and *isrāʾīliyyāt* throughout his commentary exemplifies a dependence on previous traditions early in the formation of the tafsīr genre, the literary presentation of which becomes less noticeable later in the commentary literature as other methods of interpretation begin to emerge.³¹⁹ Next, Ṭabarī’s exegesis of Q 3:7 will be presented in order to further situate Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī in the Islamic tradition.

4.2.2. Ṭabarī on Q 3:7

The contrast between Muqātil’s early tafsīr and al-Ṭabarī’s commentary calls attention to the hermeneutical differences in the genre, distinctions in style and emphasis that are equally found

³¹⁶ Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ‘Text and Textuality: Q 3:7 as a Point of Intersection,’ in Issa J. Boullata, ed., *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qurʾān* (London: Routledge, 2000), 60. With respect to the *mutashābihāt*, Muqātil limits them to a group of *ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭaʿat*: alif-lām-mīm, alif-lām-mīm-ṣād, alif-lām-mīm-rā, alif-lām-rā (*Tafsīr*, 1:264).

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60. These sentiments are also shared by al-Biqāʿī, as will be evinced with his treatment of Q 3:7, discussed below.

³¹⁸ Claude Gilliot, Exégèse, *Langue et Théologie en Islam: L’Exégèse Coranique de Tabari* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1990), 132.

³¹⁹ For a concise survey of this literature within the development of the tafsīr genre, see Jane Dammen McAuliffe, ‘Assessing the Isrāʾīliyyāt: An exegetical conundrum,’ in Stefan Leder, ed., *Story-telling in the Framework of non-Fictional Arabic Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 345-69; William Brinner’s introduction to al-Thaʿlabī’s *ʿArāʾis al-Majālis fi Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ*, also provides important historical background for *isrāʾīliyyāt* literature and one of its genres, *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, that helps orient the reader to their function within the larger field of tafsīr studies (Brinner, trans. and ed., *ʿArāʾis al-Majālis fi Qiṣaṣ al-Anbiyāʾ* or “*Lives of the Prophets*,” [Leiden: Brill, 2002], xi-xxxiii).

when comparing al-Ṭabarī's work with that of al-Zamakhsharī.³²⁰ Ṭabarī references some *asbāb* material at the outset of his commentary on chapter three, similar to that of Muqātil, but at v. 7, his presentation of *umm al-kitāb* is arranged systematically, taking into account various traditions thus providing several ways of interpreting the text. Moreover, Ṭabarī also provides traditions that support the interpretation of *al-furqān*, but rather than emphasizing 'light,' the legal sense of 'distinguishing between truth and falsehood' (*al-faṣl bayna l-ḥaqq wa'l-bāṭil*) is imparted to the text.³²¹ There is also some discussion about the Christians of Najran in this section of al-Ṭabarī's commentary; *al-furqān* is related to the *āmr Ṭā* (command of Jesus) in several places. However, it is only with the connotation of distinguishing between what is right and what is wrong, not in the sense of a previous 'revelation' or a 'light,' that guides one out of darkness.

Ṭabarī offers five possibilities for the interpretation of Q 3:7a, indicative of the kind of exegetical thinking that occurred early in tafsīr literature. Each of these lenses would continue to serve as a *terminus a quo* for subsequent Qur'ānic interpretation, including the work of Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqā'ī. The following section will survey the five opinions that al-Ṭabarī transmits from early 2nd/8th c. *mufasssīrūn* in order to provide an interpretive framework for comparison.

With the first possible reading of the verse, a report attributed to Ibn 'Abbās (d. 87/688) states that the *muḥkamāt* are 'the *umm al-kitāb*: the abrogating (*al-nāsikh*) verses, which are to be obeyed and acted upon; and the *mutashābihāt* are the abrogated (*al-mansūkhāt*) verses, which is not [about] obedience.'³²² Further, Ṭabarī observes that 'the self-similar verses "are the *umm al-kitāb*," meaning, therefore, that they are the *aṣl al-kitāb*, in which are the pillar of faith (*imād al-dīn*), the religious

³²⁰ Abī al-Qāsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, 'Abd al-Mawjūd, 'Ādil Aḥmad and 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwad, eds., *al-Kashshāf 'an ḥaqā'iq ghawāmiḍ wa-'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-tāwīl*, 6 vols. (Riyād: Maktabat al-'Ubaykān, 1998). The interpretation of Zamakhsharī will be evaluated below after that of Ṭabarī.

³²¹ Abū Ja'far b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī; 'Abdallah b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin Turkī, ed., *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, 26 vols. (Riyad: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub-Ma'ārif, 2003), 5:182-5.

³²² *Ibid.*, 5:193-4.

duties (*al-farā'id*) and the divine ordinances (*al-ḥudūd*).³²³ The second opinion presented by al-Ṭabarī explains *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* in etymological terms. Several qur'ānic self-descriptions are quoted, which ascribe to parts of the texts a function similar to that ascribed to the 'firm' and the 'self-similar' parts in Q 3:7a.³²⁴

With the third possible reading, Ṭabarī presents *muḥkamāt* as those verses that only admit one interpretation; and the *mutashābihāt* are those verses that admit several interpretations. Concerning the *mutashābih*, he continues, '[B]y them God puts the servants to the test, just as He puts them to the test through what is permissible and what is forbidden; but true servants are not turned toward falsehood, nor caused to turn away from the truth.'³²⁵ The fourth opinion is that the *mutashābihāt* are those narratives that occur in several places of the Qur'ān and the *muḥkamāt* applies to those narratives that occur once. Ṭabarī begins by stating that the *muḥkamāt* are to be understood as those qur'ānic verses which God firmly established; that is, they are the verses containing the stories of the people and of the messengers who God sent to them, which He explained by clarifying that to Muḥammad and his community.³²⁶ Then he describes the *mutashābihāt* as consisting of those narratives 'whose wording is similar when it is repeated in different sūrahs — whether it is by narrating it with words that are in agreement, but differ in meaning, or whether it is by narrating it

³²³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 5:189. Understanding *umm al-kitāb* in terms of obligation and duty fits with the earlier references he cites. Madigan observes that in al-Ṭabarī's commentary many of the exegetical traditions cited are in general agreement about the *muḥkamāt*, which are 'those verses that have legal content' (*The Qur'ān's Self Image*, 163).

³²⁴ Al-Ṭabarī then brings together other verses that describe the function of certain categories of qur'ānic passages in terms that are similar to the function ascribed to the *muḥkamāt*/*mutashābihāt* relationship in 3:7: 'He leads astray by it only the profligate (*al-fāsiqīna*) (2:26); 'Thus God places abomination on those who do not believe' (6:125); and 'those who are guided aright, He increases them with respect to guidance and He gives them their fear (of God) (*taqwāhum*)' (47:17) (*Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 5:196). Here God gives clear revelation so that those who obey may receive guidance; for those who are disobedient; however, God uses the same revelation to their ultimate end. In this way, the *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* verses occur as layers in the same text.

³²⁵ Ibid., 5:197.

³²⁶ Ibid., 5:197.

with different words that agree in meaning.³²⁷ Ṭabarī's point is that Qur'ānic narratives can use contrasting words to convey the same sense of the passage.

The fifth and final possible reading of Q 3:7a, the one that al-Ṭabarī endorses, regards the *muḥkamāt* and the *mutashābihāt* as distinct kinds of verses. However the *muḥkamāt*, he begins, 'are the verses of the Qur'ān of which the scholars know the original sense, and they understand the meaning and interpretation of it.'³²⁸ As for the *mutashābihāt*, they are considered to be something only God knows the interpretation of. For example, knowing 'the time of the birth of Jesus, sunrise and sunset, the day of resurrection and the destruction of the world, and that which it resembles, because no one knows that.'³²⁹ This kind of knowledge, Ṭabarī concludes, is exemplified in the occurrence of the letter clusters (*hurūf al-muqatta'a*) at the beginning of some sūrahs in the Qur'ān.³³⁰ The hermeneutics employed by al-Zamakhsharī at Q 3:7 will be explored in what follows.

4.2.3. Zamakhsharī on Q 3:7

As the genre of tafsīr literature after al-Ṭabarī undergoes stylistic changes and emphases, Zamakhsharī stands out as a notable figure. He was a renowned 'Mu'tazilite grammarian and man of letters from Khwārazm,' whose Qur'ān commentary, *al-Kashshāf*, is for the most part evaluated positively in the sources; either his commentary is singled out for special recognition or it is listed among his other

³²⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 5:197.

³²⁸ Ibid., 5:199; he continues with an explanation of *mutashābih*, which are verses that no one is able to comprehend except God, who alone possesses knowledge of it. He then gives a few examples of this archetypal knowledge, ones that have eschatological import, such as the time of Jesus' procession (on the day of judgment, presumably) and the time of the sun's rising from the west, both of which are portents of the last days.

³²⁹ Ibid., 5:199.

³³⁰ These letter clusters, or 'mysterious letters,' appear at the beginning of 29 sūrahs: Q 2, 3, 7, 10-15, 19-20, 26-32, 36, 38, 40-46, 50 and 68. For an interesting argument on the interpretation of the 'mysterious letters,' see Irfan Shahīd, *Fawātih al-Suwar: The Mysterious Letters of the Qur'ān*, in Issa J. Boullata, ed., *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'ān* (London: Routledge, 2000), 125-39; for a treatment of the *hurūf al-muqatta'a* in the Sunnī commentary tradition, see Martin Nguyen, 'Exegesis of the *hurūf al-muqatta'a*: Polyvalency in Sunnī Traditions of Qur'ānic Interpretation,' *JQS* 14:2 (2012): 1-28.

laudable works.³³¹ It is interesting to note that, according to Ignaz Goldziher, Zamakhsharī's principal methodology is confirmed in sūrah 3:7.³³² The *umm al-kitāb*, Zamakhsharī states, 'that is, the root of the Scripture (*aṣl al-kitāb*) [is that which] the *mutashābih* verses are brought into accordance with and return to.'³³³ He then examines an ambiguous verse in light of a firm verse to show how the former is dependent on the latter for explication.

The first *mutashābih* verse he quotes is Q 75:23: 'Looking on their Lord,' which, according to al-Zamakhsharī, must be reconciled with this *muḥkam* verse, 'Sight does not reach Him' (Q 6:103); the second *mutashābih* verse quoted is Q 17:16: 'When We wish to destroy a settlement, We command its affluent people to act profligately in it, and the Word is realised against it, and We destroy it totally;' this must be brought into agreement with Q 7:28: 'When they commit some immoral act, they say "We found our forefathers practising it, and God has ordered us to do it." God does not order immoral acts.'³³⁴ The *muḥkam* verse, Q 7:28, must serve as the *aṣl al-kitāb* for the explanation of Q 17:16.³³⁵ Furthermore, the following comments by al-Zamakhsharī on the *mutashābihāt* find echoes in al-Biqā'ī's treatment of Q 3:7a: 'Therefore, in the *mutashābihāt* a test and separation [exists] between those who are firmly established in the truth from those who are irresolute. Thus are such verses for the mutual encouragement of scholars, and the sharpening of their mental powers when determining their true meaning.'³³⁶

³³¹ Andrew J. Lane, 'Working Within Structure, Al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144): A Late Mu'tazilite Quran Commentator at Work,' in Sebastian Günther, ed., *Ideas, Images, and Methods of Portrayal: Insights into Classical Arabic Literature and Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 347-8.

³³² Ignaz Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden: Brill, 1920), 127: 'Zamachscharī findet das methodische Prinzip seiner Exegese in Sure 3 v. 5 [i.e., 3 v. 7]'; idem., Wolfgang H. Behn, trans. and ed., *Schools of Koranic Commentators* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 83.

³³³ Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:528.

³³⁴ Ibid., 1:528.

³³⁵ Goldziher, *Die Richtungen*, 128.

³³⁶ Al-Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, 1:528.

In the same vein al-Biqā'ī comments on the *mutashābih* verses: 'And verily God, Exalted, High, Mighty, Awesome in power and glory revealed the *ḥurūf al-mutashābih* (all the self-similar verses) as a test for His servants to show who is firm (*thābit*) among them from the one who is irresolute (*tā'ish*) and the certain from the one who is doubtful.'³³⁷ Both *mufassirūn* understand *mutashābih* in the Qur'ān as a test to those who are firm in knowledge. For al-Zamakhsharī and al-Biqā'ī, moreover, these particular verses exist in order to distinguish between those who have certitude and those who are irresolute, and also to encourage the scholars to go even deeper in their reading of the qur'ānic text, as al-Biqā'ī asserts in his interpretation of the *rāsikhūn* at the end of Q 3:7.³³⁸

4.2.4. Conclusion

The common expressions used to describe the *mutashābihāt* between these two exegetes demonstrates that al-Biqā'ī falls within the interpretive tradition on Q 3:7. A more explicit indication of this is found in al-Biqā'ī's prolegomenon where he states that his tafsīr is a *radīf* (lit. 'one who rides behind another on the back of the same beast')³³⁹ to the commentary of al-Bayḍāwī.³⁴⁰ This treatment of Muqātil, Ṭabarī and Zamakhsharī's interpretation of Q 3:7 helps to situate Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's hermeneutics within the reception history of the passage. With these preliminary observations on the tafsīr tradition in place, Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's methodological approach to the Qur'ān and its relevance to their biblical quotations will be explored next.

4.3. Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's Scriptural Hermeneutics of the Qur'ān and Bible

The central doctrine of Ibn Barrajān's scriptural hermeneutics is *naẓm al-qur'ān*, or qur'ānic harmony and coherence. The hinges upon which this doctrine turns are his conceptions of the *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt*. Similarly, the main interpretive feature of al-Biqā'ī's commentary, one that he spends

³³⁷ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:234.

³³⁸ Ibid., 4:247-8.

³³⁹ Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., *r-d-f*.

³⁴⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 1:4.

the most time discussing in his prolegomena, is the hermeneutic of *sūrah coherence*, or *‘ilm al-munāsabāt* (science of connections); the principle of *munāsabāt* guides al-Biqā‘ī’s exegesis at almost every turn. While these two theories *prima facie* appear the same, each author delineates his own categories in different terms under the theme of ‘coherence.’

To expand on the principles of *naẓm* and *munāsabāt* requires interaction with the categories of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* from Q 3:7 in the hermeneutical paradigms of both authors. Therefore, as the reader will find, the importance placed on Q 3:7 for the conversation on Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā‘ī’s hermeneutics is warranted. Moreover, as demonstrated above in the exegesis of Muqātil, Ṭabarī and Zamakhsharī’s texts, how the *mufasssīrūn* have approached this particular qur’ānic verse reveals the intellectual motivations behind their hermeneutic; the same applies here with Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā‘ī.

It should be noted that the term *mutashābih* is commonly rendered as ‘ambiguous’ or ‘allegorical.’³⁴¹ *Mutashābih* verses can be considered ambiguous in the sense that they are like one another, or ‘self-similar,’ to the degree that ambiguity occurs. This ‘ambiguity,’ however, does not render the verses unintelligible, as Ibn Barrajān argues, which is one point of agreement between he and al-Biqā‘ī’s interpretation of *mutashābih*; both exegetes contend that the *mutashābihāt* can be understood in light of the *muḥkamāt*, which will be discussed further below. The reading of *mutashābih* as ‘allegorical,’ moreover, adds another layer to the interpretation of the text that should be reserved for the *mu’tabirūn* and those well-versed in the qur’ānic sciences, as the two main authors would agree, lest it lead to innovation (*bid’a*) and dissension (*fitna*).

³⁴¹ On these two terms, see Leah Kinberg, ‘Muḥkamāt and Mutashābihāt (Koran 3/7): Implication of a Koranic Pair of Terms in Medieval Exegesis,’ *A* 35:2 (1988): 143-172; also, Sahiron Syamsuddin, ‘Muḥkam and Mutashābih: An Analytical Study of al-Ṭabarī’s and al-Zamakhsharī’s Interpretations of Q. 3:7,’ *JQS* 1 (1999): 63-7; for the metaphorical reading of *mutashābih* in the tradition, see Michel Lagarde, ‘De l’ambiguïté (mutashābih) dans le Coran: tentatives d’explication des exégètes musulmans,’ *QSA* 3 (1985): 45-62.

The theories of qur'ānic coherence will be addressed beginning with Ibn Barrajān's argument for the Qur'ān's harmonious composition,³⁴² which will be followed with al-Biqā'ī's principle of connections. Then an assessment of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* will ensue. This also involves looking at the relationship between Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's qur'ānic interpretation with that of the Torah and the Gospel. That is to say, the evaluation will not be exhaustive, but it will be comprehensive with respect to demonstrating how far their hermeneutics of the Qur'ān possibly informs their reading of the biblical text.

4.3.1. The Theories of *Naẓm* and *Munāsabāt*

Casewit has delineated three patterns of *naẓm* observed in the works of Ibn Barrajān. First, the category of 'thematic harmony' (*intizām al-ma'nā*) involves the relationship between individual verses or whole sūrahs; second is 'explicative harmony' (*intizām kadhā bi-kadhā*), which occurs when one verse elucidates the meaning of another verse in the same sūrah; last, 'symmetrical harmony,' the least prevalent of the three, applies to instances in which two repetitious passages in the same sūrah uncover hidden meanings of the Qur'ān.³⁴³ These coincide, to some degree, with al-Biqā'ī's principle of *munāsabāt*, discussed below.

The pattern of *thematic harmony* can be observed in Ibn Barrajān's exegesis of *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7:22-8). This pericope illustrates a qur'ānic 'link' (*waṣl*) by way of contrast between the visible 'raiment' (*libās*) Adam and Eve clothed themselves with in the Garden (Q 7:22) and the 'raiment of righteousness' (*libās al-taqwá*) that was lost (Q 7:27).³⁴⁴ As the literal, word-for-word revelation from God, Ibn Barrajān maintains that each sūrah is arranged in the Qur'ān according to a divine plan and,

³⁴² Ibn Barrajān's theory of *naẓm* has been explained, in detail, by Casewit in his recent publication, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 206-44 (cited in full above). Here Casewit's work on Ibn Barrajān's hermeneutics will be consulted regularly with additional comments throughout as it relates to al-Biqā'ī's theory of interpretation.

³⁴³ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 212-17.

³⁴⁴ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶398-400.

as such, *thematic harmony* can extend across entire sūrahs.³⁴⁵ The opening lines from *sūrat al-Mā'idah* (Q 5), 'O believers, fulfill your bonds (*yā-ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū awfū bi'l-'uqūdi*)' (Q 5:1) accords in meaning (*muntazim al-ma'nā bi-qawlihi*) with the first and last verses of *sūrat al-Nisā'* (Q 4), 'O mankind, fear your Lord [...] by whom you demand one of another, and these bonds of kinship (*yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu ittaqū rabbakumu [...] alladhī tasā'alūna bihi wa'l-arḥāma*)' (Q 4:1) and 'O mankind, a proof has now come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a manifest light (*yā-ayyuhā l-nāsu qad jā'akum burhānun min rabbikum wa-anzalnā ilaykum nūran mubīnan*)' (Q 4:174).³⁴⁶ *Thematic harmony* provides the most explicit examples of hermeneutical correlation between Ibn Barrajān method of qur'ānic and biblical exegesis. However, both *explicative* and *symmetrical* harmony will be discussed below in brief.

The second form of *naẓm* is classified as *explicative harmony*, whereby one verse is used to interpret another verse within the same sūrah. Here again Ibn Barrajān's principle of *naẓm* overlaps with his method of biblical interpretation. He prefaces his quotation of *sūrat al-Naḥl* (Q 16), stating that 'Allah's commands are the tree of life,' and refers to Genesis 2:9b, 'We discussed previously what came in the Torah, that [Allah] planted in the midst of the Garden, the tree of life and the tree, which is known as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'; then concerning Q 16:21, he states that 'Allah said that unbelievers and sinners are "dead, lifeless" (*qāla Allāh 'azza wa-jalla fīl-kuffār wa'l-'uṣāh <<amwāt ghayr aḥyā'>>*),' then a quick detour to *sūrat al-An'ām*, 'one who was dead, and We gave him life' (Q 6:122), and back to Q 16:97, commenting, 'that is, through faith and obedience to Allah, who said "Whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while he is a believer, then surely We shall give him a good life.'" He connects these verses from Q 16 (and Q 6) in one concluding remark, 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the open door to this life (*al-dunyā*). It was planted to

³⁴⁵ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 213-15.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 213.

symbolize (*ma'ná*) the commands and prohibitions, which are good and evil.³⁴⁷ Therefore the ones who are dead and lifeless (Q 16:21) can be afforded life (Q 6:122) through righteous deeds that lead to the 'good life' (Q 16:97); this is brought about by following God's command and prohibitions, symbolically represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9). The verses in Q 16 represent *explicative harmony* that are then extended to, or rather complimented by, the Genesis account.

The third and final pattern of *naẓm* is *symmetrical harmony*. Here Casewit's reference stands as the best example of two repetitious verses in a single *sūrah* revealing 'hidden meanings' of the Qur'an.³⁴⁸ In *sūrat al-Nūr* (Q 24), twice it reads, 'And verily We have sent down to you signs making everything clear (*āyāt mubayyināt*)' (vv.34, 46). Within the range and context of those two verses are the 'verse of light' (35), descriptions of believers (37) and unbelievers (39), and hypocrites (47). Ibn Barrajān brings the full exegetical weight of Q 24:34 and 46 to bear on the interpretation of the those four verses: "There are two types of light, visible and invisible, just as there are two types of unbelievers (*kāfir*), hypocrites, or Scripture people, and sheer unbelievers (*kāfir maḥḍ*). That is perhaps why the phrase, "And verily we have sent down to you signs making all clear," is repeated in the beginning and end of the passage.³⁴⁹ Here the connection with the previous revelations, namely the Torah, is not as evident as it was with that of *thematic* and *explicative harmony*. Nevertheless, it provides an example of Ibn Barrajān's third pattern of *naẓm*, one that completes this section on his theory of qur'ānic coherence. Biqā'ī's principle of *munāsabāt* will now be explored in the section below.

The centrality of *ilm al-munāsabāt* for al-Biqā'ī's qur'ānic exegesis can be summed up in one statement from the prolegomena to his tafsīr: 'the more hidden a connection is, the more powerful it

³⁴⁷ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶382.

³⁴⁸ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 217.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 217.

is once you see it (*wa-'alá qadari ghumūd tilka l-munāsabāt yakūna wuḍūhuhā ba'da inkashāfihā*).³⁵⁰ For al-Biqā'ī, then, it is through the science of *munāsabāt* that one can figure out why the text appears in particular forms rather than others. He defines the principle of *munāsabāt* in 'scientific' (*'ilmī*) terms first: 'Whether in the Qur'ān or in [something] other than the Qur'ān, *munāsabāt* is a science through which is known the subtle reasons (*al-tartīb*) behind orderings. What is the thing the subject is studying? You apply this knowledge to the parts in which you want to understand the connections'; that is, one applies *munāsabāt* in the study of any field of knowledge to determine whether in that branch of learning connections exist or not.

The fruit of *munāsabāt*, Biqā'ī continues, is 'to be aware of the position that this part you are studying deserves by virtue of what is behind it and what is in front of it, according to the similarities between them, which amounts to a collection of distinguishing attributes.'³⁵¹ Therefore, the science of qur'ānic *munāsabāt*, according to al-Biqā'ī, is more specifically expressed as 'the science through which you know the subtle reasoning behind the ordering of the Qur'ān's parts, and it is the secret of rhetoric (*balāghah*) because it leads to really understanding how these meanings suit what the circumstances need.'³⁵² An awareness of these connections directly informs al-Biqā'ī's interpretation of the qur'ānic text thus allowing for an intra-textual hermeneutic.³⁵³ That is to say, by virtue of *munāsabāt* parts of the Qur'ān that are understood to connect with each other then inform the

³⁵⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 1:14.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 1:5. He further elaborates this point in similar language after beginning his exegesis of *sūrat al-Fātiha* (1:17-18); see also Saleh, *In Defense of the Bible*, 15.

³⁵² Ibid., 1:5-6; for a definition of *balāghah* and its function in Islamic literature, see, s.v., 'bālāga,' *EL2*; for a detailed study on Arabic rhetoric and the three 'sciences' that comprise *balāghah* (*'ilm al-ma'āni*, *'ilm al-bayān* and *'ilm al-badī'*), see Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2006).

³⁵³ The kind of methodology suggested here by 'intra-textual hermeneutic' derives its meaning from the interpretation of textual units that occur within a single text, rather than texts *ab extra* (e.g., *intertextuality*) (Roland Meynet, *Treatise on Biblical Rhetoric*, trans. Leo Arnold, Rubianto Solichin and Lane B. Brieze [Leiden: Brill, 2012], 233, 235-7 *passim*); for a detailed study on the usage of intratextual and intertextual exegesis in Islamic sources, see Michel Cuypers, Jerry Ryan, trans., *The Composition of the Qur'an: Rhetorical Analysis* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 155-76.

interpretation of both. What is remarkable about this methodological approach, moreover, is that it allows for the Qurʾān to interpret the Qurʾān (*tafsīr al-qurʾān biʾl-qurʾān*) on the one hand, and, on the other, it encompasses the Torah and the Gospel.³⁵⁴

Moreover, applying *munāsabāt* to one's reading of the Qurʾān, according to al-Biqāʿī, is contingent upon one's knowledge of the 'global objective' (*al-maqṣūd*) of the particular chapter in which connections are being studied. This provides an understanding of what all of the sentences in the chapter mean, and that is why one's knowledge of the global objective is 'extremely precious' (*fi ghāyat al-nafāsat*).³⁵⁵ Biqāʿī then places his hermeneutical theory within the broader context of Qurʾānic exegesis by relating the knowledge of *munāsabāt* to the general knowledge of exegesis, which, he states, is like the relationship between the science of rhetoric and the science of grammar.³⁵⁶ In other words, it is through understanding rhetoric that we can find out why the speaker chooses a particular grammatical structure over others. Therefore, through *munāsabāt* the scholar can figure out why the Qurʾānic text appears in particular forms (i.e., *sūrah* placement) over others. This is made explicit in his comment that,

‘[T]hrough [*munāsabāt*] it will become clear also that there is no such thing as a complete pause in the book of God, not even at the end of *sūrat al-Nās*; that is not a stop either. Rather it connects with the very first chapter [*sūrat al-Fatiḥa*], which is the beginning of the Qurʾān just like it connects with *sūrah* right in front of it [*sūrat al-Falaq*]; rather its connection is even stronger with the *Fatiḥa*.’³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ The hermeneutical approach becomes *intertextual* here by comprising ‘all those texts belonging to biblical books to which a particular text is related by way of quotation, reference or allusion’ (Meynet, *Treatise on Biblical Rhetoric*, 21; cf. Cuypers, *Composition of the Qurʾān*, 156).

