Transfer and Religion

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Transfer and Religion

Interactions between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century

Edited by

Alexander A. Dubrau, Davide Scotto,
and Ruggero Vimercati Sanseverino

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Introduction

Religious Transfer in the History
of the Abrahamic Religions

Theoretical Implications and Case Studies

Alexander A. Dubrau, Davide Scotto,
Ruggero Vimercati Sanseverino

From a semantic-historical perspective, the concept of transfer harks back to the act of transferring or moving ideas, texts, or objects from one context to another. The two involved contexts – geographical, political, cultural, or religious – interact in ways and on hierarchical scales that are distinct, thus representing a matter of debate. The transfer process can imply cultural dynamics of reproduction and transformation, resonance and imitation, hybridization and syncretism, innovation and preservation, misinterpretation and interpolation. At the same time, the aims of transferring and the reactions of the recipients of transfer are various. Transferring can indeed stem either from negative, defensive and disruptive purposes, or from positive, constructive, enriching scopes, as can the reactions to transfer or attempts at transferring.

Overcoming the limits of comparativism,[1] cross-cultural and transepochal scholarship of cultural transfer has recently suggested – in an obvious yet incontrovertible way – that transfer as a phenomenon is controversial and disputed by definition. Hartmut Kaelble keenly noted that the same existence of a transfer can be questioned by scholars. The evidence of a transfer can be either neglected despite its manifest reality, or overstated although it lacks compelling proofs. As a concept and an object of study, transfer originated in European history and in particular in the history of European expansionism involving interactions and conflicts with non-European cultures. Thus, it has become an enticing subject of intercultural and postcolonial reflections.[2]

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[1] On the methodological implications of scholarship on transfers, see Stefanie Stockhorst, "Cultural Transfer through Translation: A Current Perspective in Enlightenment Studies", *Cultural Transfer through Translation. The Circulation of Enlightened Thought in Europe by means of Translation*, ed. Stefanie Stockhorst, Amsterdam NY: Rodopi, 2010, pp. 7–26: pp. 19–22.

[2] See, for instance, Michel Espagne and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (eds.), *Transferts de savoirs sur l'Afrique*, Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2015.

It was noticed that transfer often materializes in a framework of unequal interchange in either political, social, or economic terms, reflecting the non-homogeneity of the two societies or cultures which provide the backdrop and conditions for transferring. An intriguing question related to the definition of cultural transfer is whether this phenomenon is to be regarded as mutual and multilateral: mutual, as it can imply influences by and upon both cultures in contact; multilateral, as it can develop beyond bilateral exchanges, involving a third mediating or intermediate culture whereby the transfer process is in fact enacted, hence the fruitful idea of a chain or a sequence of transfers.[3] Given this increasing scholarly attention to transfer, it is not surprising that Jörg Feuchter has somehow defiantly claimed that cultural interconnectedness should be taken as a factor of history, pointing to a well-established trend which regards cultural contacts as ultimately intrinsic to history, and recalling Peter Burke's provocative suggestion that cultural hybridization is in fact historically ubiquitous.[4] This assumption is not far from stating – as Lutz Musner did regarding the transferring of architectural patterns – that culture itself might be interpreted as transfer.[5]

This seems to suggest that the time has come for scholars to analyze global challenges and to rewrite history – from cultural to religious history – as a constellation of hidden transfers which have long awaited being finally disclosed. In the last decade, several methodological purposes stemmed from this theoretical assumption. Cases of cultural transfer lie behind the concepts of connected history, *histoire croisée*, *Transfergeschichte*, which have been discussed recently by scholars of different disciplines and chronological interests. This is the case of Michel Espagne's investigations of the cultural relations between France and Germany in modern times, or Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmer's critique of the concept of hegemonic influence (*Einflussgeschichte*), which they suggested replacing by focusing on the role of neighbouring cultures and peripheral zones as central to the understanding of transcultural history.[6] At the same time, the historical dynamics of transfer are at the core of the recent research approach labelled entangled history, which originated in the controversial debate on the

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[3] See Hartmut Kaelble, "Forward: Representations and Transfers", *Cultural Transfers in Dispute. Representations in Asia, Europe and the Arab World since the Middle Ages*, ed. Jörg Feuchter, Friedhelm Hoffmann, and Bee Yun, Frankfurt: Campus, 2011, pp. 9–13.

[4] Jörg Feuchter, "Cultural Transfer in Dispute: An Introduction", *Cultural Transfers in Dispute*, pp. 16–7; Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, pp. 1–9.

[5] Lutz Musner, "Kultur als Transfer. Ein regulationstheoretischer Zugang am Beispiel der Architektur", *Ent-grenzte Räume. Kulturelle Transfers um 1900 und in der Gegenwart*, ed. Helga Mitterbauer, Wien: Passagen-Verlag, 2005, pp. 173–93.