³⁵⁵ Al-Biqāʿī, *Nazm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 1:6.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:6.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:14.

A similar connection between *sūrahs* is made by al-Biqā'ī with the introduction of *sūrat al-Baqara* and that of *sūrat Āl Imrān*.³⁵⁸ Whereas 'raiments' in the Garden account acted as the 'axial theme' for Ibn Barrajān to move between *sūrahs*,³⁵⁹ Biqā'ī focuses on the 'sending down' of revelation, or Scripture. The opening lines of Q 2 read, 'And who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you and are sure of the world to come' (2:4) (*wa-lladhīna yu'minūna bi-mā unzila ilayka wa-mā unzila min qablika wa-bi'l-ākhirati hum yūqinūna*); Biqā'ī then links this with the introduction to Q 3, 'He revealed to you the Scripture in truth, confirming that which was before it' (3:3) (*nazzala 'alayka l-kitāb bi'l-ḥaqq muṣaddiqan li-mā bayna yadayhi*).³⁶⁰ Therefore, he argues, 'what is strung together (*muntazim*) in the introduction to *sūrat Āl Imrān* is something that parallels what is strung together as the introduction of *sūrat al-Baqara*'; the opening of Q 3 'gradually descends to the root (*al-aṣl*) of the sending-down of the revealed scripture.'³⁶¹

Further, the 'sending down' commented on at Q 3:3 is connected with Q 3:7, 'It is He Who sent down the Scripture upon you' (*huwa lladhī anzala 'alayka l-kitāba*); 'sent down' is a 'common qur'ānic locution for its revelation and connotes a transitive transmission from a celestial archetype.'³⁶² This locution occurs twice in the introduction to *sūrat Āl Imrān* (Q 3:3), first with reference to the Qur'ān, and second to the Torah and the Gospel. An examination of *muḥkam* (firm/fixe) and *mutashābih* (self-similar) in the writings of both Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī will commence in what follows. These two terms have a long history in the genre of tafsīr, and both authors employ them in similar ways that set them apart from the Islamic tradition.

³⁵⁸ This connection will be developed further below.

³⁵⁹ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 215.

³⁶⁰ In the next section, 4.3.2., Ibn Barrajān makes a similar connection using Q 2:4.

³⁶¹ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:223-4.

³⁶² McAuliffe, 'The Qur'ānic Context of Muslim Biblical Scholarship,' 142. Q 2:4 opens with the same locution as well: 'And who believe in what has been sent down to you (Muḥammad) and what was sent down before you, and are sure of the world to come'; more on the 'celestial archetype,' i.e., the 'Preserved Tablet' (*lawḥ al-mahfūz*) to follow in section 4.3.2. below.

4.3.2. Q 3:7 and the Hermeneutical Value of *Muḥkam* and *Mutashābih*

Within Ibn Barrajān's formulation of *naẓm*, the previous equivalence for *muḥkam* as 'clear' and *mutashābih* as 'ambiguous' are abandoned by the author; that is, they should be rendered, respectively, as 'fixed/compact' and 'self-similar'.³⁶³ The Qur'ān is not ambiguous, Ibn Barrajān argues, but rather contains a harmonic, thematic arrangement of the resembling *mutashābihāt* that can be used to 'disambiguate' the qur'ānic corpus; thus he inverts the typical reading of Q 3:7.³⁶⁴ Moreover, the *muḥkamāt* stem from the *umm al-kitāb* ('Root of the Book'), according to Ibn Barrajān, and act as intermediaries between the archetypal source of revelation, and the Qur'ān because they are 'fixed' in the *umm al-kitāb* and descend to the Qur'ān.³⁶⁵ The dissemination and differentiation of the *muḥkamāt* across the qur'ānic corpus into self-similar verses gives rise to the *mutashābihāt* which represents the majority of the qur'ānic text.³⁶⁶ The task of unveiling these links, Ibn Barrajān comments, is reserved for the mystic-scholars, or *mu'tabirūn*, like himself, and those who have mastered the Islamic sciences of *uṣūl* and *ḥadīth*, who contemplate patterns of *naẓm* and become the 'true repositories of inner knowledge'.³⁶⁷ Here his emphasis on *i'tibārī* exegesis begins to emerge.

Further, to be inoculated from this virus (*al-shifā' min hādihā l-maraḍ*), that of reading *mutashābih* as 'ambiguous,' requires one to have 'healthy (i.e., right) beliefs' (*ṣiḥḥat al-īmān*) and the

³⁶³ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 211.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 209, 211.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 228.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 228.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 211, 228; see al-Biqā'ī's prolegomena, where he talks about this in similar terms: '[T]he next point is as follows: so if one seeks help from God and keeps knocking on the door of deliverance, what is the tool of knocking? It is by deep contemplation and showing complete inability [to uncover the meaning], and being convinced that [the passage] is of the highest degree of connection (*rābt*), just like it is at the peak of beautiful meanings and words, because it is the speech of the One who is transcendent beyond all forms of deficiency; he has all the attributes of perfection from his belief in the unseen and believing in the truthful words of the Lord as those firm in knowledge (*al-rāsikhūna*)' (*Naẓm al-durar*, 1:12).

desire for certitude (*ṭalab al-yaqīn*) about those beliefs, which only the *mu'tabirūn* possess.³⁶⁸

Moreover, Ibn Barraġān maintains that defining *mutashābihāt* as 'ambiguous' further confuses the qur'ānic revelation for the believer. He states,

[T]he Qur'ān and ḥadīth become a source of dissension (*fitna*), a hotbed for whims and lies that invites metaphorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*) [...] He said, 'As for those in whose hearts is swerving, they follow the *mutashābihāt*, desiring dissension, and desiring its metaphorical interpretation (Q 3:7b)' [...] Moreover, it is as a result of the almost complete neglect of *naẓm* that [commentators] have failed to understand and discern 'obfuscated' (*mushtabih*) from 'self-similar' (*mutashābih*) verses. By reducing [the *mutashābihāt* to incomprehensible], they wrongly caused their followers to flee from looking into the Qur'ān and contemplating the Book of God as He commanded us to do.³⁶⁹

Here Ibn Barraġān demonstrates the degree to which his hermeneutical paradigm for qur'ānic *naẓm* depends upon the correct understanding of *mutashābih*; if not properly interpreted, it becomes *fitna* (dissension) and *marta'* (breeding ground for evil), characterised by *hawá* (whims) and *takdhīb* (lies).

While Ibn Barraġān contends that one can access and discover the *mutashābihāt* through mastery of the Islamic sciences and with God's help, Biqā'ī approaches this 'access' in slightly different terms. Commenting on Q 3:7b, he states that the *mutashābihāt* lead astray the ones 'in whose hearts is deviation (*zayghun*)' and who seek 'mischief (*fitna*)'. By 'stopping' (*waqfah*) at the *mutashābihāt*, however, the *rāsikhūn* (those who are firm in knowledge) actually open the door for God to impart

³⁶⁸ Ibn Barraġān, *Īdāh* ¶196; on the special role of the *mu'tabirūn*, see Denis Gril, 'La <<Lecture Supérieure>> du Coran selon Ibn Barraġān,' *A* 47/3 (2000): 518.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, ¶196, 200; cf. Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 211.

knowledge on the *mutashābih* verse.³⁷⁰ By this is meant that the *mutashābih* verses exist to test those who are firm in knowledge; the test is to stop at the *mutashābihāt* and focus, rather, on practicing what is enjoined in the *muḥkam*, which ultimately leads to a realisation of the *mutashābihāt*, as al-Biqā'ī argues:

‘So the command of God and His manifestations cannot really be attained except through a [divine] will from Him. Something comes over the servant that breaks the veils of darkness and veils of light (*al-hujub al-ẓulmāniyya wa'l-nūrāniyya*) at which all the scholars stopped. However, there is nothing in the *mutashābih* revelation except one of two tongues: one is the tongue of stopping at the limit of faith, and this is for those who are true in knowledge and who are busy with being characterised by humility, lowliness, god-fearing-ness and righteousness; the Prophet has ordered that a person should follow [these things] until the slave reaches the stage where God loves him. And at that stage when you just follow and practice and do not delve into the *mutashābihāt*, at that stage, when God loves you because of your practice [of *muḥkam*], God will lift from you the incapacity of stopping at the *mutashābihāt* and He will save [you] from the veil of light; and nothing at that stage that is subtle (*daqīq*) will be hard for [you] to understand. It is by virtue of God’s loving you that you will not be faulted because of something hidden.’³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ At this point in the verse, how one chooses to read the text significantly effects the interpretation. The meaning of this part of the verse hinges on how to understand the conjunction *wāw* between ‘God’ and ‘those who are well-grounded in knowledge’ (*al-rāsikhūna fīl-‘ilmi*) in the words *wa-mā ya‘lamu ta’wīlahū illā Allāhu wa'l-rāsikhūna fīl-‘ilmi yaqūlūna āmannā bihi*. Either *wāw* is a letter indicating the beginning of a new sentence (*wāw al-isti’nāf*)—this would signify that God alone knows the meaning of the *mutashābihāt*—or it is a conjunctive particle (*wāw al-‘atf*), implying that the *rāsikhūn* do as well (see Ismail Albayrak, ‘The Notions of Muḥkam and Mutashābih in the Commentary of Elmalī’lī Muḥammad Ḥamdi Yazır,’ *JQS* 5:1 [2003]: 27; for a comparison of the variants, see Arthur Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān* [Leiden: Brill, 1937]; this variant is observed in three of the fifteen non-canonical, primary ‘old codices’: Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ubai b. Ka‘b and Ibn ‘Abbās. For a table of the canonical variants on Q 3:7, see Aḥmad Mukhtār ‘Umar and ‘Abd al-‘Āl Sālim Mukram, *Mu‘jam al-qirā’āt al-Qur’āniyya*, 8 vols. [Kuwait: Dhāt al-Salāsil, 1402/1982-1405/1985], 2:7; for a comparative study on the ten readings, see Christopher Melchert, ‘The Relation of the Ten Readings to One Another’ *JQS* 10:2 [2008]: 73-87; for a detailed analysis of variants in early qur’anic manuscripts, see Yasin Dutton, ‘Some Notes on the British Library’s “Oldest Qur’ān Manuscript” (Or. 2165),’ *JQS* 6:1 [2004]:43-71; idem, ‘An Early *Muḥḥaf* According to the Reading of Ibn ‘Āmir,’ *JQS* 3:1 [2001]: 71-89; Stefan Wild, ‘Why self-referentiality?’ in Stefan Wild, ed., *Self-Referentiality in the Qur’ān* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz-Verlag, 2006], 20-1). Al-Biqā’ī has little to say about the differences of opinion here; he accepts the reading that God alone knows the interpretation: ‘Therefore it is not possible for someone to know the interpretation (*ta’wīl*) of everything except God, Most High’ (*Naẓm al-durar* [Hyderabad Ed.], 4:247).

³⁷¹ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:244-5.

Therefore, it is the practice of *muḥkam* that allows God to remove the ‘veils’ (*hujub*) so that what was once ‘subtle’ (*daqīq*) will become clear. Here al-Biqā’ī uses a common motif in ṣūfī writings that plays on the duality of veiling (*al-satr wa’l-ikhfā*) and unveiling (*al-kashf*).³⁷²

As al-Biqā’ī brings the three books into focus, the relevance of his Qur’ānic hermeneutic on his reading of the Bible becomes more apparent. For al-Biqā’ī, then, God clarifies through Q 3:7 that in the same way that He makes certain *actions* similar (*mutashābih*) — here he gives the example of Jesus being formed without the sperm of the male and the miraculous deeds accomplished through Jesus’ hands — He also says *words* that are similar (*mutashābih*), such as ‘sonship’ (*al-bunuwwah*) and ‘fatherhood’ (*al-ubuwwah*), as al-Biqā’ī will assert in his discussion of the Gospels.³⁷³ Thus, in al-Biqā’ī’s view, God has done in the Qur’ān what He has done in the Torah and the Gospel, which is separating the verses into categories of ‘firm’ (*muḥkam*) and ‘self-similar’ (*mutashābih*) in order to test the people of faith so that those who are well-grounded in knowledge and have certitude will know that this book is from Him.³⁷⁴

According to al-Biqā’ī, the correct stance with respect to interpreting God’s revelation is found at the end of the Q 3:7: ‘Those who are well-grounded in knowledge (*al-rāsikhūna fī’l-‘ilmi*) say, “We believe in it. All is from our Lord.” Only men of understanding are reminded.’ Being ‘well-grounded in knowledge’ is therefore the key for comprehending the relationship between the firm and mutually resembling verses within al-Biqā’ī’s hermeneutical paradigm. The *rāsikhūna fī’l-‘ilmi*, he states, are those people who are versed in the great points of knowledge, who have not been carried off in the least by imaginations (*takhyīl*) about God.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Zayd, ‘Towards understanding the Qur’ān’s worldview’, 62.

³⁷³ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:226-7.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 4:226.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 4:244.

Biqā'ī conceives of these 'imagination' as excessive contemplation on anthropomorphic verses (*āyāt al-ṣifāt*);³⁷⁶ that is, those verses in which God communicates *vis-à-vis* descriptions of Himself that are 'perceived by any of the senses'³⁷⁷ of His creation, such as things based on the creation in terms of the form, like the eye, the hand, the foot and the face, everything connected with the human form. Likewise, the attributes of the soul are counted among the *āyāt al-ṣifāt*, which consist of knowledge, wisdom, anger and pleasure, for example. All of these are *mutashābihāt* verses in al-Biqā'ī's estimation.³⁷⁸

There is a divine purpose for these anthropomorphisms, however, that relates back to the firm verses, according to al-Biqā'ī. It is because the intellect of creation cannot actually grasp God and 'their eyes cannot really look to Him' that He 'has introduced Himself to them with similitudes from themselves [i.e., anthropomorphisms], so that the *muḥkam* verses are for practice and the *mutashābih* verses are to show people their inability to grasp [Him].³⁷⁹ Therefore, he concludes, the fundamental reason behind revealing the *muḥkamāt* and the *mutashābihāt* is for worship:

'So the benefit of revealing the mutually resembling verses (*mutashābihāt*) is to make [God] known to [His creation] through a test for them, which is not thinking too much about the *mutashābihāt* and focusing instead on worship. Therefore, the benefit of making known the mutually resembling verses is in terms of the practice of *muḥkam* and then stopping (*waqfah*) at that which is *mutashābih* so that the test can happen from two points of view. From the point of view of praxis when coming to the

³⁷⁶ Here M. Lagarde's "De l'ambiguïté (*mutashābih*) dans le Coran" is a helpful study on anthropomorphic expressions and the *mutashābihāt* in the *tafsīr* tradition (56-62).

³⁷⁷ Lane, *Lexicon s.v.*, *ḥ-s-s*; here the Arabic reads, *maḥsūs*, or 'palpable', the sense of which connotes something much stronger than just 'perceiving' with one's senses.

³⁷⁸ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:243. The use of *mutashābih* as a category for interpreting anthropomorphisms in the Qur'an was first adopted by the Mu'tazilites as a key theological hermeneutic (Nasr Abu Zayd, 'Towards understanding the Qur'an's worldview,' in Gabriel Said Reynolds, ed., *New Perspectives on the Qur'an: The Qur'an in Its Historical Context 2* [London: Routledge, 2011], 55-8; idem, *The Rational Trend in Exegesis: A Study of the Concept of Metaphor in the Mu'tazilites' Thought* [Beirut: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī, 1982]; 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Asadābādī; 'Adnān Muḥammad Marzūq, ed., *Mutashābih al-Qur'an* [Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1966]).

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 4:226.

firm verses (*muḥkamāt*), and from the point of view of stopping when coming to the *mutashābihāt*.³⁸⁰

Delving in to what is *mutashābih* is thus an innovation (*bid'a*) and will lead astray those 'in whose hearts is deviation.' Stopping short of the *mutashābihāt*, however, is correct, or proper (*sunna*).

Furthermore, Biqā'ī established early in his commentary that Q 3:7 is central among the *āyāt al-ta'abbud* (verses of worship) and that its rulings (*ḥukma*) do not change between the three books.³⁸¹ Here al-Biqā'ī's choice to explore praxis as a facet of *muḥkam* aligns him with those like-minded exegetes observed in al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the verse.³⁸² It demonstrates, however, that while al-Biqā'ī is in accordance with the interpretive tradition on this point, his *muḥkam/mutashābih* formula is markedly different in the sense that both function *together* rather than being *separate* ways of approaching the text. In that sense, his exegesis of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* aligns with that of Ibn Barrajān. That is to say, Ibn Barrajān does not separate them either, but uses both together to compliment his theory of *naẓm* as al-Biqā'ī does with *munāsabāt*.

Ibn Barrajān also describes the coalescence of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* in terms of roots and branches of a tree. For him, the *muḥkamāt* are the roots of trees, firmly sunk into the grounds of the archetypal book; the *mutashābihāt* are the interlocking branches of these trees, which are difficult to distinguish from one another. To separate them, one must trace each branch back to its root (*aṣl*) in the firm soil of the archetypal Book.³⁸³ With al-Biqā'ī's discussion on the relationship between

³⁸⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:243.

³⁸¹ With respect to worship (*al-ta'abbud*), Ibn Barrajān shares a similar interpretation when addressing the divine names, a section in the *Sharḥ* that occupies the third part of that work, wherein meditation and contemplation on the divine names leads to an act of worship, which should be, according to al-Biqā'ī, the *terminus ad quem* for practicing *muḥkam* (see, s.v., 'Ibn Barrajān, Abū L-Ḥakam [Abuelo], ECA).

³⁸² Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 5:189.

³⁸³ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 230; cf. Ibn Barrajān, *Tanbīh*, 4:546-7; in the previous discussion on the introductions to Q 2 and 3, al-Biqā'ī uses the same language of 'the root' (*al-aṣl*) gradually descending from the celestial archetype.

muḥkam, *mutashābih* and *umm al-kitāb* in Q 3:7, the resemblance of his hermeneutic to that of Ibn Barrajān is evident:

‘As for making the verses clear (*bayān*), they are of utmost clarity, and [also are] the rulings in their internal coherence. Some of the verses are traced back to others as if it were a single thing, and since tracing the mutually resembling verses (*mutashābihāt*) back [to the Root] is externally easy — for the one whose faith is firmly established, and whose intentions are right and whose knowledge is capacious — the result is that the entirety (of meanings) becomes one thing, because [God] refers to a plural [i.e., *al-āyāt*] by using a singular [i.e., *al-umm*].’³⁸⁴

With this understanding of the ‘Root’ (*al-umm*) and its relationship to the firm and the self-similar verses, Biqā’ī’s method of connections becomes the hermeneutical thread that binds the revelatory core between the ‘three books.’ Following al-Ḥarāllī’s (d. 637/1239)³⁸⁵ exegesis of this verse, Biqā’ī interprets Q 3:7 as the verse of worship (*āy al-ta’abbud*) from ‘generation to generation,’ whose rulings (*ḥukma*) do not change among any of the three books.³⁸⁶ This resembles the interpretation of the early Qur’ān exegete Muqātil, who also conceives of *umm al-kitāb* and the *muḥkamāt* together to encompass the previous revelations of the Torah and Gospel.³⁸⁷ For both Muqātil and al-Biqā’ī, a revelatory core is shared between the three books and the *muḥkamāt* are for all of the children of Adam.³⁸⁸

It is because God has divided what is sent down into firm and mutually resembling verses, according to al-Biqā’ī, that ‘He envisages them as a totality, as is required by using the expression ‘*al-*

³⁸⁴ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:225.

³⁸⁵ GAL 1:414; *Supplement* 1:717; the thirteenth-century CE Moroccan exegete, al-Ḥarāllī, features significantly in al-Biqā’ī’s tafsīr (on his importance, see *Naẓm al-durar* [Hyderabad Ed.], 1:10-11).

³⁸⁶ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:224-5; ‘*fa-hiya āy al-ta’abbud min al-khalq lil-khalq allātī lam [...] fi kitāb min hādihī l-kutub al-thalāth al-mudhkūrah.*’

³⁸⁷ Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, 1:263-4.

³⁸⁸ McAuliffe, ‘Text and Textuality,’ 60; cf. Muqātil b. Sulaymān; I. Goldfeld, ed., *Tafsīr al-Khams Mi’at Āya min al-Qur’ān* (Shfaram: Dār al-Mashriq, 1980), 275.

kitāb' in 3:7.³⁸⁹ All three books are united in their agreement on the *mutashābihāt*, in his view, which constitute part of this 'totality' of the revelation. Therefore, the connection between the three books is in their expression of firm and mutually resembling verses together. Similarly, Ibn Barrajan connects the previous revelations with the *umm al-kitāb* with a quotation from Q 2:4, 'And those [godfearing] who believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down before you'; he comments, 'our Qur'ān, and the previous books including the Torah, Gospels, Psalms, and all other scriptures are together a guidance for those who have certainty, since they give report of God's good pleasure, and on a whole, they alert to what was inscribed upon the Mother of the Book.'³⁹⁰ He, like al-Biqā'ī, further advocates for the use of all 'scrolls ennobled by the exalted revelation' (*al-ṣuḥuf al-mukarrama bi'l-waḥy al-'alī*) with feet firmly grounded in the Qur'ān.³⁹¹

One final comment should be made concerning a particular characteristic of Ibn Barrajan's method of interpretation, namely his formulation of *ta'wīl*; this will play out later in chapter 6 with his exegesis of the Matthean passage used there. For Ibn Barrajan, *ta'wīl* — which is typically translated as 'allegorical' or 'symbolic' — denotes something much more central to the other branches of his hermeneutics.³⁹² As an exegete, Ibn Barrajan views his role as one who excises both the 'external philological meanings' from the *mutashābihāt*, as well as the 'universal meanings' of the *muḥkamāt*.³⁹³

Therefore, *ta'wīl*, which is derived from the verbal noun of the second form of the root *'-w-l* — meaning 'to derive from,' 'to return' — or *w-'l* — meaning 'to take refuge with,' 'to hasten to' — corresponds to two modes of exegesis, *protological* and *eschatological*. The *protological* mode of *ta'wīl*

³⁸⁹ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:223.

³⁹⁰ Ibn Barrajan, *Tanbīh* 4:224; idem *Īdāh* ¶18 and 31; cf. Casewit, 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 10; the phrase 'Root of the Book' (*umm al-kitāb*) is used by Ibn Barrajan interchangeably with the 'archetypal Book' (noted above) and the 'Preserved Tablet' (*Tanbīh*, 2:568, 4:201-2).

³⁹¹ Ibn Barrajan, *Īdāh* ¶268; Casewit, 'Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 10.

³⁹² Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 236.

³⁹³ Ibid., 236.

denotes ‘understanding the “firstness” (*awwaliyya*) of a verse’ by following its meaning ‘through its levels of descent back to its non-differentiated origin in the Preserved Tablet’ (*Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*); this is from *ʿ-w-l*. Moreover, when a qurʾānic verse employs terms that connote cosmic existence, the pre-eternal Primordial Covenant, revelation, prophecy or God’s names and attributes, which are beyond time and space, then Ibn Barraḡān intends to grasp the ‘firstness’ of those concepts.³⁹⁴ The *eschatological* mode of *taʿwīl* corresponds to *w-ʿ-l*, and entails grasping the ‘lastness’ of a verse, which includes concepts such as recompense, reward and punishment, life and afterlife, resurrection and the like.³⁹⁵ Ibn Barraḡān fluctuates between both modes of interpretation, usually without any indication to the reader as to which one is at play.³⁹⁶

Bearing in mind these cosmological and eschatological concepts provides some perspective on Ibn Barraḡān’s *ʿtibārī* exegesis, of which *naẓm al-qurʾān* and the modes of *taʿwīl* are central; they are both tools within this particular exegetical toolbox. This now leads to a discussion on the relationship between the ‘Supreme Qurʾān’ (*Qurʾān al-Aẓīm*), the Preserved Tablet (*Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) and biblical revelation.

4.3.3. The Ontological Relationship between Biblical and Qurʾānic Revelation

The application of *munāsabāt* by al-Biqāʿī to his interpretation of the Qurʾān proved to be a valuable hermeneutic for interpreting the previous revelations of the Torah and the Gospel. There al-Biqāʿī connected the ‘sending down’ of revelation to the ‘root’ (*aṣl*), that is, the *lawḥ al-maḥfūz*. This link between the three revelations centres on the *muḥkamāt* and the *mutashābihāt*, both of which comprise the revelatory core shared by each divine message. While the substance (*muḥkam*) of the revelation in the three books remains the same for al-Biqāʿī, the interpretation of the *mutashābihāt* is

³⁹⁴ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 237; this is exemplified most explicitly in the next chapter when analysing what could be considered the first Primordial Covenant between God and Adam in the Garden Narrative (see Ibn Barraḡān, *Īdāḥ* ¶380-93); there both the ‘protological’ and ‘eschatological’ modes of interpretation can be observed.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 237.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 237.

left open. While there are similar methodological features shared by Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī, the former more explicitly formulates an ontological coherence between the three streams of revelation, as will be discussed below.

Two hermeneutical concepts that guide Ibn Barraġān's method of scriptural exegesis are referred to as the 'Supreme Qur'ān' (*al-qur'ān al-'azīm*) and the 'Exalted Qur'ān' (*al-qur'ān al-'azīz*).³⁹⁷ These are two technical terms that function throughout all of his works which represent two stages of differentiation (*tafāḍul*) for the 'sending down' of qur'ānic revelation from the Preserved Tablet (*lawḥ al-mahfūz*).³⁹⁸ In his exegesis of *sūrat al-Ra'd* (Q 13), Ibn Barraġān posits the existence of the Qur'ān as a transcript (*nuskhat al-wujūd*) (i.e., the *Supreme Qur'ān*), inscribed by God out of the Archetypal Book (*al-kitāb al-awwal*) from which all revelations descend.³⁹⁹ The *Exalted Qur'ān*, moreover, denotes the totality of qur'ānic revelation, namely the *mutashābihāt*, which emanate from the *Supreme Qur'ān*.⁴⁰⁰

Further, the *Supreme Qur'ān* encompasses the entirety of the *muḥkamāt* which, then, encapsulates the *Exalted Qur'ān* (i.e., the *mutashābihāt*) as discussed previously; this recalls Ibn Barraġān's analogy of the tree, whereby the *muḥkamāt* represent the roots and the *mutashābihāt*, the branches that must be traced back to the root as an outgrowth therefrom. The *Supreme Qur'ān*,

³⁹⁷ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 223.

³⁹⁸ Amina González Costa, 'Un Ejemplo de la Hermenéutica Sufí del Corán en al-Andalus: El Comentario Coránica *Īdāh al-Ḥikma* de Ibn Barraġān (m. 536/1141) de Sevilla,' in Amina González Costa and Gracia López Anguita, eds., *Historia del sufismo en al-Andalus: Maestros sufíes de al-Andalus y el Magreb* (Cordoba: Almuzara, 2009), 57-61; here the discussion centres on the 'Incommensurable Corán dentro del Corán' as a technical term (término técnico) in Ibn Barraġān's tafsirs; see also, idem, s.v., 'Ibn Barraġān, Abū L-Ḥakam (Abuelo);' *ECA*.

³⁹⁹ Ibn Barraġān, *Īdāh* ¶515; idem, *Tanbīh* 4:201-2; Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 221-2.

⁴⁰⁰ Gril, 'La <<Lecture Supérieure>> du Coran,' 518; Gril observes Ibn Barraġān's doctrine of *al-qur'ān al-'azīm* in the latter's interpretation of *sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, where the first sūrah is described as the *umm al-qur'ān* and the *umm al-kitāb*, using it and the *basmala* as examples of the *lawḥ al-mahfūz*, which are 'two modalities of the Book': 'Ce rapport entre la *basmala* et la *Fātiḥa* correspond à deux modalités de l'existence [...] Elles représentent toutes les révélations et les potentialités d'existence contenues dans la Table gardée. Elle assurent le passage entre les deux modalités du Livre et de l'existence, désignées par la "totalité et la distinction" (*al-ijmāl wa'l-tafṣīl*).'

moreover, is 'ontologically higher' than the *Exalted Qur'ān* and engulfs the latter in its 'compactness and universality.'⁴⁰¹

Furthermore, because of its ontological proximity to the Preserved Tablet (*lawḥ al-mahfūz*), the *Supreme Qur'ān* corresponds in status to the Torah, according to Ibn Barrajān, which 'God inscribed with His hand.'⁴⁰² Ibn Barrajān argues, moreover, that the Torah, which God composed for Moses, contains all things as one of three differentiated parts of God's all-embracing knowledge; that is, the *Torah* exists as an 'exhortation' (*maw'izah*) and 'differentiation' (*tafṣīl*) of the *lawḥ al-mahfūz*.⁴⁰³ He comments elsewhere that God made three inscriptions on three tablets that are brought together on the 'supreme tablet' (*lawḥ al-'azīm*), which, he opines, 'is all things (Q 6:101) because it contains all things to come, and what was before.'⁴⁰⁴ Thus, as one inscription (*katb*), the Torah itself consists of all knowledge, past, present and future, and, like the Qur'ān, it also predicts what is to come.⁴⁰⁵ Ibn Barrajān then extends the same logic to the Gospel, which, he maintains on the basis of *sūrat al-Mā'idah* (Q 5:46), also exists as a 'guidance' (*hudá*) and 'light' (*nūr*) confirming what came in the Torah.⁴⁰⁶

4.4. Concluding Remarks

The various parts of both Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's method of qur'ānic interpretation have been examined in relationship to their use of the Bible. Ibn Barrajān's principle of *naẓm al-qur'ān*, which is

⁴⁰¹ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 223.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 224; cf. Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶428: '*qāla rasūl Allāh <<kataba Allāh al-Tawrāh bi-yadihi>>*'; here Casewit notes that the reference to God inscribing the Torah comes from a ḥadīth (see Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Mawsū'a*, #5538; Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt*, 301).

⁴⁰³ Ibn Barrajān, *Tanbīh*, 3:283: '*fa-hādhā ka-lladhī katabahu Allāh jall dhakarhu li-Mūsá fī'l-tawrāh min kull shay' ay min al-asmā' min al-lawḥ al-mahfūz maw'izah wa-tafṣīl li-kull shay'*'

⁴⁰⁴ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶515: '*thalāth kutub bi-thalāthah abwāh yajma'uhā l-lawḥ al-'azīm [...] fa'l-lawḥ al-mahfūz huwa <<kull shay'>> (Q 6:101) li-annahū ḥawá 'alá kull shay' kā'in mā kāna*'; cf. Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 221 n.36.

⁴⁰⁵ Casewit, 'Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 7; cf. Ibn Barrajān, *Tanbīh*, 3:283.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibn Barrajān, *Tanbīh*, 3:283: '*ka-dhālika qāla [Allāh] fī'l-injīl [...]*'; he makes a similar connection in his interpretation of Q 5:46-8 in the *Īdāh* (¶295).

rooted in his *ʿtibār* exegesis, provides valuable insight into his methodological framework for approaching the Qurʾān. Here the function of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* are indispensable as a means of deciphering his paradigm for scriptural hermeneutics. Then, one hermeneutical step further is taken by connecting the three revelations of the Torah, the Gospel and the Qurʾān with the *lawḥ al-mahfūz* on an ontological level, which essentially places the *muḥkamāt* contained therein on a par with each other.

As for al-Biqāʿī, this chapter opened with an examination of his treatise, the *Aqwāl*. There *tawaqquf* is established as his primary argument for (re)approaching the Bible. His tafsīr further provides two valuable, qurʾānic methodologies for understanding his broader hermeneutical theory, that of *ʿilm al-munāsabāt* and the categories of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* from Q 3:7, as the case is with Ibn Barrajān as well. Given the resemblance of Ibn Barrajān's method of *naẓm al-qurʾān* to *ʿilm al-munāsabāt*, it is surprising that al-Biqāʿī never explicitly references the Andalusian scholar in his prolegomena while discussing his approach to the Qurʾān. However, the similarity between Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī's hermeneutics is striking.

With this detailed analysis of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī's hermeneutical theories, the biblical quotations used by both authors in their exegesis of the Qurʾān will be examined next. The case studies in chapters 5 and 6 will consist of looking at two passages, one from the Hebrew Bible, namely Genesis 3, and one from the New Testament, namely Matthew 19:30-20:16, respectively. Whereas here the focus has been on the scriptural hermeneutics that undergird Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī's methodological approach to scripture, how these theories of interpretation are then employed in the tafsīr context will be observed in chapters 5 and 6.

Chapter 5

Adam in the Gardens of Paradise: Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī's Theological Exegesis of Genesis 1-3

Stories from the Hebrew Bible and Gospels are frequently echoed in narrative sections of the Qur'ān in its use of biblical characters, such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, to name a few. This occurs at several points in the Qur'ān's retelling of events that are shared with the biblical corpus. Here the focus is on Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī's use of Genesis in support of their interpretation of qur'ānic texts. Details from the biblical 'Garden narrative,' that is, the Adamic story, quoted by both authors correspond explicitly in this case to the accounts in the Qur'ān.⁴⁰⁷ Ibn Barraġān uses quotations from Genesis 2-3 in the qur'ānic context of *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7:18-19), and al-Biqā'ī quotes the entirety of Genesis 1-3 at *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2:31-5).⁴⁰⁸ These qur'ānic Garden narratives provide details that each author explicates in his commentary. This chapter will explore the qur'ānic interpretations of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī in light of their inclusion of biblical material.

Further, there are certain methods of biblical exegesis common to both Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī. These methods of quoting the Bible are to be distinguished from the hermeneutical theories developed in chapter 4. In the previous chapter, those theories were seen to be the intellectual motivation and justification behind quoting the biblical text, not the actual manner in which the Bible becomes integrated into the tafsīr context; this integration is the focus of chapters 5-6.

Some interpretive methods underlying al-Biqā'ī's use of the Hebrew Bible have been outlined by Saleh already: 'explaining laconic biblical references in the Qur'ān,' 'contrapuntal quotations,'

⁴⁰⁷ See *Appendix I* for an English translation of these biblical and qur'ānic texts.

⁴⁰⁸ Here I am indebted to Yousef Casewit and Walid A. Saleh, whose respective works on Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī laid the foundation for locating the biblical quotations; see Casewit, 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 1-48, and Saleh, 'Sublime in its Style, Exquisite in its Tenderness,' 331-47.

which are used to contrast with corresponding qur'ānic narratives, and 'parallel quotations.'⁴⁰⁹ 'Explaining laconic biblical references' is pertinent for this chapter and applies to both Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's method of using biblical quotations in their exegesis of the Qur'ān. Before examining Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's tafsīrs, some brief discussion on the Adamic story in Muslim thought is in order.

5.1. Adam in Muslim Imagination

Two extra-canonical texts that circulated within Judaism and Christianity are significant for studying the reception history of the Adamic Garden Narrative in Islam. These include a midrash on Genesis, *Bereshit Rabbah*,⁴¹⁰ within Jewish thought, and the apocryphal Syriac *Book of the Cave of Treasures* in Christianity.⁴¹¹ Adamic, Abrahamic and Mosaic narratives, among others, are reflected in the Qur'ān through a dialogue with rabbinic and Syriac texts that circulated, not only in a literary culture, but,

⁴⁰⁹ Saleh, 'Sublime in its Style, Exquisite in its Tenderness,' 334-42.

⁴¹⁰ The two versions of *Bereshit Rabbah* consulted here are H. Freedman and M. Simon, trans. and eds., *Midrash Rabbah* (London: The Soncino Press, 1961) and J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck, *Midrash Bereschit Rabba* (Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1965).

⁴¹¹ For the narrative of Genesis 1-3, see Alexander Toepel, 'The Cave of Treasures: a new translation and introduction' in Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila and Alexander Panayotov, eds., *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume One* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2013), 540-84 (CT 2:1-5:17); Toepel's translation is based on the Eastern Iraqi manuscript (c. 1709 CE) British Museum Codex Add. 25875, a version that merges the Eastern and Western Syriac recensions of the text ('Cave,' 534); see the seminal work by Su-Min Ri, *La Caverne des Trésors: Les Deux Recensions Syriaques*; for other Syriac recensions Toepel consults; also M.D. Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica: I. Kitāb al-Magāll or The Book of the Rolls* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1901) for an Arabic version and English translation of the *Cave of Treasures* transmitted in Sinai MS Arab. 508, an eighth century CE manuscript believed to be based on an earlier text (Gibson, x-xii).

more importantly, within ‘an oral milieu of intertextuality.’⁴⁴² Holger Zellentin refers to *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures* as ‘the most important repositories of aspects of an Arabian oral tradition that allow us to understand what the Qurʾān expects its audience to know — and how it deals with this knowledge.’⁴⁴³ Zellentin aptly refers to this ‘dialogue’ as a ‘counterpointal engagement’ with the Jewish and Christian traditions.⁴⁴⁴ Although the primary focus of this chapter is on the reception of the biblical text in the tafsīrs of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqāʿī — and not the Qurʾān’s evocation of the Garden Narrative — it is still important to understand the reception history of this Adamic story vis-à-vis Muslim exegetical tradition, for example, al-Ṭabarī’s *Tafsīr*. *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* reflects some of the narrative elements observed in *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures*. A few of these elements reappear in Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqāʿī’s tafsīr contexts, which is why ‘The Angels’ Protest’ and ‘The Creation of Adam’ will be addressed in the following two sections.

5.1.1. *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* on the Angels’ Protest (Q 2:30)

Explicit connections can be made between the narratives found in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* and the previous Jewish and Christian tradition, albeit in the form of a ḥadīth. The first episode, which will continue to be discussed in the commentaries of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqāʿī, relates to the angels’ question in Q 2:30 when God decrees in the company of angels that he will place a ‘vicegerent’ (*khalīfah*) on the

⁴⁴² Holger Zellentin, ‘Triological Anthropology: The Qurʾān on Adam and Iblīs in View of Rabbinic and Christian Discourse,’ in Rüdiger Braun and Hüseyin I. Çiçek, eds., *New Approaches to Human Dignity in the Context of Qurʾānic Anthropology: The Quest for Humanity* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 69; cf. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, 74-5; Sinai, *The Qurʾān*, 153; also, Guy G. Stroumsa, ‘Jewish Christianity and Islamic Origins’ in Behnam Sadeghi, Asad Q. Ahmed, Adam Silverstein and Robert Hoyland, eds., *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 77-81; Angelika Neuwirth, ‘The House of Abraham and the House of Amram: Geneology, Patriarchal Authority, and Exegetical Professionalism’ in Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai and Michael Marx, eds., *The Qurʾān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qurʾānic Milieu* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 500-1; Norman Calder, ‘From Midrash to Scripture: The Sacrifice of Abraham in Early Islamic Tradition’ in Andrew Rippin, ed., *The Qurʾān: Formative Interpretation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 378 ff.

⁴⁴³ Zellentin, ‘Triological Anthropology,’ 68. Zellentin also includes the *Clementine Homilies* here as an important source along with *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures*.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 72; idem, ‘*Aḥbār* and *Ruhbān*: Religious Leaders in the Qurʾān in Dialogue with Christian and Rabbinic Literature,’ in Anglika Neuwirth and Michael Sells, eds., *Qurʾānic Studies Today* (London: Routledge, 2016), 262.

earth: 'Will you place therein one who will work corruption, and shed blood, while we hymn your praise and call you Holy?' (*a-taj'alu fihā man yuḥsidu fihā wa-yasfiku l-dimā'a wa-naḥnu nusabbiḥu bi-ḥamdika wa-nuqaddisu laka*).⁴¹⁵

The angels's apprehension about Adam introducing 'corruption' into the created order recalls what was previously observed in *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures*. In the *Cave of Treasures* the angels 'were agitated' from the first sight of Adam's appearance, but it would be Satan, the 'chief of that lowest rank' who rebels with all of his hosts and thus cast down from heaven.⁴¹⁶ *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* explores various opinions on the angels' retort, ranging from the extent of angelic foreknowledge, to the role of Iblīs among the other angels, to why the angels would pose such a question, challenging God's resolve to create Adam.⁴¹⁷ *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* concludes that the angels were not contesting their Lord's decision, only troubled by the disobedience of the one he would create.⁴¹⁸

5.1.2. *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* on the Creation of Adam (Q 2:31, 15:26 and 7:12)

Another feature in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* that connects the Muslim and Jewish traditions is the discussion on the meaning of Adam's name. This was first observed in *Bereshit Rabbah*, where God asks Adam his name in the context of naming the animals; Adam answers, 'It is fitting that I be called Adam because I was created from the ground (*adamah*).'⁴¹⁹ The naming of the animals in the Qur'ān (Q 2:31) also brings about the discussion of Adam's name in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*. Here several lines of transmission in the ḥadīth are given, which attest to Adam being formed from the 'surface of the earth' (*adīm al-arḍ*), and thus the reason for the name 'Adam.'⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁵ *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* 1:482ff.

⁴¹⁶ *Cave of Treasures* 2:13-3:7 (Toepel, 541-2).

⁴¹⁷ *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* 1:482-501.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:498-9.

⁴¹⁹ *Bereshit Rabbah* 17:4 (Freedman, 135); also, *Bereshit Rabbah* 14:8 (Freedman, 115-6).

⁴²⁰ *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* 1:511-14.

The discussion of Adam's name also coincides with another common feature of the *Cave of Treasures* and *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*. Certain elements (or types of earth) are associated with Adam's creation. In the Qur'ān, *sūrat al-Ḥijr* (Q 15:26ff.) describes Adam's constitution as one of 'clay, mud moulded into shape' (*min ṣalṣāl min ḥamā' masnūn*), and the jinn ('demons') created from 'the fire of scorching wind' (*khalaqnāhu min qabl min nār al-samūm*). The elements of earth, wind and fire figure prominently in the Qur'ān's creation account. In *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*, three 'grades' (*qadr*) of earth are named: 'and from the children of Adam came [various] grades of earth: red-coloured, black, white and what is in between; the smooth and the rough, the wicked and the good' (*fa-jā'a banū ādam 'alá qadr al-arḍ jā'a minhum al-aḥmar wa'l-aswad wa'l-abyaḍ wa-bayna dhālika wa'l-sahl wa'l-ḥazn wa'l-khabīth wa'l-tayyib*).⁴²¹ It is interesting to note here as well the comment about 'the wicked and good' (*wa'l-khabīth wa'l-tayyib*) arising from Adam because this was first observed in the midrash of *Bereshit Rabbah*.⁴²²

In the *Cave of Treasures*, the angels behold God taking from the earth, 'one grain of dust,' from the essence of the waters, 'one drop of water,' from the air above, 'one breeze of wind' and from the nature of fire, 'a little flame of heat.'⁴²³ The reason given for the use of these elements corresponds with Adam's dominion over all of creation: those beings comprised of dust would be subservient to him; everything found in the seas and rivers would be his; every species of bird in the air would belong to him; and all fiery beings and powers would assist him. In the Qur'ān, this dominion over the created order is implied in God's appointment of Adam as 'vicegerent' (*khalīfah*); this is also marked by God's command for the angels to prostrate before him.

⁴²¹ *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* 1:513; this is elaborated on in *Ta'rikh Ṭabarī* where the delineation of several kinds of clay accompany a rather lengthy discussion *via* ḥadīth on the linguistic aspect of *ṣalṣāl* ('clay') in the context of Adam's creation account (89-94).

⁴²² Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:4 (Freedman, 57).

⁴²³ *Cave of Treasures* 2:7 (Toepel, 541).

Therefore the similarity observed between the Qur'ānic text, its interpretation in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* and the *Cave of Treasures* relates to Adam's constitution and the subservience of creation to him. This becomes an even more pronounced feature with Iblīs's (Satan) retort to God after being asked to prostrate before Adam: 'I am better than he; you created me from fire, but you created him from clay' (*anā khayr minhu khalaqtanī min nār wa-khalaqtahu min ṭīn*) (Q 7:12). In the *Cave of Treasures*, when Satan sees the greatness bestowed upon Adam, he responds, 'Let us not worship and glorify him together with the angels. It is meet that he worships me, who am fire and spirit and not that I worship dust formed from dirt.'⁴²⁴

The Garden Narrative in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* has been examined as it relates to the previous Jewish and Christian traditions found, respectively, in *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures*. With Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqā'ī, the differences between each author's quotation of biblical material will centre on the hermeneutic value of Genesis for their specific interpretations of the Adamic creation narratives in the Qur'ān. Moreover, with al-Ṭabarī's commentary a methodological shift took place as the focus moved into the genre of tafsīr. Whereas the examination of *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures* related only to the Qur'ān's counterpointal engagement with those traditions, *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* opened up the door to the tafsīr context. In the next two sections, distinguishing characteristics, as well as common features, will be addressed in Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqā'ī's interpretation of the Qur'ān's Garden narrative *as it relates* to the biblical account. Therefore the central question of the Bible's influence on Ibn Barraĵān and al-Biqā'ī's exegesis of the Qur'ān will be explored in what follows.

5.2. The Garden Narrative in Ibn Barraĵān's Commentary

In Ibn Barraĵān's tafsīr, the biblical quotations from Genesis appear with the interpretation of the Garden account in the context of *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7:18-25).⁴²⁵ He also uses the parallel account from

⁴²⁴ *Cave of Treasures* 3:1-2 (Toepel, 542).

⁴²⁵ Ibn Barraĵān, *Īdāh* ¶377-80.

sūrat Ṭā Hā (Q 20:118-121) for his exposition of this narrative. While the qurʿānic accounts at Q 7 and Q 20 differ slightly from *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2:30-6), Ibn Barrajān references the text of Q 2:35 once, and the ensuing comments will be discussed below. He first addresses the qurʿānic Garden account, which is followed by biblical quotations from Genesis 2-3; then, Ibn Barrajān cites passages from the ḥadīth to explain and connect the narratives from the Bible and the Qurʿān.

5.2.1. The Qurʿānic Garden Account

The Garden narrative in *sūrat al-Aʿrāf* begins at Q 7:11: ‘We created you and then We shaped you, and then told the angels, “Prostrate yourselves to Adam.” They [all] prostrated themselves apart from Iblīs, who was not one of those who prostrated themselves’ (*wa-laqaḍ khalaqnākum thumma ṣawwarnākum thumma qulnā lil-malāʾikati usjudū li-Adama fa-sajadū illā Iblīsa lam yakun mina l-sājidīna*). Ibn Barrajān moves into the immediate context of Q 7:19-25 with v.18, ‘Those of them who follow you — I shall fill Jahannam with you all’ (*fa-man tabiʿaka minhum la-amlāʿanna jahannam minkum ajmaʿīna*) and then provides several qurʿānic texts in order to set the stage for a full exposition of the Garden narrative from the Qurʿān and the Bible; Q 2:35b: ‘and the two of you eat in plenty from it wherever you wish’ (*fa-kulā minhā raghadan ḥaythu shiʿtumā*); Q 7:19b: ‘and eat wherever you wish’ (*fa-kulā min ḥaythu shiʿtumā*); Q 7:20a: ‘Then Satan whispered to them to reveal to them what was hidden from them of their bare bodies’ (*fa-waswasa lahumā l-Shayṭānu li-yubdiya lahumā mā wūriya ʿanhumā min sawʾatihimā*); ‘Like what [God] said’ (*kamā qāla*), Q 20:118-19: “It [has been granted] to you that you will not go hungry in it nor go naked, nor will you thirst in it nor be exposed to the heat of the sun” (*inna laka allā tajūʿa fihā wa-lā taʿrā wa-annaka lā taẓmaʿu fihā wa-lā taḍḥā*); Q 7:26c: ‘so that they may remember’ (*la-ʿallahum yadhdkkarūna*); and lastly, Q 20:121b: ‘and their bare bodies appeared to them’ (*fa-badat lahumā sawʾatuhumā*).⁴²⁶

⁴²⁶ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶377.

This string of Qur'ānic texts anticipates the scene from Genesis 3:1-7, which Ibn Barraġān is about to quote. The Qur'ān recalls details from this event, which he wants to emphasise, namely, the freedom to eat that Adam and his wife enjoyed before disobeying God and the consequence of their transgression, that is, their nakedness being exposed. This follows the narrative flow of Genesis 3:1-7, where Adam and Eve are enjoying freedom in the garden before the serpent tempts Eve, leading to transgression, and ultimately exposes their nakedness to each other.

5.2.2. The Biblical Garden Account

In what follows, the background for the biblical Garden narrative provided by Ibn Barraġān will be examined alongside Genesis 3. These biblical texts include Genesis 2:8-9, 16-17:

'And the Lord God had planted a garden of pleasure in the beginning, and the man, whom he had created, dwelt therein. And the Lord God had planted in the earth all trees that are fair to behold and pleasant of fruit, and he planted in the midst of the garden the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And he said: eat of every tree of this garden, but do not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; for when you eat from it, you shall die.'⁴²⁷

Ibn Barraġān interprets 'death' in v.17 as Adam taking on a state of mortality, which symbolically denotes the death of his exalted place, one in which he conversed (*hiwār*) with his Lord; this 'death' extends, as well, to his carefree life and his blessings.⁴²⁸ Ibn Barraġān understands Adam's 'state of mortality' (*hāl man yamūta*) in the Garden as the consequence of his disobedience, transgression that his offspring would also inherit.⁴²⁹ Then he continues with the text from Genesis 3:17-19:

⁴²⁷ Ibn Barraġān, *Īdāh* ¶378: 'wa-kāna l-sayyid Allāh iġhtarasa jinān mushtahan fihi fīl-bad' wa-sakana fihi l-ādami l-makhlūq wa-kāna l-sayyid Allāh qad anbata fīl-arḍ kull shajarah jamīlah al-manẓar ṭayyibah al-fākihah wa-anbata fī wasaṭ al-jinān shajarat al-ḥayāh wa-shajarat ma'rifah al-khayr wa'l-sharr wa-qāla kul min jamī fākihah hādhihi l-jinān wa-lā ta'kul min shajarat ma'rifah al-khayr wa'l-sharr fa-matā akalta minhā tamūta.'

⁴²⁸ Ibid., ¶378.

⁴²⁹ Ibn Barraġān will develop this idea further in his commentary below; cf. *Īdāh*, ¶380 and 381, where a connection is made between God's foreknowledge of Adam's sin and repentance, and Adam's recognition of this, as recorded in the ḥadīth literature.