[6] Michel Espagne, *Les transferts culturels franco-allemands*, Paris: PUF, 1999; Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der Histoire croisée und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen", *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 28/4 (2002), pp. 607–36; Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, "Deutsch-Französischer Kulturtransfer im 18. und 19. Jh.: Zu einem neuen interdisziplinären Forschungsprogramm des C. N. R. S.", *Francia*, 13 (1985), pp. 502–10.

spatial turn raised by global history and the re-assessment of modern history through postcolonial studies.[7]

While with regard to cultural transfer, these and other critical observations are intriguing and compelling – and today even self-evident – they are not so obvious nor necessarily pertinent to a type of transfer that specifically involves religion. It is only in the last five years that research outcomes and editorial initiatives have shown that the debate on entangled history and cross-cultural history can play an influential role in the renovation of disciplines such as religious studies (*Religionswissenschaft*), comparative history of religions, theology, and the interfaith history of the premodern Mediterranean. Cross-disciplinary and epistemological achievements in this regard are also particularly relevant to the present book.[8]

Describing transfer in terms of global mobility, Manuela Rossini and Michael Toggweiler have remarked that the process of transfer involves 'words, concepts, images, persons, animals, commodities, money, weapons, and other things', triggering interdisciplinary research on cultural mediation on a broader level.[9] This volume intends to add to this telling list of movable or moved elements implicated by transfer a further and in many respects overlooked aspect, namely the transferring of knowledge, ideas, objects, texts, and customs of a religious character, which affect religious life on an individual or community level. To this type of transfer – which can be defined as religious transfer – and to a series of case studies concerning its enactment amongst Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Mediterranean and in Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, this collection of essays is devoted.

Historians of interfaith encounters are well aware that the intellectual space in which religions interact, through exchanges, mutual influences, or conflicts, may be characterized by a series of hindrances and barriers which are due to lack of knowledge of the other religion, doctrinal recalcitrance, and legal or political opposition stemming from the existence, implementation and dissemination of distinct religious laws.[10] Religious transfer operates within this space of interaction between faiths leading either to the building of bridges or to the

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[7] Sönke Bauck and Thomas Maier, "Entangled History", InterAmerican Wiki: Terms – Concepts – Critical Perspectives, 2015, www.uni-bielefeld.de/cias/wiki/e_Entangled_History.html (download 30.12.2018).

[8] We allude in particular to the journal *Entangled Religions*, founded in 2014 and published by the Center for Religious Studies and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe* at Ruhr-Universität Bochum; all contributions are available through open access: https://er.ceres.rub.de/index.php/ER/issue/archive. And, regarding medieval history, to the *Journal of Transcultural Medieval Studies*, coordinated by Matthias M. Tischler (editor-in-chief) and published with De Gruyter.

[9] Manuela Rossini and Michael Toggweiler, "Cultural Transfer: An Introduction", *Word and Text. A Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics*, 4/2 (2014), pp. 5–9: p. 5.

[10] See Ana Echevarría, Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, and John Tolan (eds.), *Law and Religious Minorities in Medieval Societies. Between Theory and Praxis*, Turnhout: Brepols, 2016.

exacerbation of contrasts. One of the most engaging challenges behind religious transfers is indeed the self-affirmation, inner development, and intellectual expression of a religion through close interaction with other religions or theological worldviews.

The book is divided into two parts, pointing to both a chronological and a critical watershed in the history of religious transfer concerning the so-called Abrahamic faiths or Abrahamic religions.[11] The mutual interactions between Judaism, Christianity and Islam cannot but be dated to as early as the birth and the expansion of Islam as a religion at the dawn of the seventh century CE/first century AH. Since then the binary relation between Judaism and Christianity on the level of theological thinking and religious practices, so essential to shaping the later history of both religions,[12] became tripartite and properly Abrahamic. Focusing respectively on the interaction of Judaism with Islam, Christianity with Islam, and Judaism or Islam with the secularized space descending from Latin Christendom, we suggest looking at the (from a European perspective) so-called Middle Ages and early modern times as the laboratory for the making of religious transfer with its peculiar dynamics and patterns.

Over the course of the development of the three Abrahamic religious systems in the Middle Ages – Rabbinical Judaism, medieval *Christianitas* and classical Islam – through peaceful and conflictual coexistence, crossing of borders, and intellectual confrontation, the enactment of religious transfers played a pivotal role. Tackling the one-directional or mutual dimensions of transfer, and the bilateral or multilateral dynamics they imply, the contributions in this book help the reader to detect types of religious transfer and the distinct reactions displayed by the recipients of transfer. Referring to encounters and confrontations of an intercultural character, Hartmut Kaelble affirmed that transfer can function either as a disruptive factor or as a benign acceleration of a process, entailing consequences which are regarded by historians either as positive, such as cultural innovation and transformation, or negative, such as forms of social oppression and decline.[13] This is equally apparent in the cases of religious transfer discussed in this book.