‘Just as [God] related to [Adam]: “Because you have listened to your wife, and have eaten from the tree which I forbade you [...] cursed is the earth for your inhabitance; for you will eat from it only through much labour. Thorns and thistles will it bring forth for you; and [you] will eat the herbs of the earth by the sweat of your hands, and you will eat the bread until you return to the ground; for out of it you were made; for you are dust, and to dust you will return.”⁴³⁰

He does not provide commentary for the biblical text, but it resembles similar passages from the Qur’ān. This particular ‘curse’ for Adam follows the curse placed upon Eve (Gen. 3:16), as well as that which was placed upon the serpent (Gen. 3:14-15). The most relevant decree in this series of ‘curses’ is for the serpent, which reads, ‘I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers (*wəʿebā ʾāšit benakā ūben hāʾiššā ūben zarʾ kā ūben zarʾah hūʾ*)’ (Gen. 3:15).

Though Ibn Barrajān does not comment on this passage from Genesis, it aligns, however, with the text of Q 2:36, a context in which he is engaged. The Qur’ān restates this sovereign indictment from Genesis 3: ‘We said, “Go down [from it], foes of one another. You will have a habitation on the earth and enjoyment for a time” (*wa-qulnā ahbiṭū baʿḍukum li-baʿḍin ʿaduwwun wa-lakum fīʾl-ardī mustaqarrun wa-matāʾun ilā hīnin*). In *sūrat Ṭā Hā* (Q 20:123), the same basic decree is recorded, ‘He said, “Leave it, both of you together, each an enemy of the other” (*qāla ahbiṭā minhā jamīʿan baʿḍukum li-baʿḍin ʿaduwwun*). The closest parallel to Gen. 3, however, occurs in Q 7:24-5: ‘He said, “Go down, each in enmity to the other. You will have a place to stay on earth and enjoyment for a time.” He said, “You will live in it and you will die in it and you will be brought forth in it” (*qāla ahbiṭū baʿḍukum li-baʿḍin ʿaduwwun wa-lakum fīʾl-ardī mustaqarrun wa-matāʾun ilā hīnin qāla fihā taḥyawna wa-fihā tamūtūna wa-minhā tuḥrajūna*). The last phrase, ‘you will live in it and you will die in it and you will be brought forth in it,’ clearly resembles what appears in Gen. 3:19, ‘for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’

⁴³⁰ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶378: ‘*kamā jāʾa annahu qāla lahu idh qad samaʾata li-imraʾatika wa-akalta min al-shajarah allatī nahītuka ʾanhā fa-qad laʾantu al-ard li-ʾimāratika fa-lā tuṣību minhā illā bi-shukhūṣ wa-sa-tanabat li-ka l-baql waʾl-shūk wa-yaʾkulu [taʾkulu] ʾushb al-ard fi ʾaraq yadika wa-taʾʿamu l-khubz ilā an taṣīru ilā l-ard li-annaka minhā khuliqta li-annaka ghubār wa-sa-taʾūdu ghubār.*’

Ibn Barrajan ends his quotations from Genesis 3:17-19 by citing Q 7:19.⁴³¹ He then quotes Genesis 3:1-7 in full:

‘Now the serpent was more cunning than all the earthly beasts which the Lord God created. And he said to the woman, “Why has God forbidden both of you from eating every fruit of the garden?” And the woman said to him, “We may eat every fruit of the garden, but not the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden; for God has commanded us that we not eat from it nor touch it lest we die.” And the serpent said to her, “You both shall never die; for God knows that the moment both of you eat from it, both of your eyes will open, and both of you will be like God in knowing good and evil.” And when the woman saw the beauty of the tree and was pleased by the goodness of it, she took its fruit and ate from it; then she gave it to her husband, and he ate it. And then both of their eyes were opened; and when both of them realised that they were both naked, they pieced together fig leaves and made themselves aprons with it.’⁴³²

No comments follow Genesis 3:1-7. He cites another series of qur’anic texts, however, that highlight Adam’s transgression and God’s foreknowledge of the Garden events. Ibn Barrajan begins this series of texts with a quote from Q 7:21-22, ‘And [Satan] swore to them, “I am one of those who give you good advice.” Thus he sent them down by delusion’ (*wa-qāsamahumā innī lakumā la-mina l-nāshihīna fa-dallāhumā bi-ghurūrin*).

The next verse used by Ibn Barrajan to bridge these two Garden stories is Q 7:20, “Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree, lest you become angels or become immortals” (*mā nahākumā rabbukumā ‘an hādhihi l-shajaratī illā an takūnā malakayni aw takūnā mina l-khālīdīna*). The prohibition recounted by Satan connects the qur’anic story with the biblical account. This also

⁴³¹ ‘And, “O Adam, inhabit the Garden, you and your wife, and eat wherever you wish; but do not approach this tree, lest you be of the wrong-doers” (*wa-yā‘adamu askun anta wa-zawjuka l-jannata fa-kulā min haythu shi‘tumā wa-lā taqrabā hādhihi l-shajaratā fa-takūnā mina l-zālimīna*).

⁴³² Ibn Barrajan, *Īdāh* ¶379: ‘*wa-kāna l-tinnūn akhbath jamī‘ bahā‘im al-arḍiyah allatī khalaqa l-sayyid Allāh fa-qāla lil-mar’ah li-ma nahākuma Allāh ‘an akil jamī‘ fawākih al-jinān qālat lahu l-mar’ah na’kulu min jamī‘ fawākih al-jinān mā ‘adā l-shajarah allatī fi wasaṭhā fa-inna Allāh amaranā illā na’kulu minhā wa-lā namassuhā li‘allā namūtu fa-qāla lahā l-tinnūn lā tamūtāni abadan qad ‘alīma Allāh annakumā matā akaltumā minhā tanfatīhu absārhumā wa-takūnāni ka’l-ilah fi ma’rifat al-khayr wa’l-sharr fa-limmā baṣurat al-mar’ah jamāl al-shajarah wa-a’jibahā ḥasanahā akhadhat min fākihathihā wa-akalat minhā thumma nāwalat zawjahā minhā fa-akalahā wa-infatahat absārhumā wa-idh ‘alīmā annahumā ‘uriyānāni laffaqa waraq al-tīn wa-ittazarā bihi.’*

corresponds with Ibn Barraĵān's previous discussion on Adam's 'state of mortality' as a consequence of disobedience and Satan's temptation here for Adam to become 'immortal' (*khālidīn*). While comments were not directly made on the quoted biblical texts, Ibn Barraĵān grafts them into his exposition of the qur'ānic story in order to highlight the transgression of Adam and give more detail to the narrative. Moreover, the quotations from Genesis are used by Ibn Barraĵān to enhance the qur'ānic text and add depth to the serpent's temptation for Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, depicted in Genesis 3, which is then paired with Q 7:19-20. The following section will explore Ibn Barraĵān's use of ḥadīth literature in the middle of his biblical and qur'ānic interpretation of the Garden narrative.⁴³³ As it will be shown below, the ḥadīths function as the exegetical glue that binds together Ibn Barraĵān's interpretation of the two Garden accounts. Here the analysis centres on ḥadīths that correspond with the previous Jewish and Christian traditions.

5.2.3. The Use of Ḥadīths in the Interpretation of the Garden

Ibn Barraĵān infuses his discussion on the Garden narrative with ḥadīth accounts at various points.⁴³⁴ The primary ḥadīths cited contain two accounts that relate back to what was previously observed in *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures*, as well as the Muslim interpretation in *Tafsīr Ṭabarī*. The first parallel includes wicked people and righteous people arising from Adam, and second, Moses decrying the creation of Adam because of his subsequent transgression.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ On Ibn Barraĵān's use of ḥadīth in his tafsīrs, see chapter 4 (4.1.2.) of this dissertation.

⁴³⁴ The ḥadīths cited by Ibn Barraĵān appear to be taken from two collections: Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī; Khalīl Ma'mūn Shīḥā, ed., *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rīfah, 2007), 105 (no. 313) and Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī; Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī; Khalīl Ma'mūn Shiha, ed., *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rīfah, 2010), 161 (no. 349); the discussion on 'inherited sin' also recalls another ḥadīth, Muḥammad Barbar, ed., *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Aṣrīyah, 2010), 457 (no. 2616); Casewit notes that the ḥadīth collections in Ibn Barraĵān's tafsīrs are comprised of: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (d. 257/870), *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (d. 261/875), *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* (d. 354/965), *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma* (d. 311/923), *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (d. 276/889), *Sunan al-Bayhaqī* (d. 458/1066), *Sunan al-Dārimī* (d. 255/ 869), *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (d. 279/892), *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (d. 273/887), *Musnad Abī Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī* (d. 307/919), *Musnad Aḥmad b. Hanbal* (d. 241/855), *Muṣannaḥ 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī* (d. 211/826), *Mustadrak al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī* (d. 405/1014) and *Muwaṭṭa' al-Imām Mālik* (d. 179/795) (*Mystics of al-Andalus*, 242).

⁴³⁵ *Bereshit Rabbah* 8:4 and 8:8 (Freedman, 57 and 59, respectively).

The context in which the ‘souls of [Adam’s] offspring’ (*nasam banīhi*) are discussed occurs in the narrative for Muḥammad’s Ascendence, or ‘Night Journey’ (*al-Isrā’*). Ibn Barrajan does not, however, quote the ḥadīths verbatim, but rather conflates the reports for a more comprehensive reading. Here two kinds of people are clearly delineated, those on Adam’s right — the ‘people of Paradise’ (*ahl al-jannah*) — and those on the left — the ‘people of the (Hell) fire’ (*ahl al-nār*). Adam laughs for those on his right and weeps for those on his left.⁴³⁶ In *Bereshit Rabbah*, Moses debates with God over the creation of Adam while penning the Torah; Moses sees that wickedness would also ‘spring from him.’ Here in the ḥadīth, Moses contests with Adam concerning his ‘sin’ and the inheritance of this transgression for his offspring.

All of this discussion between Moses and Adam from the ḥadīth culminates with one qur’ānic verse from *sūrat al-A’rāf* (Q 7:145a) that bridges this discussion with the biblical text: ‘And We wrote down for [Moses] on the tablets an admonition drawn from everything and an exposition for everything’ (*wa-katabnā lahu fī’l-alwāḥ min kull shay’ maw’iẓatan wa-tafṣīlan li-kull shay’*). Ibn Barrajan uses this qur’ānic maxim about Moses and the authority of the Torah to refer back to the Garden narrative he cited from Genesis 3 and to look forward to his interpretation of the ‘two trees.’ Then he begins to elaborate on ‘the tree of life’ planted in the middle of Paradise (*fī waṣṭ al-jinān shajarat al-ḥayāh*), which, he states, is known as ‘the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ (*wa’l-shajarah allatī tu’rafu bi-shajarat ma’rifat al-khayr wa’l-sharr*).⁴³⁷ However, Ibn Barrajan will distinguish between these two trees on the basis of the biblical account, not being exegetically dependent on the Qur’ān, as will be shown below.

⁴³⁶ Al-Bukhārī, 161 (no. 349); cf. Ibn Barrajan, *Īḍāḥ* ¶381: *‘fa-ṣa’idnā l-samā’ al-dunyā fa-idhā anā bi-Adam wa-‘an yasārihi aswidah wa-‘an yamīnihi aswidah qāla fa-idhā nazāra qibala yamīnihi ḍaḥika wa-idhā nazāra qibala shīmālihi bakā.’*

⁴³⁷ Ibn Barrajan, *Īḍāḥ* ¶382.

5.2.4. The Role of the ‘Two Trees’ in the Garden Account

The most elaborate discourse in the present context involves the nature of the ‘trees’ in the Garden and Ibn Barrajan’s *protological* and *eschatological* modes of *ta’wīl* to interpret the biblical account. There is strong evidence that indicates an influence from the Genesis narrative here. This final section will be devoted to Ibn Barrajan’s interpretation of the forbidden trees and the commingling of his biblical and qur’ānic hermeneutics.

Before examining the interpretation of the two trees, however, an overview of Ibn Barrajan’s cosmology is in order. As a *mu’tabir*, Ibn Barrajan sees an ‘unbroken ontological link between the herebelow (*dunyā*) and the afterworld (*ākhirā*). The herebelow derives its very existence from and is rooted in the latter.⁴³⁸ What this suggests is that the herebelow, as one mode of Paradise, still remains connected in some sense to the afterworld, another mode of Paradise, even though the herebelow has been ‘yanked’ out of it (*al-dunyā jadhbat judhibat min l-ākhirā*).⁴³⁹ Between the herebelow and the afterworld lies the interworld (*barzakh*), or isthmus,⁴⁴⁰ which functions as a kind of purgatory. Only here, according to Ibn Barrajan, the interworld exists for two purposes: a temporary abode for deceased Prophets, martyrs and righteous servants awaiting Judgment Day, and an abode for unbelievers, who experience hellish torment and punishment.⁴⁴¹

Furthermore, according to Ibn Barrajan, this life, or the herebelow (*dunyā*), can be divided into two types: the visible Paradise (*al-jannah al-zāhirah*), which consists of God’s blessing and grace, and the hidden Paradise (*al-jannah al-bāṭinah*), which is when one is tested by God leading to acceptance and surrender. Here Ibn Barrajan’s *i’tibār* exegetical paradigm is clearly observed. The afterworld, moreover, consists of three types of Paradise: Paradise on Earth, i.e., *dunyā*, Middle

⁴³⁸ Casewit, *The Forgotten Mystic*, 299.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 299.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 301.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 301.

Paradise and Higher Paradise. It is unclear where 'Adam's Paradise' falls, as Ibn Barraĵān attempts to place it within his own paradigm, but he ultimately leaves the question unanswered.⁴⁴²

This is important to bear in mind as Ibn Barraĵān begins to connect the two trees with the herebelow and the afterworld. Remember that in the Qur'ān, only one tree is mentioned at *sūrat Ṭā Hā* (Q 20:120), 'the tree of eternity' (*shajarat al-khuld*). It is remarkable how the account of the two trees from Gen. 2:9 further shapes, rather, aligns with Ibn Barraĵān's cosmological paradigm for the Qur'ān.⁴⁴³

Ibn Barraĵān begins his discourse by quoting again from Gen. 3:4-5, "You both shall never die; for God knows that the moment both of you eat from it, both of your eyes will open, and both of you will be like God in knowing good and evil."⁴⁴⁴ Here he allegorically interprets the two trees of the Garden, the tree of life (*shajarat al-ḥayāh*) and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*shajarat ma'rifat al-khayr wa'l-sharr*), as God's commands and prohibitions, respectively.⁴⁴⁵ The tree of life, moreover, is the open door to the abode of the afterworld (*dār al-ākhirā*); the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the open door to life in the herebelow (*dunyā*).⁴⁴⁶

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, continues Ibn Barraĵān, is a link (*ṣilah*) between Adam's Paradise and the herebelow, and the tree of life is a link (*ṣilah*) between the Middle Paradise and the Higher Paradise.⁴⁴⁷ Further, the commands of God belong to the Middle Paradise, while the Higher Paradise is reserved for the pleasure of God (*riḍwān Allāh*). Therefore, Satan did not incite

⁴⁴² Ibn Barraĵān, *Īḍāḥ* ¶389: 'hal jannah al-barzakh hiya jannat adam alayhi l-salām am hiya awsa'u wa-a'ammu wa-afdalu.'

⁴⁴³ Casewit, *Forgotten Mystic*, 296.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibn Barraĵān, *Īḍāḥ* ¶382: 'innakumā lā tamūtāni abadan qad 'alīma Allāh annakumā matā akaltumā minhā tantafīhu [tanfatīhu] abṣārکمā wa-takūnāni ka'l-ilah fī ma'rifat al-khayr wa'l-sharr.'

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., ¶382.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., ¶382.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., ¶388.

Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of life, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; he fooled both of them with the claim that they would become like gods in knowing good and evil.⁴⁴⁸ According to Ibn Barrajān, this kind of knowledge is *fiqh*, which Islamic theologians acknowledge as the first principles of revelation; *fiqh* is the knowledge of first principles drawn from the branches of the revealed law of Islam.⁴⁴⁹

In conclusion, Ibn Barrajān fully adopts the biblical Garden account into his *i'tibār* exegesis of the Qur'ān. The designation of two separate trees, which is only found in Genesis, provides philosophically fertile ground for Ibn Barrajān to employ modes of *ta'wīl* to interpret the text. The two trees, moreover, anchor his cosmological discussion on the herebelow, the interworld and the afterworld, and ultimately provide the origin story for the first principles of revelation within the Islamic tradition, exemplifying his *protological* mode of *ta'wīl*.

Moreover, the incorporation of biblical material into Ibn Barrajān's exegesis of the qur'ānic Garden narrative reveals the relationship between his thoroughgoing hermeneutic as a *mu'tabir* with his biblical quotations. Ibn Barrajān uses the Genesis texts to elaborate on the Qur'ān's story and develop his own interpretation of this primeval event. Therefore the Bible is used tangentially with the Qur'ān as Ibn Barrajān draws on the biblical text to supplement his interpretation.

5.3. The Garden Narrative in al-Biqā'ī's Commentary

While Ibn Barrajān's exegesis of the Garden account from biblical, qur'ānic and ḥadīth sources came across as the homily of an arcane philosopher, Biqā'ī stands firmly in the midst of his material, pen in hand, ready to defend the biblical text rather than expound it. That would be the most apt way of describing his 'reinterpretation' of the Garden narrative, an *apologia* in the same vein as his treatise discussed previously in chapter 4. Whereas Ibn Barrajān used *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7) to explore the

⁴⁴⁸ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶388.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., ¶388.

Garden account, Biqā'ī picks *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2) as his point of reference. Bearing that in mind, it begins to make sense why al-Biqā'ī is still on the defensive for his use of the Bible in his *Tafsīr*; he has only just begun the task of interpreting the whole of the Qur'ān. This is, moreover, the first instance in his commentary where the Bible is being cited, at great length no less — remember that all of Genesis 1-3 is quoted verbatim here in the context of Q 2:30-6.

That said, there is still some interpretive overlap between al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible and the Qur'ān; it is not all *apologia*. In what follows, the first section will address the comments made before he quotes the Bible. This provides an Islamic narrative framework for the biblical account, as it will be demonstrated below. Then his arguments for using the Bible, which appear after the quotations, will be discussed. The main points have been developed in chapter 4, but any unique contributions in the context of Q 2:30-6 will be examined further here. The final section will look at al-Biqā'ī's interpretation of Adam's creation in light of the biblical quotations from Genesis. It should be noted that the overall length of discourse devoted to the exegesis of the Qur'ān's Garden narrative in al-Biqā'ī's commentary is significantly less than Ibn Barrajān. Therefore the space in chapter 5 devoted to al-Biqā'ī's interpretation will be shorter as well.

5.3.1. The Created Order: from Ḥadīth to Torah

Before quoting entirety of Genesis 1-3, Biqā'ī cites a ḥadīth first to place God's creation in an Islamic context. This becomes a common interpretive move when al-Biqā'ī quotes the biblical text, which is equally true with his use of the Gospels.⁴⁵⁰ Here, in the tafsīr context of *sūrat al-Baqara*, two qur'ānic verses on creation from *sūrat al-Furqān* (Q 25) precede the ḥadīth: 'Have you not seen how your Lord has spread the shade [...]' (Q 25:45) and 'It is He Who makes night a covering for you [...]' (Q 25:47). After discussing the differences between these two verses, primarily focused on how differing groups — 'the people of knowledge' (*ahl al-ta'arruf*) and 'the people of understanding' (*ahl al-fahm*) — parse

⁴⁵⁰ This exegetical 'motif' will be discussed further below in chapter 6 when addressing Matthew 19:30-20:16.

out the *ism al-rabb* in v. 45, along with the correlation of both verses, Biqā'ī sets the biblical text in an Islamic narrative framework.

The ḥadīth al-Biqā'ī quotes is understood to be *ḍa'īf*, that is, 'weak,' but he cites it nonetheless.

He traces it from *Saḥīḥ* Muslim to *Sunan* al-Nasā'ī, and then to *Sunan* Abu Hurayrah:

God created the earth on Saturday (*yawm al-sabat*), and on Sunday (*yawm al-aḥad*), He created the mountains upon it; on Monday (*yawm al-ithnaynī*) He created the trees, and on Tuesday (*yawm al-thalāthā'*) He created the *makrūh*; on Wednesday (*yawm al-arbi'ā'*) He created light, then, on Thursday (*yawm al-khamīs*), He dispersed hoofed animals upon the earth; and He created Adam in the afternoon on Friday (*yawm al-jum'ah*), the last one of Creation in the final hour of that day, between noon time and night.⁴⁵¹

This account of creation reflects commonality with the verse in *sūrat al-Hūd* (Q 11:7) that states God created 'the heavens and earth in six days,' while also, it would appear, trying to follow the biblical record for what occurred, in part, on each of those six days. Following this account, Biqā'ī takes the opportunity to mention something that was not stated in the ḥadīth (*wa-mā yuqālu min annahu [...]*). Before Adam was made on the earth, he continues, God created the disobedient ones who were compared to the angels (*qāsa 'alayhim al-malā'ikah*).⁴⁵² Adam was the first to dwell on the earth, however, a sign indicated by the spelling of his name; that is, the *hamzah* stands as the first letter in his name and thus he is the first man to dwell upon the earth with God's spirit. His name concludes with the letter *mīm* just as Adam's descendants, who will be raised up on the Day of Resurrection, conclude this life.⁴⁵³ This leads directly to his quotation of Genesis 1-3. The arguments following his biblical citations will be discussed below.

⁴⁵¹ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:95.

⁴⁵² Ibid., 1:96.

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 1:96.

5.3.2. Arguments in Context: Foundations for Biblical Quotation

After quoting Genesis 1:1-3:24, Biqā'ī completes the narrative with a quote from Gen. 5:5 where the total of Adam's days are numbered, thus bringing the Torah's account of him to a close.⁴⁵⁴ After a brief discussion on angels and cherubim, he begins to make an argument for the use of the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁵⁵ Biqā'ī opens with a harsh indictment against anyone who would deny the validity of the quotations from the Torah, which he equates with being blind (*'amiya*) to the Qur'ān's position on the previous scriptures. The text of *sūrat Āl 'Imrān* (Q 3) is presented first in order to establish that there was, in fact, a viable edition of the Torah. If in the Qur'ān the Jews are being asked to 'bring' (*atū*) the Torah forward, it is presumed on the part of the Qur'ān's audience that there is one worth producing: 'Say, bring the *Torah* and recite it, if you tell the truth' (Q 3:93). He follows this with another qur'ānic citation, this time from *sūrat al-Mā'idah* (Q 5): 'We have sent down to you the Scripture in truth, confirming all the Scripture [that had been revealed] before it, and a watcher over it' (Q 5:48). There are many more verses, he adds, just like these.⁴⁵⁶

This leads to a familiar passage which was previously discussed in chapter 4. The ḥadīth pertaining to the 'scripture' of the *ahl al-kitāb* ('Scripture people'), 'Do not trust the Scripture people, but do not impugn them' (*lā tuṣaddiqū ahl al-kitāb wa-lā tukdhdhibūhum*) is placed between two ḥadīths that were not used before: 'We believe in that which was sent down to us, and [that which] was sent down to you' (*āmannā bi-lladhī anzala ilaynā wa-anzala ilaykum*), and, 'if it originated with the Banī Isrā'īl, then it is not forbidden' (*ḥadathū 'an banī Isrā'īl wa-lā ḥarija*).⁴⁵⁷ Following the first ḥadīth, however, an interesting comment is interjected: 'the Scripture people were reading the Torah

⁴⁵⁴ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:98.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:100-2.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:98.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:99; Biqā'ī cites, along with al-Bukhārī, several other *muḥaddith*, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī and al-Nisā'ī, to establish *tawātur* for this saying.

in Hebrew, but they were interpreting it in the Arabic of the people of Islam' (*kāna ahl al-kitāb yaqra'ūna al-tawrah bi'l-'ibrāniyyah wa-yufassirūnahā bi'l-'arabiyyah li-ahl al-islām*).⁴⁵⁸ The use of this saying draws attention to the different modes of transmission between the two scriptures within an Arabo-Islamic context.

He concludes this section with a response to several ḥadīths that seem to condone the reading of the Torah when one was either sexually defiled or soiled, and then using the *Torah* and *Gospel* to clean oneself. That is to say, the Torah, as an 'altered' (*tabḍīl*) text, could be handled by defiled people and its pages used as toilet paper. Biqā'ī retorts by quoting the Decalogue, and asking, 'Can a Muslim, let alone a scholar, concede that he may clean [himself] from excrement (*yastanjiya bi-najw*) with the ten statements inscribed upon the tablets?'⁴⁵⁹ This is an implicit yet profound accusation against the veracity of the ḥadīth in support of the Torah's authenticity.

In that vein, Biqā'ī takes a moment to explain to his audience that the version of the Bible he transmits is 'authentic' by describing, in detail, a number of biblical sources. The inclusion of the following statement bears directly on the validity of his comparative exegesis. The importance of his statement on the editions of the Hebrew Bible available to him, wherein he also recounts the origin story of the Septuagint, warrants a full citation here:

There are three versions of the *Torah* which are linguistically different (*mukhtalifat al-lafẓ*), but close in meaning (*mutaqāribat al-ma'nā*): one of them is the Septuagint (*tawrāt al-sab'īna*), which was approved by seventy two of their rabbis. The story behind [the Septuagint] is that a Greek king who ruled Egypt asked one of the Jewish kings in Jerusalem to send him a number of Torah scholars. He sent him seventy-two rabbis. He put each of them, by twos, into a house with scribes (*kuttāb*) and translators (*tarājimah*). They wrote down the Torah in the Greek language. The king then compared their thirty-six versions and they were linguistically different but close in meaning. He knew that they were honest. This version was later translated into Syriac and Arabic while the Christians possessed them. The second version is the edition that belongs to the Rabbanites (*al-rabbāniyyīna*), as well as the Karaites (*al-qarā'īna*). The

⁴⁵⁸ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:99.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:101.

third version is the Samaritan Pentateuch (*al-nuskhah al-sāmīrah*); it is the same one al-Samarqandī notes in his *Ṣaḥāʾif*, where he cites many lines from the *Torah*.⁴⁶⁰ Most of what I mention in [*Naẓm al-durar*] is taken from a version whose translator is unknown to me. The marginal notes should be read, at times. Apparently it is the Jews' version, which is very old. The first part had lines erased at the end of the page, so I completed it with the Septuagint version. Then I compared my entire edition to that of Saʿīd al-Fayūmī [Saʿādiyah Gaon], which is [the Jews'] best translation. But I found that my version is closer to the real meaning of the Hebrew words, which, as a translation, is more tightly knit together than Saʿādiyah's with respect to the Arabic language.⁴⁶¹

This is a telling account on the acquisition of the Arabic Bible in late medieval Cairo and the lengths to which al-Biqāʿī went to find a valid edition to quote. Saleh has already noted as well that he used a Jewish informant for various interpretive measures during the course of his biblical exegesis in the composition of his tafsīr.⁴⁶² After this excursus on *Biblia Arabica* al-Biqāʿī launches directly into his interpretation of the Qurʾān. In the context of Q 2:31-5, he engages with other parallel accounts from various sūrahs that will be discussed below.

5.3.3. The Creation of Adam

In the context of Q 2:30-3, Biqāʿī interprets a verse from *sūrat al-Ḥijr* (Q15:29), stating, 'the clear (*ẓāhir*) meaning of the qurʾānic text, "So when I have formed him, and breathed into him My spirit, then you will fall down to him, prostrating," is that the command to prostrate to him was before the fulfillment of his creation, and that the prostration followed after the breath.'⁴⁶³ Here he references the tafsīr of

⁴⁶⁰ Ashraf al-Ḥusaynī al-Samarqandī's (d. 690/1291) *al-Ṣaḥāʾif* contains an extended discussion on 'prophethood' (*nubuwwah*) wherein he cites various passages from the Torah and the Gospels (Aḥmad Farīd al-Miziyadi, ed., *Al-ṣaḥāʾif al-ilāhiyyah* [Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2007], 194-200). In the section al-Biqāʿī notes, al-Samarqandī mentions all of those versions, the Septuagint (*Tawrāt al-Sabʿīna*) and the Torah that belonged to the Karaites (*al-Qarāʾīna*) and the Rabbanites (*al-Rabbāniyyīna*) (*al-Ṣaḥāʾif*, 196).

⁴⁶¹ Al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:102.

⁴⁶² Saleh, 'Sublime in Its Style,' 333-4; cf. *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 11:343ff, where al-Biqāʿī mentions 'an erudite Jew' (*fuḍalāʾ al-yuhūd*) who explained Jewish history to him.

⁴⁶³ Al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:102.

Ḥusayn b. Mas‘ūd al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) in support of his interpretation.⁴⁶⁴ Baghawī comments on *sūrat al-A‘rāf* (Q 7:11), ‘And We created you, then formed you, then We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam!’ saying, ‘creation and formation was for Adam only, and it was mentioned in a plural form (*bi’l-lafẓ al-jami‘*) because [Adam] is the father of mankind.’⁴⁶⁵ Therefore, Biqā‘ī continues, ‘He created [mankind] as He created [Adam], and He formed them as He formed him’; and, referencing al-Baghawī again, ‘he comments that “the word *thumma* (then) means *al-wāw* (and), not indicating a progression [in time].”⁴⁶⁶

Biqā‘ī follows this with further clarification on the progression of Adam’s ‘forming’ (*taṣwīr*) which is then linked with the description in the Torah. This formation, he continues, ‘came before (*sabaqa*) the ears, the eyes and the fingers — this indicates that both the arrangement (*taswiyah*), which is the right order of creation, and its preparation and completion are for the filling up (*naḥkh*) of the spirit.’ That is to say, the formation (*taṣwīr*), with its preliminary stages, preceded the final act of God breathing his spirit into Adam (Q 15:29).⁴⁶⁷ Biqā‘ī uses the commentary of al-Baghawī on Q 7:11 to thus interpret the verse at Q 15:29 in order to inform his understanding of the text at Q 2:30. He continues to reason, moreover, that the saying ‘We created you’ (Q 7:11) could also mean, ‘We decreed’ (*qadarnā*), such that an immediate decision was made for the formation of Adam from ‘nothingness’ (*al-‘adam*).⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁴ *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, 4 vols. [Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1987], 2:150.

⁴⁶⁵ Al-Baghawī, *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, 2:150.

⁴⁶⁶ Al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:102; see al-Baghawī, *Ma‘ālim al-tanzīl*, 2:150 where he elaborates further on this distinction.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 1:102; in *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.) there is a footnote to indicate that the reading شقق/*shaqqa* (to split or break) is found in one other manuscript as سببق/*sabaqa* (to come before [something]); this makes sense in context and is the preferred reading here (1:279 n.6): ‘*al-taṣwīr sabaqa l-sam‘ wa’l-baṣar wa’l-aṣābi‘ — qālahu yumāna wa’l-taswiyah ta‘dīl al-khalq wa-itmāmahu wa-tahyī‘atuhu li-naḥkh al-rūḥ.*’

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 1:102-3: ‘*wa-yumkinu an yakūnu <<khalaqnakum>> wa-mā ba’dihi bi-ma‘nā qadarnā dhālika taqdīran qarīban min l-ikhrāj min l-‘adam.*’

This is all brought in line with al-Biqāʿī's interpretation of Gen. 1:27, which he quotes, 'therefore the saying [in the Qurʾān] is made clear by the Torah: "So [God] created man in his image; male and female [he created them]" [...] because Adam would not have been created after that. Then God imitates the creation [of Adam] with the creation of his wife; this "creation" means God brought [them] into existence from a state of non-existence (*al-ījād*).'⁴⁶⁹ Implicit in the 'immediate decree' (*al-taqdīr al-qarīb*), Biqāʿī concludes, is the preparation of Adam and his wife to reach the telos of their formation, which is goodness (*al-tahyīʾah li-qabūl al-ghāyāt*).⁴⁷⁰ The remainder of al-Biqāʿī's commentary on this passage reflects no influence from the biblical text. In brief, he explores Iblīs's refusal to prostrate as the greater sin than that of Adam's disobedience, and concludes that Satan used immortality as a temptation for Adam. Knowledge of the kind of tree that existed in the Garden is irrelevant, according to al-Biqāʿī, because the focus is on the calamity of transgression (*shuʾm al-mukhālafah*) and the blessing of repentance (*barakat al-tawbah*).⁴⁷¹

5.4. Concluding Remarks

The chapter began with a survey of the Garden Narrative in Muslim imagination. It was suggested that two extra-canonical texts, *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures*, provided some basis for the Qurʾān's evocation of the Adamic narrative. This was then highlighted by al-Ṭabarī's interaction with the Qurʾānic text *sub* Q 2:30-1, 7:12 and 15:26. Two aspects of the Qurʾān's Adamic story resurfaced in Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī's exegesis of the Qurʾān: the angels' antipathy towards God for wanting to create man and his actual formation. It was demonstrated that the both authors used the Hebrew Bible to supplement the Qurʾān's narrative through tangential quotation.

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 1:103; this could be a play on words since *ajāda* can mean, 'He begot a child of excellent disposition' (Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v., *j-w-d*).

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:103.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 1:105.

Ibn Barrajan's commentary on the Adamic garden narrative, moreover, reflected the most interaction with the biblical text. Here the trees of paradise described in both the Qur'an and Torah provide him with enough information to develop an allegorical account for the origins of God's commands and prohibitions that align with his own method of *i'tibar*. This further broadens Ibn Barrajan's cosmological scope as he delves deeper into the nature of the 'two trees' from the Torah and then connects that with his tripartite division of Paradise. Further, his exegesis of the Qur'an on this occasion speaks to the tangential use of the biblical text as he supplements the Qur'an's account of the *shajarat al-khuld* (Q 20:120) with the *shajarat ma'rifat al-khayr wa'l-sharr* (Gen. 2:9). Biqa'i's use of the Bible emphasises different aspects of his exegesis on the Qur'an's Adamic story than that observed in Ibn Barrajan's interpretation.

Whereas Ibn Barrajan uses the Bible both to supplement and expand on notions of the 'two trees' from biblical and qur'anic passages, on this occasion al-Biqa'i uses Genesis only to supplement the Qur'an's retelling of the event. This becomes clearer when observing the manner in which Genesis 1-3 is inserted into his commentary with few explicit effects on his own exegesis. As mentioned previously, this may be a consequence of location in his tafsir as it is the first instance of biblical quotation witnessed in *Nazm al-durar*. Nevertheless, the extensive nature of the quotations from Genesis and their form in al-Biqa'i's commentary — remaining 'intact' and unislamicised — reveals the care the author took in transmitting the biblical material. The main point to draw from al-Biqa'i's use of biblical material here is that he is far more concerned with confirming his sources at this point in his qur'anic interpretation, thus ensuring his audience that the version consulted *is* authentic, rather than using it in his exegesis of the Qur'an.

The reader's attention is turned now to the four canonical Gospels in chapter 6. There Ibn Barrajan utilises the Gospel of Matthew only, while al-Biqa'i makes use of all three Synoptic accounts,

as well as the Gospel of John. Biqā'ī also incorporates material from the Hebrew Bible into his exegesis of the Gospels under one of the qur'ānic passages being analysed.

Chapter 6

Parables and Prophets: Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's Theological Exegesis of a Matthean Gospel Parable

In the previous chapter, the Adamic garden narrative in Genesis 3 was analysed in the commentaries of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī. Here in chapter 6, the main focus will be on the 'Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard' from Matthew 19:30-20:16. The 'Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard' is the only Gospel passage quoted by both authors on two separate occasions. Ibn Barrajān quotes it first at *sūrat al-Nisā'* (Q 4:85-7) and again at *sūrat al-Ḥadīd* (Q 57:26-9).⁴⁷² In each tafsīr context, he brings together both qur'ānic passages alongside his interpretation of the biblical text. As previously noted in chapter 3, Biqā'ī quotes this passage from Matthew twice as well; once at *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7:157) where he uses a citation from his own biblical source text, and again at Q 57:28, where he includes Ibn Barrajān's Matthean quotation. In the case of Ibn Barrajān, he quotes the Matthean text the same way in both tafsīr contexts. For al-Biqā'ī, however, primary consideration will be given to his exegesis at Q 7:157, with some comments below on his use of the Gospels at Q 57:27.

Furthermore, the structure of chapter 6 will differ from that of the previous chapter. Whereas 'Adam in Muslim Imagination' provided a brief preliminary discussion in chapter 5, here in chapter 6 there will be one section devoted to the methods of biblical quotation in the tafsīr context used by Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī — which differs slightly from that of the Hebrew Bible — and another focused on the reception of Matthew 20:1-16 in Ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawarī's (d. 276/889) work, *Kitāb ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*.⁴⁷³ In Accad's *Tables*, Ibn Qutaybah is the only other Muslim exegete attested to

⁴⁷² See *Appendix II* for a full translation of these texts. Here again, the work of Casewit has been invaluable for locating these biblical quotations; see Casewit, 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 31-3.

⁴⁷³ Ibn Qutaybah; Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Aṣfar, ed., *Kitāb ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* (Beirut: Maktab al-Islamī, 1999), 222-3; in this work Ibn Qutaybah quotes the text of Matthew 20:1-16 with the omission of only three verses (vv. 7, 9, 14). On his life and works, see s.v., 'Ibn Qūṭayba,' *EL2*; also, s.v., 'Ibn Qutayba,' *CMR1*.

have used this particular Matthean passage.⁴⁷⁴ While Accad's survey is not exhaustive, he did cast the net widely, drawing on some of the most celebrated works in the Islamic tradition spanning several epochs and genres of literature.

A brief note on Matthew's Gospel in Islamic discourse is also in order. In the history of Muslim biblical scholarship, Matthew stands out as the Gospel of choice, point in case being Ibn Barraġān's sole adoption of Matthean passages. He is not alone, however. In the earliest known treatise in the genre of polemical literature, al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī (d. 245/860) uses the Gospel of Matthew, quoting extensively from 8 chapters.⁴⁷⁵ Whether Matthean priority in Islam is simply a case of placement — Matthew occurring first in the Gospel corpus — or something more is difficult to determine. Suffice it to say there may be a more pronounced Jewish 'character' to the Gospel of Matthew — lacking in the other three Gospels — observed in, for example, the vehement anger expressed by Matthew's author toward 'Jewish leaders, Jewish people and the Jewish Temple'⁴⁷⁶ that resonates with the Qur'ān's attitude towards the Jews. It seems that this would be appealing and palatable to Muslim sensibilities. However, al-Biqā'ī quotes liberally from all four Gospels. The various methods employed by Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī for their use of the Gospels will be analysed next in the context of their tafsīrs, which will be followed with Ibn Qutaybah's interpretation, and then the two main authors' treatment of Matthew 19:30-20:16.

⁴⁷⁴ Martin Accad, 'The Gospels in the Muslim Discourse of the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries: An exegetical inventorial table (parts I-IV)' *ICMR* 14/1-4 (2003): 67-91, 205-20, 337-52, 459-79; he investigates 23 treatises from 20 scholars, ranging in date from the early 9th c. to the early 14th c. CE.

⁴⁷⁵ For an introduction to Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm and his treatise, see s.v., 'Al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm al-Rassī,' *CMR*; for his treatise, *al-Radd 'alā l-naṣārā*, see Di Matteo, 'Confutazione contro i Cristiani dello Zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm,' 300-64.

⁴⁷⁶ Hebert W. Basser and Marsha B. Cohen, *The Gospel of Matthew and Judaic Traditions: A Relevance-based Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 3.

6.1. Methods for Using the Gospels in Qur'ānic Interpretation

The main reasons for quoting biblical material has occurred in the Islamic tradition on three, mainly polemical, fronts: to refute the Jewish and Christian scriptures and show that they have been corrupted, to prove Muḥammad's prophethood and to bring biblical narratives in line with qur'ānic ones.⁴⁷⁷ As described in chapter 2, these were not the only routes Muslim scholars took with their biblical engagement. Aside from Ibn Barraḡān and al-Biqā'ī, however, the list remains short until scholarship reveals others in the Islamic tradition that have followed the same path of Muslim biblical scholarship.⁴⁷⁸ While al-Biqā'ī quotes from all four Gospels in his commentary, which provides a large enough sampling of texts to formulate categories for his method of citation, Ibn Barraḡān only uses passages from the Gospel of Matthew. That said, Ibn Barraḡān's use of Matthew is best described as a means of supplementing the Qur'ān's narrative, which will be explored below.⁴⁷⁹

Three categories for understanding the inclusion of the Gospels will be delineated in what follows. These categories have been drawn from observing the manner in which the biblical material appears in the author's commentaries rather than being based on any explicit statements made in the tafsīr context; for example, Biqā'ī rarely explains his method of interpreting the Gospels, the exception to the rule being *sūrat Āl 'Imrān* (Q 3:7), which comprises one of the categories below. Thus the Gospels are used in three different ways in Ibn Barraḡān and al-Biqā'ī's commentaries, functioning as *supplementary*, *interpretive* and *confuting* quotations. The first two categories can be observed in both authors' use of Gospel quotations while the last applies to al-Biqā'ī only.

⁴⁷⁷ Casewit, 'A Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 2-3; these issues have been fleshed out in various Islamic genres, and were explored in detail in chapter 2.

⁴⁷⁸ A case in point is Ibn Barraḡān, who, until the recent work of Yousef Casewit, had remained relatively unknown with respect to his use of biblical texts. Before Casewit's findings, Saleh's thesis, that al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible was unparalleled in the Tradition, remained unchallenged.

⁴⁷⁹ His method of Gospel quotation follows closely to that observed in his exegesis of Genesis 3:1-7.

6.1.1. Supplementary Quotations

Supplementary quotation comprises a category of citation that use the Gospels ‘to explain laconic biblical references in the Qur’ān,’ adding details to the narrative that the author’s want their audience to know. *Supplementary* quotation also appeared as a category of biblical citation for the uses of the Hebrew Bible in chapter 5. The same idea applies here. Aspects of a particular story serve to expand further on the qur’ānic image of a biblical figure or narrative. Quotations of this kind illustrate well the tangential use of the Bible in each author’s interpretation of the Qur’ān.

Instances of *supplementary* quotation include those in which the Qur’ān speaks of Jesus as one coming with ‘signs’ (*bayyināt*), or some connection is made between the role of Jesus in the Gospels and that of the Qur’ān. One example of this occurs while Ibn Barraġān comments on *sūrat al-Zukhruf* (Q 43:57-62), where Jesus is the ‘example for the children of Israel’ (*mathalan li-banī Isrā’īl*). Ibn Barraġān quotes Matthew 11:2-8, 11 and 13-15, and, at the end of v. 15 (‘Let anyone with ears to hear, listen’), he states: ‘God says in the Qur’ān, “It is knowledge of the Hour, so do not doubt concerning it”; that is, [Jesus] is its sign (*āyatihā*), so that when he descends, it will be a sign (*āyah*) of the closeness of the Hour and an indication of [our imminent] extinction.’⁴⁸⁰

Here the Gospels inform Ibn Barraġān’s qur’ānic eschatological understanding of Jesus as an ‘example.’ He connects the descriptions of Jesus from Matthew 11:2-8, the ‘signs’ and ‘works’ listed by John the Baptist, with the picture of Jesus as ‘Elijah, who is to come’ in v. 14. This provides a clear association between Jesus as a prophet who performs signs with his coming at the ‘Hour’ albeit in biblical terms. Ibn Barraġān then relates this to the similar qur’ānic context of Q 43:61 to supplement the Qur’ān’s portrayal of Jesus.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸⁰ Casewit, ‘A Muslim Scholar of the Bible,’ 30; Ibn Barraġān, *Tanbih* 5:94-6; cf. *Īdāh* ¶589.

⁴⁸¹ Q 43:61: ‘[The Recitation] is knowledge concerning the Hour. Have no doubt about it, but follow Me. This is a straight path.’

Biqā'ī also supplements the Qur'ān's narrative with accounts from the Gospels that show that Jesus was, in fact, a man who performed 'signs' and 'wonders'. For example, the first instance of quoting the Gospels in al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr occurs at *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2:87):

'In the past We gave Moses the Scripture, and after him We caused [other] messengers to follow; and We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, the clear proofs, and We supported him with the Holy Spirit. [Why is it that], whenever a messenger brings what your souls do not desire, you become haughty and some you treat as liars and some you kill?'

Under this qur'ānic text al-Biqā'ī includes the Gospel of John (1:28-51); this selection contains John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus' identity.⁴⁸² John 1 is followed up directly with John 2:1-13 (the miracle of turning water into wine, the first of seven miracles or 'signs' in John); and then John's fourth chapter is quoted in its entirety.⁴⁸³

John 4 is interesting because the passage includes Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. Upon dialoguing with Jesus, she says, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet' (John 4:19); the importance of this saying for al-Biqā'ī lies in the recognition of Jesus as a prophet. Biqā'ī exploits the correlation here between the portrait of Jesus in the Gospel narrative and that of the Qur'ān, an aspect of Jesus' identity that he will continue to highlight with qur'ānic 'sign' texts.⁴⁸⁴ The narrative in John 4 continues with Jesus healing people in Samaria and Galilee, further supporting the qur'ānic claim that he was, in fact, a man who came with signs.

This aspect of Jesus' character becomes a topos for al-Biqā'ī, who begins his interpretation of almost every qur'ānic verse that contains Gospel quotations with a biblical reference that illustrates Jesus' miraculous deeds.⁴⁸⁵ As a point of clarification, moreover, the biblical material quoted expands

⁴⁸² Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 2:22ff.

⁴⁸³ See *Appendix II* for a full translation of these texts.

⁴⁸⁴ This list of qur'ānic verses includes Q 2:253, 21:91, 23:50, 43:64 and 61:6.

⁴⁸⁵ Biqā'ī's interpretation of *sūrat al-Şaff* (Q 61:6) substantiates this, where he includes the raising of Lazarus from John 11 in his interpretation of that qur'ānic verse. This context lacks any explicit reference that would appear to prompt al-Biqā'ī to quote John's Gospel here (*Naẓm al-durar* [Hyderabad Ed.], 20:18-19).

on the qur'ānic image of Jesus without changing the meaning of Q 2:87, that Jesus was a man who performed signs. With the first category of *supplementary* quotations, it has been demonstrated that both Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī use Gospel material in order to further develop qur'ānic ideas on Jesus' identity. This is the first of three categories for understanding the manner in which the Gospels are used in the authors' tafsīrs. The next category of biblical citation is best described as *interpretive* quotations for reasons explained below.

6.1.2. Interpretive Quotations

An *interpretive* quotation signifies that the Gospels bring light to bear on the meaning of the qur'ānic verse rather than just expanding on the narrative, as demonstrated above under *supplementary*. While exegesis occurs with the help of the biblical text, the Bible still remains at the level of tangential usage. Here Ibn Barrajān's interpretation of *sūrat al-Ibrāhīm* (Q 14:48) — 'On the day when the earth is changed to something else, and [so too] the heavens' — and *sūrat al-Ḥashr* (Q 59:21) — 'These parallels are coined by us for the people so that they may reflect' — affords him the opportunity to draw on Matthew's Gospel to explain the ontological relationship between the herebelow (*dunyā*) and the hereafter (*ākhirā*).⁴⁸⁶

Ibn Barrajān strings together four 'kingdom parables' from Matthew 13:31-33 and 44-6: (i) the grain of mustard seed that grows to a tree, (ii) the yeast that is leavened, (iii) the treasure hidden in the field and (iv) the merchant who seeks fine pearls. Ibn Barrajān explains that Jesus' mustard seed parable is precisely what God meant in his statement, 'On the day when the earth is changed to something else, and [so too] the heavens' (Q 14:48). Ibn Barrajān follows his comment with a ḥadīth wherein Muḥammad states, 'in the hereafter, this world shall be merely as a finger you dip into a river; behold how much water the finger withdraws.'⁴⁸⁷ With the next three parables, which build on the

⁴⁸⁶ Ibn Barrajān, *Īdāh* ¶589; the effect of the Bible on his cosmology was also observed in the previous chapter in relation to the Garden narrative.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ¶589; cf. Casewit, 'Muslim Scholar of the Bible,' 31.

idea of seeking and finding something of great value — yeast leavened for bread, treasure sold for a field and the purchase of a great pearl — Ibn Barrajān uses these biblical illustrations to add dimension to the qurʿānic text at Q 59:21, ‘These parables⁴⁸⁸ are coined by us for the people so that they may reflect.’ These provide examples of *interpretive* quotation by allowing the biblical material to (i) inform Ibn Barrajān’s understanding of the implicit description of the hereafter, the subtext in Q 14:48, and (ii) add content to the interpretation of ‘parables’ in Q 59:21.

One example of *interpretive* quotation in al-Biqāʿī’s commentary occurs at *sūrat al-Ḥadīd* (Q 57:27):

‘Then We caused Our messengers to follow in their footsteps. We caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow and We gave him the *Gospel*; and We placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him. But monasticism (*rahbāniyyah*) they invented. We did not prescribe it for them [but it arose] through desire for God’s satisfaction; and they did not observe it as they should have done. So We gave those of them who believed their wage; but many of them are profligates.’

Here al-Biqāʿī waits until the end of the verse to begin quoting the Gospels. Then he proceeds to engage in his own biblical exegesis and provides a harmony of Gospel texts that clarify the meaning of ‘monasticism’ (*rahbāniyyah*) used in the Qurʿān, designed to vindicate the monastic life.⁴⁸⁹ The Qurʿān does not elaborate on what ‘monasticism’ means, so al-Biqāʿī strings together Matthew 18-21, essentially, with excerpts from Mark 10 and 11 and a few texts from parallel accounts in Luke in order to *interpret* the qurʿānic account.⁴⁹⁰ The Matthean passage includes the saying about a brother who sins against you, the parable of the unforgiving servant, the rich young man who is told to sell all of his possessions to have treasure in heaven and the cleansing of the temple.

⁴⁸⁸ Jones, ‘parallels.’

⁴⁸⁹ On qurʿānic *rahbāniyyah* see Sinai, ‘Muḥammad as an Episcopal Figure,’ *A* 65 (2018): 27-8; for the etymological history and reception of *rahbān/ruhbān* in Jewish, Christian and Islamic contexts, see Zellentin, ‘Aḥbār and Ruhbān,’ 271-84.

⁴⁹⁰ For recent views on ‘monasticism’ in early Islam, see Christian C. Sahner, ‘“The Monasticism of My Community is Jihad”: A Debate on Asceticism, Sex, and Warfare in Early Islam,’ *A* 64 (2017): 149-83.

‘Monasticism,’ according to al-Biqā’ī, is something that is not denied by ‘the principles of religion concerning what has been understood from the Qur’ān and the ḥadīth by some scholars’; this leads to a further designation of ‘good innovations’ (*bid‘a l-ḥasanah*) and ‘evil innovations’ (*bid‘a l-qabīḥah*).⁴⁹¹ He uses the Gospels to demonstrate the former. The followers of Jesus acted upon what they received in the Gospel, which was initially right to do. The problem that developed, Biqā’ī adds, stemmed from a later king, who remains unnamed — this refers to the emperor Constantine, who altered the Gospel after Jesus. And here al-Biqā’ī references the story provided by Ibn Barraḡān in his interpretation of Q 57:27. In that context, Ibn Barraḡān does not name the king either, but his description is more detailed, recounting how this king brought the Gospel in line with Roman and Greek traditions.⁴⁹² He also reports that ‘300 bishops’ (*thalāthumī‘ah usquf*) were convened for the task of creating a ‘canon’ (*qānūn*). This is none other than a description of the Council of Nicaea and the formation of the Nicene Creed. Both Ibn Barraḡān and al-Biqā’ī reference the historical aftermath.

Ibn Barraḡān recalls how the followers of Jesus were killed and some were ‘torn apart’ (*muzziqū*), and those that remained, who read the Torah and the Gospel, dispersed. Biqā’ī recounts this dispersion as well and notes it as the origin of monks then living in isolation atop mountains. This, according to al-Biqā’ī, led to ‘evil innovations,’ what the Qur’ān means by, ‘Yet they did not observe it like it should have been observed.’⁴⁹³

Thus for Ibn Barraḡān and al-Biqā’ī, this anecdote on the event of Nicaea presents something of a turning point for understanding the way in which the Gospel had been lived out by Christians before the Creed.⁴⁹⁴ ‘Monasticism’ as an improper form of worship, or use of revelation, stemmed from

⁴⁹¹ Al-Biqā’ī, *Nazm al-durar*, 7:464.

⁴⁹² Ibn Barraḡān, *Tanbīh*, 5:305.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 5:305-6; cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Nazm al-durar*, 7:464.

⁴⁹⁴ The Council of Nicaea and the formation of the Nicene Creed also receive polemical attention in ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s *Critique* (Reynolds, *Critique*, xlvii; 1:41-6) and al-Qarāfi’s *Ajwiba* (Cucarella, *Muslim Christian Polemics*, 102) as the *terminus a quo* for the Christian Gospel becoming a source of ‘evil innovations.’

recasting the Gospel in terms of the creedal formulae constituted at Nicaea. Without further elaborating on the Christian and Muslim theological distinctions comported therewith, here the authors restrict the discussion to the text of Q 57:27 and the use of *rahbāniyyah* in this context, using the anecdote on Nicaea to add dimension to the Qurʾān's narrative.

There is, moreover, a subcategory of quotation under *interpretive*, best understood as 'proof texting.' This applies to instances in which the Bible is quoted to confirm an Islamic concept rooted in the Qurʾān. As will be shown below with the analysis of Matthew 19:30-20:16, this is most clearly expressed in citing the Bible to prove the legitimacy of Muḥammad's prophethood from the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The final category, which is unique to al-Biqāʿī, will be addressed in the following section.

6.1.3. Confuting Quotations

The last kind of quotation only occurs in al-Biqāʿī's commentary and designates *confuting* the Bible with the Qurʾān. Here Q 3:7 is the only text that qualifies. A *confuting* quotation signifies the process of taking a Qurʾānic concept, in this case *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*, and applying it to the Gospels in order to refute a Christian doctrine, namely the identity of Jesus — this will be discussed in detail below. This particular text, moreover, stands out as the only one in al-Biqāʿī's tafsīr where he enters into a diatribe against the deity of Jesus characteristic of the polemic tradition in Islam.

6.1.3.1. Two Christian Assertions Tested

At the beginning of his Gospel quotations at Q 3:7, Biqāʿī opines, '[The Christians] believed wrongly about Jesus that when a person would say to him, "Oh lord, do such and such for me," and he would prostrate to him, and then Jesus would confirm this person in what he was doing and answer his request, that that indicates Jesus was a god.'⁴⁹⁵ Biqāʿī's selection of Gospel quotations reflects his overall purpose of elucidating the relationship between firm (*muḥkam*) and mutually resembling

⁴⁹⁵ Al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:227.

(*mutashābih*) verses. The first Christian assertion cited is that Jesus is God. This belief, al-Biqā'ī contends, comes from misinterpreting instances in the Gospels when people would prostrate before Jesus, asking for help of some kind.⁴⁹⁶ Numerous examples can be found throughout the New Testament, but I will note a few in the Gospels that would not have escaped al-Biqā'ī's attention.

In the Gospel narratives, one finds people 'falling' (Gr. *pesōn*) or 'kneeling' (Gr. *gonupetōn*) at Jesus' feet. The Gospel of Matthew, which functions as the 'scaffold' on which al-Biqā'ī builds his composite narrative,⁴⁹⁷ includes such a case, as when a man who 'knelt before Jesus' and pleads for the life of his son who suffers from symptoms resembling epilepsy (Matthew 17:14). Also in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark, a leper kneels before Jesus, pleading with him, 'If you choose, you can make me clean' (Mark 1:40).⁴⁹⁸

Likewise, Luke's Gospel includes the leper who 'falls' at Jesus' feet seeking to be healed (Luke 5:12); Jairus, the ruler of a synagogue, 'fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house' (Luke 8:41); and a woman came to Jesus, 'trembling and falling down before him' and is healed of her infirmity (Luke 8:47).⁴⁹⁹ Such verses can be observed in all of the Gospels, but these suffice to create a picture of what al-Biqā'ī intends with his example of prostration; that is, because Jesus allowed people to 'fall' or 'kneel' at his feet as if they were prostrating and then Jesus would answer their request, the

⁴⁹⁶ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:227.

⁴⁹⁷ Walid A. Saleh and Kevin Casey, 'An Islamic Diatessaron: Al-Biqā'ī's Harmony of the Four Gospels,' in Sara Binay and Stefan Leder, eds., *Translating the Bible into Arabic: historical, text-critical and literary aspects* (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2012), 87; Biqā'ī quotes from this Matthean text at one point, but only notes the use of *al-rabb* ('lord') (*Hyd. Ed.*, 4:117); he nonetheless shows familiarity with the text.

⁴⁹⁸ Mark 1:35-9 is quoted at Q 5:46 (*Naẓm al-durar* [Hyderabad Ed.], 6:164-5), which again indicates that al-Biqā'ī at least had the context to draw on for his comments concerning prostration.

⁴⁹⁹ Luke 5:12 falls at the beginning of a pericope (Luke 5:12-16) that al-Biqā'ī quotes the latter half of at Q 5:46 (*Naẓm al-durar* [Hyderabad Ed.], 6:162).

Christians misinterpreted this to mean that he was God.⁵⁰⁰ Rather than reading these situations in light of what al-Biqā'ī considers *muḥkam* in the Bible, the Christians ignored such verses.

He continues with his explanation of why they were in error for this, by commenting that it is mentioned many times in the Hebrew Bible that people prostrate to one another and it is 'permissible in their law.'⁵⁰¹ This is enough, in al-Biqā'ī's view, to interpret the *mutashābih* verses correctly. And from it is the fact that Jesus would say about God, "Father," and about himself, that he is His son. So [the Christians] sought out the seditions (*fitna*) in it, and they believed in the literal meaning of the two words 'fatherhood' and 'sonship.' They did not return these expressions back to what was clear (*muḥkam*) in the book, namely that which he said to them many times in it.⁵⁰²

The second Christian assertion al-Biqā'ī references pertains to the filial language of 'sonship' (*al-bunuwwah*) and the description of God as 'Father,' and using 'fatherhood' (*al-ubuwwah*) to express the relationship between Jesus and God in the Gospels.⁵⁰³ He maintains that the Christians went astray by believing wrongly that the expressions 'sonship' and 'fatherhood' were to be interpreted literally; that is, they deliberately clung to the ambiguous verses without referring them back to the clear verses in the Gospels.⁵⁰⁴

Concerning the description 'fatherhood' and its sense in the Gospels, Biqā'ī spends more time explaining this than the term 'sonship' at Q 3:7. He advocates referring to God as 'Father' in a number of places, beginning with Luke 11:1-4 (the Lord's Prayer): 'Oh Lord, teach us to pray like John taught his disciples. So he said to them, "If you pray then say: Our Father who is in heaven [...]."' Biqā'ī refers back

⁵⁰⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:227.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 4:233.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 4:227.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 4:227; the language of 'fatherhood' and 'sonship' in the Gospels was dealt with early in the Islamic tradition in al-Qāsim's *al-Radd 'alā l-naṣārā* (Di Matteo, 'Confutazione,' 318:13-323:14).

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 4:227.

to this text to make the point that Jesus taught his followers to refer to God as ‘Father;’ therefore this description is not indicative of a unique relationship between Jesus and God.⁵⁰⁵ He elaborates on the dynamic between Jesus as a son and God as his father:

If [the Christians] refer the phrases ‘father and son’ back to this fixed (*muḥkam*) text and the likes of it, and there are many in all of the Gospels, they would know without any doubt that its meaning is that God dealt with [Jesus] as a father deals with his son; namely, nurturing, protecting, aiding, venerating and honouring, just like they are forced to interpret his saying in what I mentioned earlier, ‘Our Father Who is in Heaven.’⁵⁰⁶

Biqāʿī then goes through several passages to support this understanding of ‘fatherhood’ in the Gospels: ‘Let your light shine forth in front of people that they may see your good deeds and they may glorify your Father who is in the heavens’ (Matthew 5:16); ‘Be good to those who hate you and pray for those who expel you and let you down in order that you may be sons to your Father who is in heaven, because he is the one Who shines the sun on the good and the evil, and He gives rain to the saints and the oppressors’ (Matthew 5:44-5); ‘Pray to your Father secretly, and your Father sees the secret and He will give to you openly’ (Matthew 6:6). Biqāʿī apprises his readers that the meaning is ‘that they should venerate [God] more than they venerate their [earthly] fathers in order that He may care for them more than fathers care for their children.’⁵⁰⁷

While al-Biqāʿī’s assessment of prostration to Jesus and his divinity has strong polemical tones, nonetheless his intention is to illustrate how the *muḥkam/mutashābih* paradigm functions in the

⁵⁰⁵ Al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:230-1.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 4:230-1: ‘*wa-law raddū ayḍan al-āb wa’-ibn ilā hādhā l-muḥkam wa-amthālihi wa-hiya kathūrah fī jamīʿ anājilīhim la-‘alimū bi’-l-ashbahah anna ma’anāhu anna Allāh yaf’alu l-wālid ma’a walidhi min al-tarbīh wa’-l-ḥiyāṭah wa’-l-nuṣrah wa’-l-ta’zīm wa’-l-ijlāl kamā li-zammahum ḥatman anna ya’walū qūluhu fīmā qadammtuhu <<ābānā lladhī fī’-l-samāwāt>>.’*

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 4:232.

biblical text.⁵⁰⁸ His treatment of ‘fatherhood,’ moreover, and the divine language that he admits as *muḥkam* into his descriptions of God, disallows the notion that al-Biqāṣī’s exegetical aim is strictly polemical in nature. The language al-Biqāṣī does permit for the relationship between Jesus and God is in contrast to what other Muslim exegetes are willing to concede. In al-Ṭūfī’s (d. 716/1316) commentary, for example, he consistently makes a distinction in the language used for ‘sonship’ and ‘fatherhood’ in the Gospels; Ṭūfī first defines these terms as purely metaphorical in his prologue, stating that the Christians are in error,

by presuming that what is found in these Gospels is actually from Christ’s words; they are to be understood as an obvious and common metaphor [*majāz*]. Giving them a metaphorical interpretation is more befitting than giving them an absurd interpretation. The decision to do so entails taking [Jesus’] expressions ‘Father’ and ‘son’ to correspond to our expressions ‘Lord’ and ‘servant.’⁵⁰⁹

Nowhere in al-Biqāṣī’s treatment of ‘fatherhood’ and ‘sonship’ at Q. 3:7 does he make this association. Though he admits that much of the language is *mutashābih*, he is willing to use the terms as they appear in the Gospels without relabeling them to fit within a Muslim paradigm, as observed in al-Ṭūfī’s remark, ‘to correspond to our expressions “Lord” and “servant.”’

Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāṣī’s manner of quoting the Gospels reflects some awareness of biblical context. The qur’ānic parallels they supply with their interpretation of the Bible demonstrate that the Gospel material fits well within the Qur’ān’s narrative discourse. *Supplementary* quotations, moreover, add depth in each context, and *interpretive* ones further develop and explain qur’ānic ideas found in those particular verses. Ibn Qutaybah’s use of Matthew 20:1-16 will be presented next. It will then be followed with Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāṣī’s interpretation of that Matthean text.

⁵⁰⁸ A similar use of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* has been observed in Sa’adiah Gaon’s *Tafsīr* on the Hebrew Bible (David M. Freidenreich, ‘The Use of Islamic Sources in Saadia Gaon’s *Tafsīr* of the Torah’ *JQR* 93/3-4 [2003]: 353-95, esp. 360).

⁵⁰⁹ Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible*, 127; cf. 129, 151, 165, 169 and 181; for background on al-Ṭūfī, see, s.v., ‘Al-Ṭūfī,’ *CMR4*.

6.2. Ibn Qutaybah's Matthean Quotations

In his work, *Kitāb ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, Ibn Qutaybah marshals the 'parable of the labourers in the vineyard' from Matthew 20:1-16, omitting vv. 7, 9 and 14, in order to determine whether a ḥadīth of 'Amr Ibn al-Āṣ, which some detractors declared weak, was, in fact, valid for understanding God's relationship to man.⁵¹⁰ Here is Ibn Qutaybah's Matthean quote, in full:

'Abū Muḥammad said: "And I read in the Gospel, that Christ, said to the disciples, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who went out in the darkness before daybreak to hire labourers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay a denarius a day for each one; then he sent them to his vineyard. He went out after three hours and he saw some men standing idle in the market place and said: "You also, go to the vineyard and I shall give you what ought to be given to you." So they went. Then he went out after six hours, and after nine hours, and after eleven hours and he did the same. And when evening came, he said to his steward: "Give the labourers their wages beginning with the last until you reach the first." He gave them their earnings and paid them equally. When they received their wages, they grumbled to the owner and said: "These men worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us in pay." Then [the owner] said: "Have I treated you unjustly? Did I not give you what had been agreed upon? The money belongs to me and I do with it whatever I wish. So the first shall be last and the last, first."⁵¹¹

The point of using this biblical 'defense' is to justify the ḥadīth that states Muḥammad asked Ibn al-Āṣ to judge between tribes (*qawm*) on a matter. If he judged rightly, a ten-fold reward awaited him; if he judged wrongly, he was still promised a reward. The detractors reject the authenticity of the ḥadīth on grounds that it is unjust to discriminate between the two groups since both did the work.

Ibn Qutaybah argues, however, that succeeding at one's work is different than not succeeding, and that success is according to God's good pleasure (*tawfiq*); He does not owe man anything.⁵¹² It is at this point that he quotes Matthew 20:1-16. Here Ibn Qutaybah uses the biblical text in a positive

⁵¹⁰ Albert Isteero, "Abdullāh Muslim Ibn Qutayba's Biblical quotations and their source: An inquiry into the earliest existing Arabic Bible translations,' PhD Thesis presented at Johns Hopkins University, 1991, 189.

⁵¹¹ Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitāb ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, 222-3.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 221-2.

manner, buttressing his own argument for the validity of that particular ḥadīth. He makes no pronouncement on the Matthean text, but uses it rather to authenticate an Islamic text, which implicitly affords the Bible an authoritative place alongside the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. Ibn Qutaybah's use of the Bible, moreover, qualifies as *interpretive quotation* because he marshals the biblical text in order to explain the meaning of an Islamic idea rooted in a ḥadīth. Similar instances of interpretation occur with this Matthean text in the works of Ibn Barraḡān and al-Biqāʿī and will be explored in what follows.

6.3. The 'Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard' in Ibn Barraḡān's Commentary: *Sūrahs al-Nisā'* and *al-Ḥadīd*

The context of *sūrat al-Nisā'* (Q 4:85-7) provides Ibn Barraḡān with an opportunity to quote from Matthew 19:30-20:16. The full pericope appears, however, in *sūrat al-Ḥadīd* (Q 57:28); both contexts will be addressed together here. The Matthean quotation reads:

'And many that are first, will be last; and the first will be behind the last. That is why the kingdom of heaven is likened to a wealthy man who went out to hire labourers to work his vineyard in the early morning. And having agreed with the labourers for a *dirham* (a day), he brought them into his vineyard. During the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace. He said: "You go also into the vineyard, and I will give you your rightful dues (*bi-ḥuqūqikum*)."⁵⁴³ So they did, and again he did the same in the sixth hour...and the ninth hour. And when the eleventh hour came...he found others standing idle, and he said to them: "Why do you stand here all day without work?" They responded: "Because no one has hired us." He said to them: "You go (to the vineyard) as well and I will give you your rightful dues." So when the day ended, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward: "Call the labourers and pay them their hire, and begin with the last and end with the first." So he began with those that were brought in on the eleventh hour, and he gave every man a *dirham*. Then the first came forth, hoping for an increase, but every man also received a *dirham* only. So they reproached the owner of the vineyard, saying, "Have you made us equal to those who worked one hour of the day only, yet we have toiled all day long and borne the burden of its heat?" Then (the owner) answered one of them, saying, "Friend, I do you no wrong; did we not agree on a *dirham*? So take what is yours and go your way; for I wish to give to those who arrived late just as I have given you. Is it unlawful for me to do so? Just as you are envious, so am I merciful. It is on this account that the last will be first, and the first will be behind the last. For many are called, but few are chosen."⁵⁴³

⁵⁴³ Ibn Barraḡān, *Tanbīh* 5:308.

Ibn Barrajan's discussion on the 'ḥadīth of the wage' (*ḥadīth al-ijārah*) is sparked by the appearance of the word *naṣīb* ('reward') in Q 4:85. He interprets this term alongside *ḥaẓẓ* ('portion') while exploring the meaning of *al-kifl*.⁵¹⁴ Here these ideas precipitate a discussion on *ajrahum* ('their reward/wage') in Q 57:27, which Ibn Barrajan brings together in this tafsīr context, along with the Bible, in order to illuminate the qur'ānic passage. The same comments occur in the context of *sūrat al-Ḥadīd* (Q 57:28-9), where Ibn Barrajan connects the qur'ānic text again with the *ḥadīth al-ijārah* and the Matthean quotation.⁵¹⁵ Further, the *ḥadīth al-ijārah* was previously commented on in chapter 2; the report there is slightly different but retains the same general contours observed here.⁵¹⁶

After quoting Q 4:85, 'Those who make fair intercession will have a share of it; whilst those who make evil intercession will bear the responsibility for it,' and equating *al-kifl* ('reward/burden') with *al-mithl*, rendered here as 'equivalent,' he goes directly into Q 57:28, 'O you who believe, fear God and believe in His messenger, and He will give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light, by which you can walk; and He will forgive you.'⁵¹⁷ The 'double portion' is an important concept to grasp here. Ibn Barrajan interprets this to mean, 'two equivalents (*mithlayni*), or two rewards (*ajrayni*): the reward of believing in Muḥammad, and the reward of believing in what was revealed before.'⁵¹⁸ The second reward of 'believing in previous revelations' is key for understanding the place of Matthew's Gospel alongside the qur'ānic revelation and ḥadīth. After scrutinising the semantic range for *al-kifl* ('portion, reward, equivalent') from Q 57:28, Ibn Barrajan cites the 'ḥadīth of the wage.'

⁵¹⁴ Ibn Barrajan, *Tanbīh*, 2:92.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5:310.

⁵¹⁶ See section 2.1.4., 'Ḥadīth Literature and the Bible,' for an English translation. If the reader compares the two translations, the differences in form and content are clear.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:92.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2:92.

The importance of the ‘ḥadīth of the wage’ to Ibn Barraḡān’s use of the Bible warrants a full translation here. It is taken from Casewit’s recent publication with minor deviations.⁵¹⁹ This ḥadīth is from the *Kitāb al-Iḡārah*, narrated by the father of Sālim b. ‘Abd Allāh, who reported:

‘I heard the Messenger of God say, “The period of your stay, with respect to the previous nations, is like the period between the late afternoon (*al-‘aṣr*) prayer and sunset. The people of the Torah were given the *Torah* and they acted upon it until midday, then they were exhausted and were each given one *qīrāṭ*. And then the people of the Gospel were given the *Gospel*, and they acted upon it until the late afternoon; then they were exhausted and were each given one *qīrāṭ*. And then we were given the Qur’ān and we acted upon it until sunset and we were each given two *qīrāṭs*. Because of this the people of both scriptures said, ‘O our Lord, You have given them two *qīrāṭs* and have given us only one *qīrāṭ* even though we have worked more than they.’ God responded, ‘Have I compensated you unfairly in any way?’ They said, ‘No.’ Then God said: ‘That is my blessing I bestow upon whomsoever I wish.’”⁵²⁰

Affinities to ‘the parable of the labourers in the vineyard’ is clear. Ibn Barraḡān paraphrases this ḥadīth and then refers back to Q 57:28, before using two more qur’ānic texts to support his argument: Q 57:29, ‘That the People of the Scripture may know that they have no power over any of God’s bounty but that the bounty is in the hand of God, to give to those whom He wishes. God is endowed with great bounty’: he interprets this to mean that God bestowed upon the earlier ones (*al-awwalīna*), that is ‘the People of Scripture’ — both Jews and Christians — the reward (*al-kifl*) for their work; this is also an equivalent (*al-mithl*) for their labor.⁵²¹ But God has bestowed upon the later ones (*al-mua’akhhirīna*), that is, ‘those who believe in Muḡammad,’ what they have earned, as well as a greater reward (i.e., a ‘double portion’). Then he quotes Q 4:32, ‘Do not covet that through which God has granted some of you preference over others. Men will receive a share of what they have earned, and so will women,’

⁵¹⁹ Casewit, ‘Muslim Scholar of the Bible,’ 43 n.127.

⁵²⁰ This ḥadīth can be found in the following collections: al-Bukharī (#3272), Aḡmad (#4508), al-Tirmidhī (#2871), al-Bayhaqī (#11978), Ibn Ḥabbān (#6765) and al-Ṭabrānī (#306); cf. Ibn Barraḡān, *Tanbih* 2:93.

⁵²¹ Ibn Barraḡān, *Tanbih*, 2:93; cf. 5:310-11.

and comments that, ‘this is a promise and glad tidings according to the aforementioned doubling (or double portion)’ in Q 57:28.⁵²² This leads directly into the quotation of Matthew 19:30-20:16.

In his interpretation of both qur’ānic passages, that of sūrahs *al-Nisā’* and *al-Ḥadīd*, Ibn Barrajān interacts with Jesus’ words in the parable, ‘one *dirham* each’ at the eleventh hour.⁵²³ This hour is special for Ibn Barrajān as it connotes the eschatological ‘Hour’; it signifies Jesus’ ‘time of descent’ (*waqt nuzūlihi*), and those working in the eleventh hour, that is, Muslims, will be working with him on that day.⁵²⁴ As previously mentioned, the *ḥadīth al-ijārah* is discussed in chapter 2, where the wording comports with a stronger eschatological understanding of this text. Though Ibn Barrajān does not designate each of the hours to specific groups — ‘nations’ (*aqwām*) is used here in the *ḥadīth* — they represent Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Jews and the Christians represent the grumblers who were hired at earlier hours, and the Muslims arrive at the end and receive double, that is, a ‘double portion’ as communicated in Q 57:28. Ibn Barrajān brings the qur’ānic and biblical accounts together into one unified narrative that places Muḥammad and those who believe in him as the final ‘nation’ at the arrival of the *Eschaton*, that is, the *yawm al-qiyāmah* (‘Day of Resurrection’).⁵²⁵ While there is no explicit connection to the *yawm al-qiyāmah* in Q 4:87, Ibn Barrajān is commenting on this passage in the same qur’ānic context and thus draws on that motif as well in his exegesis of the biblical material.

⁵²² Ibn Barrajān, *Tanbīh*, 2:93.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 2:94 and 5:310; here the Arabic ‘*dirham*’ calques the Greek, ‘*denarius*’; this unit of measure occurs as *qirāṭ/qirāṭayni* in the *ḥadīth* version of this parable.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:94.

⁵²⁵ There is an interesting play on words and concepts here, unintended by the author, of course; there is no reason to believe Ibn Barrajān knew Koine Greek. In the Greek, ‘last’ or ‘*eschatos*’ signifies both the actual ‘last’ as in Matthew 20:8, as well as the ‘Last Day’ or ‘*Eschaton*’ in other biblical contexts: ‘When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, “Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last (*eschatos*), and then going to the first” (Matthew 20:8), the ‘last’ being those at the eleventh hour, which, according to Ibn Barrajān, are the Muslims standing at the ‘Last Hour / Day of Resurrection’ with Jesus.

With his use of this Matthean passage, Ibn Barrajan finds significant evidence from the Gospel text to support and expand on qur'anic eschatological concepts. While his use of the Bible fits within the category of supplementary quotation, the extent of his biblical exegesis also moves into interpretive, albeit tangential, quotation. The importance of his interaction with Matthew's Gospel, moreover, is demonstrated in the overlapping of his qur'anic and biblical hermeneutics, which, it is argued, bears such fruit by means of approaching these texts with an *i'tibar* hermeneutic in place. As noted, the 'reward of believing what was revealed before' (*wa-ajr al-imān bimā anzala min qablu*), what acts as a guiding hermeneutical principle here, is directly conveyed through Ibn Barrajan's interpretation of Matthew 19:30-20:16 alongside his use of both the Qur'an and ḥadīth literature.

Furthermore, in his chapter on Ibn Barrajan's hermeneutics, Casewit notes the 'protological' and 'eschatological' emphases observed in the author's method of interpretation:

'The second mode of *ta'wil* is eschatologically oriented, and corresponds to the root *w-l*, whence *ma'āl* or 'final destination.' Here, interpretation entails understanding the lastness or final destination of a verse in the Hereafter. For instance, passages relating to recompense, reward and punishment, life and afterlife, resurrection and post resurrection, must be interpreted in relation to their ultimate "lastness."⁵²⁶

Not only has Ibn Barrajan applied this mode of *ta'wil* to his qur'anic interpretation, but it has also spilled over into his method of biblical exegesis. Here again, the overlapping of his scriptural hermeneutics can be observed between Matthew 19:30-20:16 and both the Qur'an and ḥadīth. Thus Ibn Barrajan's interaction with the Bible, Qur'an and ḥadīth demonstrates the multifaceted nature for his use of Gospel material and reveals the depths to which his exegesis as a *mu'tabir* draws from the biblical and qur'anic streams of revelation. Biqā'i's use of Matthew's Gospel will be explored in the following section. His quotation of biblical material in both qur'anic contexts is more extensive,

⁵²⁶ Casewit, *Mystics of al-Andalus*, 237; the 'protological' emphasis of Ibn Barrajan's mode of *ta'wil* is also explained by Casewit here, though it bears no relationship to the present discussion (see chapter 4, section 4.3.2. for the 'protological' mode).

making use of various Synoptic accounts, as well as the Pentateuch, leading up to and following his quotations from the four Gospels.⁵²⁷

6.4. The ‘Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard’ in al-Biqā’ī’s Commentary: *Sūrat al-A’rāf*

Biqā’ī’s use of Matthew’s Gospel at *sūrat al-A’rāf* (Q 7:157) appears within a web of various biblical quotations.⁵²⁸ The point of excursus from the Qur’ān into the Bible occurs at Q 7:157, ‘[...] in the *Torah* and *Gospel* [...]’ which affords al-Biqā’ī the opportunity to launch into both the Hebrew Bible, namely Deuteronomy, and the four Gospels. Biqā’ī bookends his string of Gospel quotes with the quotation and interpretation of John 15:23-16:1 from Ibn Ḥishām’s *Sīrah*.⁵²⁹

As will be demonstrated below, Biqā’ī has become more comfortable with his use of the Bible in the exegesis of the Qur’ān, as compared to his biblical reconnoitering of Genesis 1-3 in the previous chapter. This section will analyse al-Biqā’ī’s use of the Bible in the context of Q 7:157. Further, whereas Ibn Barrajān stood out in the previous chapter with a more detailed discussion surrounding Genesis 1-3, the reader will notice that the tables have turned with al-Biqā’ī’s use of the Gospels. That is to say, compared to Ibn Barrajān, Biqā’ī spends a considerably longer amount of time here with his use of the Gospels, which includes a significant amount of quotations from the Pentateuch as well.

The Qur’ān’s mention of the *Torah* and the *Gospel* at Q 7:157a — ‘Those who follow the messenger, the prophet of his community, whom they will find mentioned in the *Torah* and the *Gospel*

⁵²⁷ For background on the Synoptic Gospels, see, for example, E.P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, eds., *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM, 1996); also, Wilfred L. Knox and Henry Chadwick, eds., *The Sources of the Synoptic Gospels*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁵²⁸ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:125-33.

⁵²⁹ This passage was discussed earlier in chapter 2, section 2.1.2.2.

in their possession [...]’⁵³⁰ — prompts al-Biqā’ī to recall a passage from Deuteronomy 18.⁵³¹ This particular biblical passage is used as a proof-text to demonstrate that the Jewish Scriptures speak of Muḥammad’s prophethood. Immediately following the Deuteronomic verses, Biqā’ī begins quoting from another 6th/12th c. scholar, Samaw’al b. Yaḥyá al-Maghribī (d. 570/1175).⁵³² Samaw’al b. Yaḥyá was a convert from Judaism to Islam, a man of letters skilled equally in mathematics and logic, but also the author of two polemical works, *Iḥām al-yahūd* (‘Silencing the Jews’) and *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd fī l-radd ‘alá l-naṣārā wa’l-yahūd* (‘The Aspired Goal in Refuting the Christians and the Jews’), quoted here by al-Biqā’ī.⁵³³

Biqā’ī’s argument from Deuteronomy precedes Matthew 19:30-20:16; the Matthean passage is then followed with other Synoptic accounts, along with the Gospel of John.⁵³⁴ In the first instance, the quotations from Matthew and Deuteronomy work together to explore the idea of *iṣṭifā’* (‘election,

⁵³⁰ The English translation of the Arabic *al-ummiyya* here is a debated topic. Like Jones, A.J. Arberry (*The Koran Interpreted* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964]) translates it as, ‘the Prophet of the common folk,’ which is in contrast to other interpretations of *ummiyya* as ‘unlettered’ or ‘illiterate / unable to read and write’; see, for example, E.H. Palmer, *The Koran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949); J.M. Rodwell, *The Koran* (London: Dent and Sons, 1945); Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur’ān: text, translation and commentary* (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 2015). If *ummiyya* is understood as ‘illiterate’ or ‘unlettered,’ Muḥammad’s production of the Qur’ān as a written text would in itself be a miracle (see s.v., ‘*djāz*, *El2*). For further reading on this, see Sebastian Günther, ‘Muḥammad, the Illiterate Prophet: An Islamic Creed in the Qur’ān and Qur’anic Exegesis’ *JQS* 4/1 (2002): 1-26; idem, s.v., ‘illiteracy’ and ‘literacy,’ *EQ*.

⁵³¹ Al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:125.

⁵³² On Samaw’al b. Yaḥyá’s life and works, see Moshe Perlmann, trans. and ed., *Samaw’al al-Maghribī Iḥām al-Yahūd: Silencing the Jews* (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1964), 15-28; see also, Ibrahim Marazka, Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke, eds., *Samaw’al al-Maghribī’s (d. 570/1175) Iḥām al-yahūd* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz-Verlag, 2006), 1-15; and ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Ṭawīlah, ed., *Badhl al-majhūd fī iḥām al-yahūd* (Dimashq: Dār al-Qalam, 1989) (henceforth referred to as *Iḥām*); Maḥmūd Ṭal’at, ed., *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd fī al-radd ‘alá l-naṣārā wa’l-yahūd* (Qāhira: Dār al-Āfāq al-‘Arabīyah, 2006) (hereafter *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*); for a discussion on Samaw’al’s polemic in context, see Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, 69-71.

⁵³³ It is interesting to note that the editor and commentator — his footnotes function more like a *hashīyyah* — of Samaw’al’s text, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Ṭawīlah, in his *iftitāh*, strings together the same Gospel harmony that al-Biqā’ī will produce in the pages that follow his quotations from Samaw’al’s *Iḥām*. The reader should note that al-Biqā’ī never calls the *Iḥām* by name, only ‘in the chapter on [...] by Samaw’al b. Yaḥyá,’ the *Iḥām* containing said chapter. He does refer to the *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd* by name, which also sets it apart from earlier quotations from the unnamed work.

⁵³⁴ The exact Gospel references as they appear in quotation are: Matthew 19:30-20:16, 22:14, 21:23-26a; Luke 20:6; Matthew 21:26b; Mark 11:32b; Matthew 21:27; Mark 12:10; Matthew 21:28-33; Luke 20:9b; Matthew 21:34-22:14; Luke 14:16b-21, 23-24; John 10:1-3, 11b-13, 16, 19-21a (Saleh and Casey, ‘An Islamic Diatessaron,’ 109).

preference') and its bearing on Muḥammad's prophethood.⁵³⁵ The second set of Gospel quotations using Matthew, Luke and John work towards this end as well and will be examined in context. Further, each block of Gospel quotations are prefaced with qur'ānic verses that will be looked at in sequence, first, then followed by the set of quotations from Deuteronomy. The Gospels will be next in the contexts of Q 7:157, including the *Sīrah* reference.

Before quoting the Bible, Biqā'ī cites parts of three qur'ānic verses to support his inclusion of biblical material. In this case, sūrahs *al-Baqara* (Q 2:124), *Āl 'Imrān* (Q 3:33) and *al-Nisā'* (Q 4:157) provide him with a qur'ānic foundation to build on and further structure his arguments. The first qur'ānic verse reads, 'And [recall] when Abraham was tested by his Lord' (Q 2:124a); then, 'God chose Adam and Noah' (Q 3:33a); and last, 'Certainly, they did not kill him' (Q 4:157f). This final quote from *sūrat al-Nisā'* is somewhat puzzling among the other texts. However, the referents in each text are the major prophets, Adam, Noah, Abraham and Jesus. What can be gleaned from these verses appears to be a confirmation that God tests, elects and sustains his prophets, notions of God's providential work that al-Biqā'ī intends his reader to bear in mind as he moves into Deuteronomy 18. And bringing all of these prophets into focus for his reader, he then establishes an a fortiori argument for the prophethood of Muḥammad, as will be demonstrated in what follows.

6.4.1. Biblical Proofs of Prophethood *sub* Q 7:157: Deuteronomy 18

Deuteronomy 18:9-11, 14-19 is quoted by al-Biqā'ī, with a minor addition to the end of v.19, and will be translated here in full:

“When you enter the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not follow the same practices as those of the nations, and there shall not be found among you anyone teaching the practice of diviners (*'arrāfīna*).” Then He said: “For these nations which you are going to confound, they have remained obedient to the ones practicing divination and astrology (*munajjimīna*). But as for you, the Lord your God has not

⁵³⁵ On this topic, see Reuven Firestone, 'Is there a notion of "divine election" in the Qur'ān?' in Gabriel S. Reynolds, ed., *New Perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context 2* (London: Routledge, 2011), 393-41, esp. 401-2.

permitted this for you. He will, however, raise up for you a prophet from among your brothers, like me — obey that prophet — just as you pursued the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Do not listen to the voice of our Lord God, nor see this great fire, lest I die’; and the Lord said, “What they have spoken is right. Therefore I will raise up for them a prophet from their brothers, like you; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them what I command him; and the those who do not obey the words that prophet will speak in my name, I myself will take vengeance (*anā antaqimu*) on [them] and on [their] tribe (*sibt*).”⁵³⁶

The language of v.19 quoted here by al-Biqāʿī reflects influence from the LXX version, which uses ‘I will take vengeance on him’ (*egō ekdikēsō ex autou*) rather than what is found in the MT, ‘I myself will require it of him’ (*ʿānōki ʿedrōš meʿimmô*); Biqāʿī adds, ‘and on his (Israelite) tribe’ (*wa min sibṭihi*). He follows this with a short citation from Samawʿal’s *Iḥām* on another reading for v.18: ‘He said, “A prophet was raised (*uqīma*) for them from among their brothers, like you, so that they may believe in him.”’⁵³⁷

Biqāʿī then interprets all of this to mean that, like the traditional Islamic interpretation of Deuteronomy 18, the prophet spoken of here is Muḥammad, who is ‘from the tribe of Ishmael, the brother of Isaac’; he will come with ‘particular commands’ (*sharīah mustaqillah*) that are not to be associated with the commands that came before them, nor will they be dependent upon them either.⁵³⁸ Biqāʿī continues to compare the manner in which Moses came with particular commands, then Jesus, whose commands differed with the exception of some rules (*baʿd al-aḥkām*). Biqāʿī then quotes a report from Samawʿal’s *Iḥām* to support his interpretation:

‘the Jews said, “This prophecy [about the prophethood of Muḥammad] came in truth from Samuel (one of their prophets), who was after Moses; there would be one like Moses from among their tribe.” And he said, “Samuel saw in a dream that [this prophet] would present a book and he would find in it this prophecy.” And he exclaimed to him, “Felicitations to you, O Prophet of God, for God has rewarded you well!” Then he turned angrily towards me and said, “Has God referred to me in these

⁵³⁶ Al-Biqāʿī, *Nazm al-durar*, 3:125.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 3:125; Samawʿal b. Yahyá, *Iḥām*, 75; idem, *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*, 102.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 3:125.

lines, O fine man? Did the gematrical proofs benefit you nothing?" Thereupon I said, "O Prophet of God! Then whom has God referred to here?" He replied, "It is the one regarding whom God has said: *'hawfi' mihār fārān* [Heb. *hōpī'a mehar pā'rān*; Deut. 33:2 — 'he shone forth from Mount Paran']."⁵³⁹

In the remainder of the section leading up to the Gospel quotations, Biqā'ī provides a fascinating argument for the prophethood of Muḥammad that builds upon the above quote from Samaw'al, concerning gematrical values of Arabic letters, or *abjad* numerology, which corresponds with Mount *Fārān*.⁵⁴⁰

Biqā'ī begins with Samaw'al's *Ghāyat al-Maqṣūd*, which is used in parallel with biblical references. He opens with Genesis 17:20a, 'As for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly (*jiddan jiddan*) increase his numbers'; this phrase, *jiddan jiddan*, comments Samaw'al, is expressed as *bi-mād mād* in Hebrew.⁵⁴¹ If one calculates the sum of this phrase using *abjad* numerals, it is ninety-two, and the sum of Muḥammad's name is also ninety-two.⁵⁴² This, according to al-Biqā'ī, along with the fact that no other descendants of Ishmael had fulfilled this prophecy, demonstrates that Muḥammad is the one foretold of in Genesis 17:20.⁵⁴³

Biqā'ī, following Samaw'al's argument, then equates the mountains of Paran (Arab. *fārān*) with Meccah.⁵⁴⁴ The word *al-fārān* is understood to be arabised Hebrew, which is believed by some in the Islamic tradition to be one of the names of Meccah in the Torah; this is closely linked to the

⁵³⁹ Samaw'al b. Yahyá, *Iḥām*, 77; idem, *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*, 102; Biqā'ī appears to be conflating accounts from the *Iḥām* and *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*.

⁵⁴⁰ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:125-6; Samaw'al b. Yahyá, *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*, 54-5; idem, *Iḥām*, 87-90; on the subject of Arabic gematrical values, see s.v., 'abjad,' *El2*.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 3:126; Samaw'al b. Yahyá, *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*, 55.

⁵⁴² Ibid., 3:126; Samaw'al b. Yahyá, *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*, 54; idem, *Iḥām*, 87.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 3:126.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 3:126; Samaw'al b. Yahyá, *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*, 67-9.

Ishmaelites in Islamic exegesis.⁵⁴⁵ Biqā'ī quotes Deuteronomy 33:2-3 where Mount Paran (Heb. *pārān*) is mentioned, interjecting his comments throughout:

“The Lord came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount” — in one of the renditions — “Mountains of *Fārān*.” “He came with myriads of holy ones in his right hand. He provided for them and made them beloved unto the peoples and blessed all his holy ones. At your feet they all bow down, and from you they receive instruction.” In another rendition it is stated, “And with him are the groups of holy ones [...]” — until the end, which is, “And he came from the highlands of Jerusalem with a law that he enlightened from his right hand for them, and chose a people whose prominent men are in your service. At your feet they bow down and from you they receive instruction.”⁵⁴⁶

Therefore, al-Biqā'ī continues, the one who appeared from the mountains of *Fārān* is Muḥammad, because it is acknowledged that that mountain is Meccah and he came with a myriad (*ribwāt*), that is, a group, of pure ones (*jamā'āt al-aṭhār*).⁵⁴⁷

This protracted argument for the legitimacy of Muḥammad's prophethood from the Hebrew Bible precedes al-Biqā'ī's quotation of the four canonical Gospels. As will be shown in what follows, al-Biqā'ī's method of quoting the Bible creates one, extensive biblical defense for the supremacy of Muḥammad's prophethood and Muslims as fulfilling God's eschatological plan for them as the final group of believers to inherit the earth.

6.4.2. Biblical Proofs of Prophethood *sub* Q 7:157: Gospels

Here in the context of Q 7:157, Biqā'ī strings together a series of Gospel quotations, beginning with Matthew 19:30-20:16.⁵⁴⁸ He uses the Gospels to further buttress his argument for Muḥammad's

⁵⁴⁵ See Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis* (New York: State University of New York, 1990), 65 n.18.

⁵⁴⁶ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:126

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 3:126; Samaw'al b. Yahyá, *Iḥām*, 68; idem, *Ghāyat al-maqṣūd*, 55.

⁵⁴⁸ Quotations from all four Gospels occur here in the following order: Matthew 19:30-20:16, 22:14, 21:23-26a; Luke 20:6b; Matthew 21:26b; Mark 11:32b; Matthew 21:27; Mark 12:10; Matthew 21:28-33; Luke 20:9b; Matthew 21:34-22:14; Luke 14:16b-21, 23-24; John 10:1-3, 11b-13, 16, 19-21a (Saleh and Casey, 'An Islamic Diatessaron,' 109); these biblical references were checked for accuracy.

prophethood from the Hebrew Bible; that is, the Gospels, he argues, further establishes that Muḥammad is the final prophet. The reader must bear in mind that, in his typical fashion, al-Biqāʿī does not interpret, or refer back to the Gospel quotations in his subsequent commentary on the Qurʾānic text. However, if one reads the Gospel material in light of the quotations from the Pentateuch that precede it, along with the *Sīrah* text, the Gospels do communicate a message that brings his exegesis of both scriptures together, as will be demonstrated below.

Biqāʿī quotes Matthew 19:30-20:16 first, followed by other Synoptic accounts and a passage from John 10. Biqāʿī's Matthean quotation reads:

'Many that are first will be last, and the last will be first. The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a lord of a house, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. So making a contract with the tillers (of the land) for a *denarius* only for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. Then going out in the third hour, he saw others standing (idle) in the middle of the market place; and he said to them, "You go into my vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you." So they went. And also going out again at the sixth hour and the ninth, he did likewise. And he went out at the eleventh (hour) and found others standing; and he said to them, "Why do you stand idle the whole day?" So they said to him, "No one has hired us." He said to them, "You go in with haste to the vineyard, and I will give you what you have rightfully earned (*tastahiqqūna*)." And when it was evening, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the labourers and pay them the wages, and begin with them from the last to the first." So those hired came at the eleventh hour, and each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a *denarius*. And on receiving it, they grumbled at the householder, saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a *denarius*? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to these last ones as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?" So the last will be first, and the first, last.'⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁹ Al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:127.

The similarity in form and content to Ibn Barraġān's Matthean quotation is evident.⁵⁵⁰ One distinction to note, however, is between the two authors' use of the *ḥadīth al-ijārah*. While Ibn Barraġān makes the 'ḥadīth of the wage' his primary exegetical focus in both qur'ānic contexts (Q 7 and Q 57), Biqā'ī only references it after his interpretation of Q 57:29.⁵⁵¹ Like Ibn Barraġān's use of that ḥadīth, Biqā'ī focuses on the eschatological nature of the three groups — Jews, Christians and Muslims — in order to highlight Muḥammad's prophethood to those who came at the end of the day and received 'a greater reward,' that is, 'a double portion.' While this ḥadīth is not explicitly mentioned in the context of Q 7:157, its importance for al-Biqā'ī's exegesis here is nonetheless reflected by his use of biblical material.

The only way to make sense of the inclusion of Matthew 19:30-20:16 in this context is to read it in light of the other parables that follow it, which also entails using the *ḥadīth al-ijārah* as a means of interpretation. Then the different groups in the parable have the same eschatological significance, representing Jews, Christians and Muslims. This kind of eschatological reading sets Muḥammad in the place of the final prophet, and Muslims the final group of believers, which plays directly into the proofs of prophethood theme being developed by al-Biqā'ī with the use of the Bible. The remaining Gospel quotations from the context of Q 7:157, including the passage from the *Sīrah*, will be examined in what follows.

The harmony of Gospel texts that follow the parable of the labourers in the vineyard consists of Matthew, Luke and John, and form one argument that implicitly confirms Muḥammad as the final prophet, and Muslims as the final group of believers. This is anchored in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard and its interpretation through the ḥadīth of the wage. When reading the previous quotations from Deuteronomy with the following series of Gospel texts, which includes the *Sīrah*

⁵⁵⁰ As previously mentioned in chapter 3, Biqā'ī uses Ibn Barraġān's Matthean quotation in the context of Q 57:28. Here, however, his quotation is taken from the context of Q 7:157 and is from his own biblical source text; see section 3.3.4. of this dissertation for further textual comparisons.

⁵⁵¹ His interpretation of Q 57:29 and the biblical quotations that appear there were dealt with earlier in the chapter (see section 6.1.2.).

passage as a bookend to the Gospel material, it becomes more evident that al-Biqā'ī uses all of this biblical material to support his claim for the 'supremeness' and 'perfectness' (*yuzhiru afḍalītihi wa-yaḍīhu ikmalītihi*) of Muḥammad over and above the previous prophets.⁵⁵²

The harmony begins with a quote from Matthew 22:14, 'For many are called, but few are chosen,' which is then followed by Matthew 21:23-26a. Here Jesus' teachings are questioned by the chief priests and elders who ask him to prove by whose authority he heals people (cf. Matthew 21:14-15); Jesus retorts with a question for them: 'from where did the baptism of John come? From heaven or man?' Biqā'ī records the accounts from Luke 20:6, Matthew 21:26-7 and Mark 11:32 where the chief priests and scribes are befuddled and finally respond, 'We do not know.' The narrative from Matthew 21:28-22:14, containing one short and one long parable, opens with, 'He began asking them about a similar saying' from Mark 12:10.

The first parable in Matthew 21:28-32 is Jesus' indictment on the religious leaders for not believing in John the Baptist as a prophet sent by God, a claim clearly upheld by the Qur'ān.⁵⁵³ The next, longer parable in Matthew 21:33-41 is more substantial and must be read in light of Matthew 21:42-3:

'Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was from the Lord and it is marvelous in our eyes'"? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. And the one who falls upon this stone will be crushed; and when it falls upon anyone, it will crush him.'⁵⁵⁴

With this image of the rejected cornerstone, which, for al-Biqā'ī, applies to Muḥammad, along with the previous interpretation at Deuteronomy 33:2-3 — also prophetically understood as a reference to

⁵⁵² Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:130.

⁵⁵³ cf. Q 3:39; 6:85; 19:7, 12; 21:90.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 3:128: '*qāla lahum Yasū'a amā qar'atum qaṭṭu fī'l-kitāb anna l-ḥajar alladhī radhalahu l-banā'ūna šāra ra's al-zāwiyah hādhā kāna min qablu l-rabb wa-huwa 'ajab fī a'yannā min hādhā aqūlu likum inna malakūt Allāh yanzī'u minkum wa-yu'tā li-umam yašna'ūna thamaratihā wa-man saqaṭa 'alā hādhā l-ḥajar taruḍḍu wa-man saqaṭa 'alayhi ṭaḥanahu.'*

Muḥammad — the Muḥammad-centric lens is in place for reading the remaining Gospel texts. The reader should bear in mind also that al-Biqā'ī accepts filial language as an expression of God's manner of dealing with prophets; that is, God interacts with his prophets 'as a father deals with his son, namely, nurturing, protecting, aiding, venerating and honouring.'⁵⁵⁵

The parable of the wicked tenants from Matthew 21:33-41 concerns the 'lord of a house' (*rabb bayt*) who leases his vineyard to tenants in a foreign country. He sends servants to collect his fruit in season, but the tenants beat, kill and stone all of the servants that come.⁵⁵⁶ Finally, the lord of the house decides to send his son, whom he believes the tenants will respect. However, the tenants seize the son and kill him in hopes of gaining his inheritance. At this point Jesus poses a question to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They respond that the owner will put the tenants to a miserable death for what they have done. This leads to Jesus' retort concerning the rejection of the cornerstone and the kingdom of God being given to people producing fruits, an indictment against those religious leaders for not recognizing the son, that is, the prophet of God. This can only be referring to Muḥammad in light of the surrounding biblical quotations and the arguments al-Biqā'ī has put in place.

Reading the parable of the wicked tenants at Matthew 21:33-41, as well as the remaining Gospel texts, with this interpretive lens in place resets the biblical focus from Jesus to that of Muḥammad; 'son' should be understood as 'prophet' in the following parables. The next series of quotations also work towards establishing the apostleship (*risālah*) of Muḥammad and the lack of recognition he received as such. Moreover, to bookend his harmony of Gospel texts, Biqā'ī uses the

⁵⁵⁵ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar* (Hyderabad Ed.), 4:230-1; this description is being applied to God's interaction with Jesus and the language used in the Gospels to describe that relationship. Jesus, however, represents a prophet of God and thus al-Biqā'ī's logic can be extended to, rather, find its full expression in, that of God's relationship with Muḥammad, the final prophet.

⁵⁵⁶ For a detailed study on this parable, see John S. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

Johannine quotation (John 15:23-16:1) from the *Sīrah*, which also imports a particular interpretation of the preceding Gospel texts, especially when read in light of the Deuteronomic passage from the beginning of this harmony.

The final set of Synoptic Gospel quotations come from Matthew 22:1-14 and a similar account from Luke 14:16-21, 23-4. Here too, a qur'ānic / Muḥammad-centric interpretive lens is in place. The parable focuses on a king who gives a wedding feast for his son, inviting many to come, yet no one does; this is the main idea common to both the Matthean and Lukan accounts. In Matthew's account, those invited go off to their own homes and finally kill the king's servants when they return to make the offer again. In Luke, those invited simply make excuses for not accepting the offer; no one is killed. The king in the Matthean text is angry at what they have done, and sends troops to destroy the murderers and burn their city (22:7). At this point the remaining servants are ordered to bring people in from the street. Matthew's Gospel records that they are 'both bad and good' (22:10), whereas Luke's account only lists people in need, 'the poor, crippled, blind and lame' (14:21). Clearly the Lukan text is only focused on the 'good,' that is, those in need of Jesus, while the emphasis in Matthew is on the bad, which also affects the end of the parable. In Matthew someone is found in the wedding banquet without the proper garments; this amounts to being unprepared for the occasion, not recognising the significance of the event. For his lack of preparation, he is 'cast into the outer darkness' (Matthew 22:13).

While Matthew's account ends in punishment for not acknowledging the event surrounding the son, Luke's narrative ends with taking what was first offered to certain groups and giving it to others more worthy, 'to taste my banquet' (Luke 14:24). Thus two emphases are brought to the surface here. First, there is punishment for not being prepared for the son's banquet, i.e., not receiving Muḥammad as the final prophet; second, those who do not acknowledge the son do not inherit the kingdom that God is delivering to those who believe, i.e., Muslims.

Biqā'ī then presents a passage from John 10 before quoting the biblical material in the *Sīrah*. Again, there is a key within this passage for interpreting the surrounding verses. The reader must keep in mind that the text here is not being used by al-Biqā'ī to establish biblical truths about Jesus. The intention, rather, is to support further the view that Muḥammad is the final prophet, and Muslims, the final group of believers being brought into the fold.

John 10:16 stands out as the hermeneutical key for this set of Johannine quotations: 'And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; it is right that I bring them also. So there will be one flock' (*wa-lī kibāsh akhara laysat min hādhā l-qaṭī' fa-yanbaghī lī an ātā bihim ayḍan fa-takūna l-ra'iyah wa-aḥadah*).⁵⁵⁷ The 'other sheep' not of Jesus' fold and the 'one flock' represent the same group that arrives at the end of the day in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard; these are to be interpreted as referring to Muslim believers. John 10:19, moreover, is the final quoted verse from this passage, and it further supports the view that these metaphors can be applied to Muḥammad: 'A discrepancy occurred also between the Jews because of these words. And many among them said, "He is possessed by a demon; why should you listen to him?" Others said, "These are not the words of one truly possessed"' (*fa-waqa'a ayḍan bayna l-yuhūd khulf min ajli hādhā l-qūl kathīr minhum inna bihi shayṭān qad janna fimā istimā'akum minhu; wa-qāla ākhrūna inna hādhā laysa kalām majnūn*).⁵⁵⁸ This recalls the charges brought against Muḥammad in the Qur'ān for being a 'madman' or 'insane'.⁵⁵⁹

Biqā'ī completes his series of Gospel quotations with a reference to another Gospel quotation and its interpretation found in the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām, the famous Paraclete passage from John 15:23-16:1. The main ideas to glean from this text and its use here is that 1) it places the Jews in a distasteful light ('whoever hates me [...] they are puffed up with pride [...] "they hate me without cause"'); this aligns with the previous Gospel parables where the chief priests and elders (or scribes)

⁵⁵⁷ Al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-durar*, 3:129.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3:129.

⁵⁵⁹ cf. Q 15:6; 37:36; 44:14; 51:52; 54:9; 68:51; 52:29, 68:2 and 81:22 — to deny the claim indicates that it was made.

are cast in the same role; and 2) it points to Muḥammad as the one to come ('the *nāmūs* must be fulfilled [...] but when the *Munaḥḥemānā* comes, whom God will send to you [...] he shall bear witness of me').⁵⁶⁰ These well established concepts from the *Sīrah* concerning the prophetic nature of the Gospel text with respect to foretelling Muḥammad's prophethood work together with the previous harmony of biblical texts to strengthen al-Biqā'ī's argument.

6.5. Concluding Remarks

While al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible here exemplifies the genre of *dalā'il al-nubuwwah*, his method of harmonising the Deuteronomic texts with the Gospel material into an extended argument reveals the extensive nature of his biblical exegesis. Bookending with the *Sīrah*, moreover, adds further depth to his use of the Gospels. That is to say, all three parables — the labourers in the vineyard, the wicked tenants, the wedding banquet — as well as the metaphors from John 10, and the *Sīrah* each emphasise unique features that relate to Muḥammad's prophethood and his followers that have been established with the qur'ānic texts from sūrahs *al-A'rāf* and *al-Ḥadīd*. Biqā'ī's use of these Gospel passages demonstrates that his method of biblical quotation supplements the Qur'ān and also adds significant interpretive value to the ideas about Muḥammad communicated there, as well as in the ḥadīth and *Sīrah* literature; this kind of cross-pollination is what makes his interpretation distinct from the surrounding tradition of Muslim biblical scholarship.

Ibn Barrajan's use of Matthew 19:30-20:16 shows that his primary purpose of biblical quotation was to import eschatological significance from the parable to his reading of both the ḥadīth and the qur'ānic texts. While his use of the Bible here was not as extensive as al-Biqā'ī, the function of the Matthean parable in his interpretation nonetheless demonstrates his commitment to *i'tibār* exegesis. For Ibn Barrajan, the biblical text both confirms and illuminates the role of Muḥammad as the final prophet of God, and Muslims, as the final group of believers, and imparts a uniqueness to Jesus' 'time

⁵⁶⁰ Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 109.

of descent' (*waqt nuzūlihi*) affirmed by the ḥadīth of the wage. Chapter 7 now follows with a conclusion to this exploration of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible in their interpretation of the Qur'ān.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

At the beginning of this dissertation I opened with several questions about Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible: Within their unique intellectual ambiances, what motivated each author to quote the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels? What Arabic versions of the Bible are used in their tafsīrs? What possible similarities exist between each author's hermeneutical approach to the Qur'ān and the Bible? And will the use of the Bible primarily be tangential to their interpretation of the Qur'ān or something more? In what follows I will offer concluding remarks to these questions under five headings: contexts for biblical engagement, *biblia arabica*, scriptural hermeneutics, case studies and avenues for future research.

7.1. Contexts for Biblical Engagement

In chapter 1, I emphasised certain aspects of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī's careers in order to highlight possible influences on their engagement and fascination with the Bible. For Ibn Barraġān, his role as a *mu'tabir* proved to be central to his worldview which, in turn, shaped his understanding of 'revelation' (*wahy*) and how to interpret it. Moreover, the *Ikhwān al-ṣafā'* stand out as a likely influence on his use of biblical materials. Though removed from his immediate context, the *Ikhwān* appealed to Ibn Barraġān's more pluralistic approach to scripture. The surrounding Jewish and Mozarab Christian communities in al-Andalus also formed part of the religio-cultural context in which the openness to shared knowledge would have been instrumental in motivating Ibn Barraġān to cull from biblical sources in his exegesis of the Qur'ān.

The primary feature of al-Biqā'ī's career that I drew attention to was his position for over twenty years as the *qārī' al-kursī*. The relationship between al-Biqā'ī's *métier* within the Cairene context of *preaching-cum-storytelling* and his use of the Bible has hitherto been explored closely within

secondary literature. It appears that a significant connection exists between the two as his Qurʾān teaching role would have afforded him the opportunity to draw on the Bible when exegetical needs arose, as evinced in his commentary. However, nothing in his autobiography indicates that he did, in fact, draw on the Bible in his *mīʿād* sessions, but the possibility is intriguing to consider. Further, Biqāʿī's wholesale abandonment of *qiṣaṣ* materials suggests that Karaite scripturalism had an impact on his engagement with the Arabic Bible as well.

7.2. *Biblia Arabica*

In chapter 3, I carefully analysed several relatively unexamined manuscripts for Arabic versions of the Bible. In the case of Ibn Barrajān, Sinai MS Ar. 10 and München, Staatsbibliothek MS Ar. 234 were used for Genesis 3:1-7 and München, Staatsbibliothek MSS Ar. 234 and 238 for Matthew 19:30-20:9. For al-Biqāʿī, Sinai MS Ar. 3 and Cairo MS Cop. Bibl. 22 were used for the same passage in Genesis and Oxford, Bodleian MSS Hunt. 17 and 118 for that of Matthew. These manuscripts were analysed alongside the biblical citations from Genesis and Matthew found in the works of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī.

One pressing question I raised in this study was whether our authors would interact with the Arabic Bible in the same way in which they treat the Qurʾān for grammar; whether the particular versions of the Arabic Bible adopted would be scrutinised along with the qurʾānic text. Given the linguistic emphases placed on interpreting the Qurʾān, it is curious that neither author brings the same sensibilities to bear on the biblical texts they quote throughout. It may be the case that the distinctly Christian Arabic form of the language found in Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqāʿī's quotations, though important for supplementing their theological exegesis of the Qurʾān, still remains subordinate to the Arabic of the Muslim holy book because they knew the Bible was a translation into Arabic. Though this lack of interaction is somewhat disappointing, it should not, however, diminish the value of other findings.

For example, Ibn Barraġān took great care to preserve the Arabic version of the Bible he transmitted *via* quotation in his tafsīrs, giving us valuable insight into the Andalusī biblical tradition of the 6th/12th century. Rather than producing Islamicised paraphrases of Genesis and Matthew, he retains many of the Christian Arabic features of the text, as demonstrated in chapter 3, especially in the Matthean quotations. This provides further evidence for the close familial link between Ibn Barraġān's Arabic version and that of Ishāq b. Balashk al-Qurṭubī's 4th/10th c. Arabic translation from a Latin *Vorlage*, categorised by Kachouh as *family m*.

Similarly, Biqā'ī preserved the Christian Arabic character of his versions as well, which is even more remarkable when considering the twenty-year time span for the composition of his tafsīr. He also showed impressive detail in the selection process for his Arabic versions of the Hebrew Bible, as discussed in chapter 5. The correspondence between his Arabic quotations of Genesis and the manuscript witnesses yielded mixed results in the end. I can safely say that all of the citations agree with manuscript families of Syriac *Vorlage* — as delineated by Vollandt — but the text did not correspond as closely with the passage from Genesis as it did in Matthew. My analysis of al-Biqā'ī's Matthean quotations also revealed the highest degree of correlation to his source text with little to no orthographic deviation, as observed with Ibn Barraġān. Further, the overwhelming quotient of Gospel material found in al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr suggests some preference for the Gospels in his Qur'ānic exegesis.

7.3. Scriptural Hermeneutics

I demonstrated in chapter 4 that Ibn Barraġān's method of *naẓm al-qur'ān* is rooted in the *i'tibārī* idea of reality. The subcategories of man (*insān*), creation (*khalq*) and revelation (*waḥy*) formed a lens through which he comprehended the world around him. Therefore *i'tibār* was not a means to an end, it was the end itself. This view of reality also allowed Ibn Barraġān to draw on the Hebrew Bible and Christian scriptures to supplement and inform his understanding of the Qur'ān. He found significant

evidence from the Torah and Gospel to expand on qur'ānic concepts using *itibār* cosmological and eschatological formulations.

While Ibn Barrajān's use of the Hebrew Bible and Gospels fits within the category of supplementary quotation, at times he delves deeper into his exegesis of a given biblical passage, moving his use of the Bible into the category of interpretive, albeit tangential, quotation. This was demonstrated in chapter 5 with Genesis 1-3, and further observed in several Matthean passages analysed in the introductory section to chapter 6, as well as in his exegesis of Matthew 19:30-20:16. For al-Biqā'ī, however, *ilm al-munāsabāt* is a method not a way of life, and thus does not reach as far into his own perspective on the Qur'ān, ḥadīth and Bible. *Munāsabāt* dictates how he approaches each book, rather than being rooted in a view of reality that penetrates all facets of life, as with the case of Ibn Barrajān. Biqā'ī did interpret at least two of his dreams through a particular lens that was tied to his holistic approach to scripture, but it seems that he failed to attach anything else to it. This is one major distinction between the *mu'tabir* and the preacher to draw out of the preceding study.

Moreover, I demonstrated that Saleh's thesis on al-Biqā'ī — that his use of the Bible is nonpareil within Muslim biblical scholarship — is no longer tenable in light of Ibn Barrajān's use of biblical quotations. Biqā'ī's large scale and intricate exegesis simultaneously within the Qur'ān, the Gospel and the Torah is provocative, however, and still sets him apart within the Islamic tradition, especially when considering the amount of Gospel material he incorporates into his tafsīr. This became clearer in chapter 6 with his quotation of the Hebrew Bible alongside all four Gospels. Further, if the Gospel material is carefully read alongside the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth in al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr context, it communicates details and nuances to his form of argumentation that moves what *prima facie* appears to be mere proof-texting into a more sophisticated category of tangential quotation. Biqā'ī spends enough time harmonising the Deuteronomic and Gospel quotations for his sustained prophethood

argument, demonstrated in chapter 6, to exonerate him from being a mere passer-by of the biblical revelatory stream.

7.4. Case Studies

In chapter 5, I showed that the Bible, namely Genesis 1-3 — with a focus on the Adamic garden narrative in 3:1-7 — supplements Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's exegesis of the Qur'ān. The supplementary use of the Bible here amounts to tangential quotation. Each author also develops his own comparative study of both qur'anic Garden narratives, expounding *sūrat al-Baqara* (Q 2) alongside *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7) and interspersing their interpretation with biblical quotations and ḥadīths. The Qur'ān's evocation of the Adamic narrative was also examined in the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī in order to provide some background for the reception history of that text in the Islamic exegetical tradition. I observed that *Tafsīr Ṭabarī* reflects interaction *via* ḥadīth with the Adamic accounts found in two extra-canonical texts that circulated within Judaism and Christianity, *Bereshit Rabbah* and the *Cave of Treasures*, respectively. The focus was on the 'angels' protest' from Q 2:30 and the 'creation of Adam' *sub* Q 2:31, 7:12 and 15:26, topics that reappear in Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's tafsīr contexts.

Furthermore, it was fascinating to see Ibn Barrajān's tangential use of the Bible in this chapter. He uses the idea of the 'two trees' found in Genesis 2:9 to create an eschatological paradigm for understanding of the 'herebelow' (*dunyā*) the 'interworld' (*barzakh*) and the 'afterworld' (*ākhirah*). This is indeed a unique formulation using Genesis to reshape his own Islamic cosmology that also highlights the protological mode of *ta'wīl* that is intrinsic to his *i'tibārī* method of exegesis.

Biqā'ī's use of Genesis is also interesting but for different reasons. The sheer amount of biblical quotations supplied by al-Biqā'ī in this context (Genesis 1-3, *in toto*) is impressive. His attention to biblical sources and his desire to accurately quote the text, even going so far as to use a Jewish informant, is also commendable. While his interpretation of Adam's creation in the Qur'ān brings biblical ideas to bear on this event, there is, however, less interaction with the Hebrew Bible compared

to that of Ibn Barrajān. The most exciting observations for the use of the Bible occur in chapter 6 with Matthew 19:30-20:16.

In the introductory section to chapter 6, I delineated three methods of Gospel quotation: *supplementary*, *interpretive* and *confuting*. Supplementary and interpretive quotation are observed throughout each authors' tafsīrs. I demonstrated that both forms were being used tangentially with Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's interpretation of the Qur'ān. While there was an admix of supplementary and interpretive quotation, confuting quotation only occurred in al-Biqā'ī's work.

With confuting quotations the qur'ānic concepts of *muḥkam* ('fixed') and *mutashābih* ('self-similar') formed an interpretive lens that al-Biqā'ī used to read the four Gospels in order to reveal its 'fixed' and 'self-similar' verses. He believed that all of God's revelation(s) share in that which is *muḥkam* and *mutashābih*. According to al-Biqā'ī, although the verses may appear differently for each 'Scripture people,' the underlying message or core of the revelation is shared between them. Therefore 'confuting' quotation as described here is a novel way of using a qur'ānic exegetical paradigm to investigate the Bible, namely the Gospels.

For the main analytical section of this chapter, I examined the 'Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard' (Matthew 19:30-20:16) in the tafsīr contexts of Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī. This is the only Gospel passage quoted twice by each author under different qur'ānic texts, and each one uses this Matthean parable in a slightly different way. Both authors, however, draw on the *ḥadīth al-ijārah* as a comparative text to interact with. And what is even more fascinating is that al-Biqā'ī quotes this parable as found in Ibn Barrajān's tafsīr one out of the two times he uses it. This is interesting because al-Biqā'ī never repeats a Gospel verse once it is quoted, but here he borrows the same material from Ibn Barrajān. Biqā'ī also retains the Christian Arabic character of Ibn Barrajān's Gospel quotation without changing it. This speaks to the level of trust he places on Ibn Barrajān as a transmitter, especially after observing how careful al-Biqā'ī was in selecting his own biblical source materials. And

al-Biqā'ī does not quote the Gospels from anyone else, a fact that demonstrates a unique connection between the two authors within Muslim biblical scholarship.

I also demonstrated that the Gospel of Matthew was used by both authors to buttress Islamic eschatological ideas that were born out of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth al-ijārah*. Ibn Barrajan explores this Matthean passage in his interpretation of sūrahs *al-Nisā'* (Q 4:85-7) and *al-Ḥadīd* (Q 57:28), and al-Biqā'ī does so in his exegesis of *sūrat al-A'rāf* (Q 7:157). In Ibn Barrajan's tafsīr context an implicit connection is made between his exegesis of Matthew and the 'ḥadīth of the wage' with the 'Day of Resurrection' (*yawm al-qiyāmah*) at Q 4:87. This highlights Jesus' 'time of descent' (*waqt nuzūlihi*) at the eleventh hour within an eschatological framework, and appears to be the main purpose for using Matthew here.

For al-Biqā'ī, however, the use of Matthew alongside the 'ḥadīth of the wage' is only half of the picture. While al-Biqā'ī brings these two texts together in order to support an Islamic eschatological perspective, he also moves into the genre of *dalā'il al-nubuwwah* creating a Muḥammad-centric lens for reading Matthew while drawing on Deuteronomy 18 in the process. He uses both the Hebrew Bible and Gospel of Matthew to show that Muḥammad was the final prophet predicted to come and to deliver the final chosen people of God. Biqā'ī creates an intricate harmony of Hebrew Bible and Gospel texts in the tafsīr context *sub* Q 7:157 that illustrates the tangential use of the biblical corpus.

7.5. Avenues for Future Research

Looking ahead, more of Ibn Barrajan's possible 'interlocutors' need to be investigated, especially those Andalusī scholars of the Bible — Jewish, Christian or Muslim — that predate his period. This also extends to scholars after Ibn Barrajan that may have been influenced by his use of *naẓm al-qur'ān* and quotation of the biblical corpus. Ibn Barrajan's association with Mahdism as it relates to his use of the Bible is also an area worth examining more thoroughly. Both sets of quotations, those from the Genesis 1-3 and Matthew 13 and 19-20, indicate that Ibn Barrajan did in fact use biblical texts with an

eschatological bent; this may indicate that he has some leanings toward a Mahdist position. Bellver, who tries to untangle Ibn Barraġān from this historical quagmire, makes a wholesale departure from the picture of him as a leader and major proponent of Mahdism, which is not entirely warranted.⁵⁶¹ It may be that as an adherent of the *i'tibār* school, the lines between the Mahdist position and the eschatological commitment of the *mu'tabir* become blurred, which seems plausible on some level.

With respect to al-Biqā'ī, the similarity with Samaw'al b. Yaḥyá's biblical quotation and argumentation warrants further exploring. Samaw'al's contribution to Muslim biblical scholarship *via* his use of the Hebrew Bible in the interpretation of the Qur'ān would appear not yet to have gained much traction among scholars in this field, the exception being the few citations used in chapter 1 and those found in Lazarus-Yafeh's *Intertwined Worlds*. Further, Biqā'ī's use of other biblical texts not examined here, for example the Arabic versions of the Septuagint Psalter and the Book of Jonah would also be valuable to identify and study. This will contribute to a greater understanding of the Arabic Bible's transmission during the late Mamlūk period. In this vein, a comparison between the Christian Arabic transmitted via quotation — identified in the various manuscripts used by both authors here — with other Arabic Bible versions of a more Islamic register could help to understand the reception of these biblical texts in each milieu and the place non-qur'ānic Arabic occupies in Muslim scholarship.

One of the more striking areas of research to investigate further concerns the relationship between the Qur'ān, the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels in light of the hermeneutical approaches to scripture, here termed *naẓm al-qur'ān* and *'ilm al-munāṣabāt*. These methods were observed in our two main authors' approach to the Qur'ān and have implications for the recent work of Lancioni and Villano (noted in chapter 4) on medieval and contemporary qur'ānic exegesis. Self-similarity and cohesion/coherence (*sūrah holism*) are used by Lancioni and Villano to assess the state of affairs in

⁵⁶¹ Bellver, 'Al-Ghazālī of al-Andalus,' 671-3.

qur'ānic studies by analysing how those categories for reading the Qur'ān appear in the works of Muslim scholars.⁵⁶² Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī should be on their list. Moreover, Biqā'ī's use of *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* as a hermeneutical paradigm for reading the Gospels ('confuting quotation') is also intriguing and should be explored in more detail within the Islamic tradition to see if others after him have adopted such an approach.

Ibn Barrajān and al-Biqā'ī's use of the Bible has demonstrated that there are some *mufassirūn* engaged in Muslim biblical scholarship that step slightly outside of their tradition to offer a distinctive approach to qur'ānic exegesis. Muslims have been using the Bible from the inception of Islam; this is nothing new. However, both authors manage to do something more substantive with their biblical quotations. Their use of the Arabic Bible, moreover, contributes meaningfully to an ongoing process of counterpointal engagement first enacted by the Qur'ān's own narrative discourse with biblical stories. Thus the manner of qur'ānic and biblical interaction witnessed here should continue to be carried out by scholars who are willing to raise critical questions about the meaning of the text in light of its reception and interpretation by those from different traditions.

⁵⁶² Lancioni and Villano, 'Self-similarity as Form and Structure,' 251-64.

Appendix I⁵⁶³

Translations for the Main Biblical and Qur'anic Texts in Chapter Five

The Hebrew Bible

Genesis 3:1-24 — Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the Garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.'

Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

⁵⁶³ The English translation of the Bible used here and in *Appendix II* comes from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); as with the previous English translations of the Qur'an used in this dissertation, the version here is also Alan Jones' *The Qur'an* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007).

To the woman he said, 'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.'

And to the man he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and his wife, and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, 'See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat and live forever' — therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Qur'ān

Sūrat al-Baqara

Q 2:31-6 — And when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am placing a vicegerent upon the earth,' they said, 'Will You place therein one who will work corruption therein, and shed blood, while we hymn Your praise and call You Holy?' He said, 'Truly I know what you know not.' And He taught Adam the names, all of them. Then He laid them before the angels and said, 'Tell me the names of these, if you are truthful.' They said, 'Glory be to You! We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. Truly You are the Knower, the Wise.' He said, 'Adam, tell them their names.' And when he had told them their names He said, 'Did I not say to you that I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and that I know what you disclose and what you used to conceal?'

And when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate to Adam,' they prostrated, save Iblis. He refused and waxed arrogant, and was among the disbelievers. We said, 'O Adam, dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat freely thereof, wheresoever you will. But approach not this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.'

Then Satan made them stumble therefrom, and expelled them from that wherein they were, and We said, 'Get you down, each of you an enemy to the other. On the earth a dwelling place shall be yours, enjoyment for a while.'

Sūrat al-Aʿrāf

Q 7:18-25 — He said, 'Go forth from it, disgraced and banished! Whosoever among them follows you, I shall surely fill Hell with you all.' 'O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Garden, and eat from wheresoever you two will, but approach not this tree, lest you two be among the wrongdoers.'

Then Satan whispered to them, that he might expose to them that which was hidden from them of their nakedness. And he said, 'Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree, lest you should become angels, or among those who abide [forever].' And he swore unto them, 'Truly I am a sincere adviser to you.' Thus he lured them on through deception. And when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness was exposed to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden to cover themselves.

And their Lord called out to them, 'Did I not forbid you from that tree, and tell you that Satan is a manifest enemy to you?' They said, 'Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have Mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the losers.' He said, 'Get down, each of you an enemy to the other! There will be for you on earth a dwelling place, and enjoyment for a while.' He said, 'Therein you shall live, and therein you shall die, and from there shall you be brought forth.'

Appendix II

Translations for the Main Biblical and Qur'ānic Texts in Chapter Six

The Hebrew Bible

Deuteronomy 18:9-11, 14-19 — When you come into the land the Lord your God is giving you, you must not learn to imitate the abhorrent practices of those nations. No one shall be found among you who makes a son or daughter pass through fire, or who practices divination, or is a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or one who casts spells, or who consults ghosts or spirits, or who seeks oracles from the dead [omits vv. 12-13]. Although these nations that you are about to dispossess do give heed to soothsayers and diviners, as for you, the Lord your God does not permit you to do so. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: “If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or even again see this great fire, I will die.” Then the Lord replied to me: “They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable [...].”

The Gospels

Matthew 19:30-20:16 — But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first. “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not

agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous? So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Matthew 22:14 — “[...] For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 21:23-26a — When he entered the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin [...]’

Luke 20:6b — [...] all the people will stone us,

Matthew 21:26b — [...] we are afraid of the crowd.”

Mark 11:32b — [...] for all regarded John as truly a prophet.

Matthew 21:27 — So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

Mark 12:10 — Have you not read this scripture: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone [...]’

Matthew 21:28-33 — “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him. “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country [...]’

Luke 20:9b — [...] for a long time.

Matthew 21:34-46 — When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those servants?’ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes’? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Matthew 22:1-14 — Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Luke 14:16b-21, 23-24 — “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the

house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame’ [omits v.22]. Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’

John 10:1-3, 11b-13, 16, 19-21a — “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out [omits vv.4-11a]. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep [omits vv.14-15]. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd [omits vv.17-18]. Again the Jews were divided because of these words. Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?” Others were saying, “These are not the words of one who has a demon [...]”

The Qur’ān

Sūrat al-Nisā’

Q 4:85-7 — Those who make fair intercession will have a share of it; whilst those who make evil intercession will bear the responsibility for it. God has power over everything. When you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a fairer greeting or return it. God takes account of everything. God. There is no god but Him. He will indeed gather you to the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. Who gives truer tidings than God?

Sūrat al-A’rāf

Q 7:157 — Those who follow the messenger, the prophet of his community, whom they will find mentioned in the *Torah* and the *Gospel* in their possession. He will order them to do what is recognized as right and forbid them to do what is disapproved of. He will make the good things lawful for them and make the bad things unlawful for them. He will relieve them of their burden and of the fetters that have been upon them. Those who believe him and support him and help him and follow the light that was sent down with him — they are the ones who will prosper.

Sūrat al-Ḥadīd

Q 57:26-9 — In the past We sent down Noah and Abraham, and We placed Prophecy and the Scripture among their seed; and [some] of the are guided aright, but many of them are profligates. Then We caused Our messengers to follow in their footsteps. We

caused Jesus, the son of Mary, to follow and We gave him the *Gospel*; and We placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him. But monasticism they invented. We did not prescribe it for them [but it arose] through desire for God's satisfaction; and they did not observe it as they should have done. So We gave those of them who believed their wage; but many of them are profligates. O you who believe, fear God and believe in His messenger, and He will give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light, by which you can walk; and He will forgive you. God is Forgiving and Merciful, that the people of the Scripture may know that they have no power over any of God's bounty but that the bounty is in the hand of God, to give to those whom He wishes. God is endowed with great bounty.

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