A long-term historical perspective on the implementation of transfers involving the doctrines, rites, and customs of the Abrahamic religions in the Mediterranean

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[11] On the potentials of a history of the Abrahamic religions, see Garth Fowden, *Abraham or Aristotle? First Millennium Empires and Exegetical Traditions*. An Inaugural Lecture by the Sultan Qaboos Professor of Abrahamic Faiths given in the University of Cambridge. 4 December 2013, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; Adam J. Silverstein, Guy G. Stroumsa (eds.), and Moshe Blidstein (associate editor), *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

[12] See Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines. The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Guy G. Stroumsa, *La fin du sacrifice. Les mutations religieuses de l'Antiquité tardive*, préface de John Scheid, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005.

[13] Kaelble, "Forward: Representations and Transfers", p. 9.

and Central Europe allows us to assess the shifting reactions to transferring, ranging from polemical purposes to intercultural mediation or forms of conciliation between faiths. Case studies from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries show that the shift from theological polemics to interfaith mediation cannot be regarded as chronologically predetermined: these two aspects of transfer are not mutually incompatible.[14] Forms of cultural mediation and religious conciliation were already attested in the medieval Mediterranean,[15] as shown by Tzvi Langermann's study of the controversial conversion to Islam of Maimonides (532–600/1138–1204) and the underlying role of his Muslim friend, who acted as a trigger for a religious experience based on double-identity and transdoctrinal perspectives. At the same time, conciliatory purposes behind religious transfer emerged in early modern Europe after the inner division within Christianity caused by the Reformation, as Andrea Celli's study of the reception of the Biblical narrative of Hagar and Ishmael in the Baroque clearly demonstrates. In fact, the shift from polemics to conciliation is not one-dimensional nor definitive or unchangeable throughout time. In his investigations currently underway on the Hagar narrative, Celli underlines how the persistency of medieval polemical tropes on Hagar and Ishmael coexists with a new, constructive understanding of this narrative based on compassion and piety for the exile. This allows for unexpected proximity between the Christian and the Islamic world through interfaith common ground consisting of shared origin narratives and proximate theological sensitivities.

The act of translating texts has long been investigated as a self-evident case of knowledge transfer. The impressive increase of research on the history of translations, especially the important achievements of the last years regarding the translation of the Qur'an into Latin and neo-Latin languages,[16] has shown how the translation of scriptural writings functions as a special observatory for the

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[14] A critically relevant discussion of the cultural dynamics and religious implications of interfaith polemics in medieval and early modern Mediterranean contexts is provided by Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, "Introduction", in *Polemical Encounters. Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Iberia and beyond*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019, pp. 1–21.

[15] Meaningful case studies of cross-cultural interaction (travels, conversions, dissemination of books) are collected in *Identity and Religion in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, ed. John Jeffries Martin, special issue of *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 41/3 (2011).

[16] We allude to the outcomes of the international research groups *Islamolatina*, coordinated by José Martínez-Gázquez and based at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; the Centre for the History of Arabic Studies in Europe (CHASE), coordinated by Charles Burnett and Alastair Hamilton, and based at the Warburg Institute, London; *Corpus Coranicum. Text Documentation and Commentary on the Quran*, coordinated by Angelika Neuwirth within the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences; and the recently launched ERC Project EuQu, Synergy Grant, dedicated to *The European Qur'an. Islamic Scripture in European Culture and Religion 1150–1850*, coordinated by Mercedes García-Arenal (Madrid), Roberto Tottoli (Naples), Jan Loop (Kent), and John Tolan (Nantes).

history of interfaith relations. Translating the Scriptures of the other religion can imply either harsh polemical claims and even military purposes, ways to come to terms with the doctrines of the other religion, or plans to convert its believers through intellectual strategies.[17] Tackling the relation between Qur'anic translations and the Crusades, Davide Scotto shows how the translations of the Qur'an into Latin or vernacular produced in Europe from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries did not respond to a pure linguistic interest, but were rather a result of the spiritual militancy of the commissioners and translators of the texts. The three complete translations of the Qur'an from the Middle Ages shed light on the thorny theological implications of transferring doctrinal contents from an Islamic to a Christian context. They display three different aims that are related to crusade propaganda in either a supportive or an opposing way: to make fully available the Qur'anic contents to Christian readers as a remedy to Western-Christian ignorance and a stronghold against the dissemination of Islam; to polemicize against the Qur'an to intellectually support military endeavours against Muslim kingdoms enacted through the Crusades; and to disseminate new translations of the Qur'an among both a Christian and an Islamic readership to achieve the peaceful conversion of Muslims in the long run.

Besides translations, theological and legal debates on religious law help to clarify the polemical reactions to knowledge transfers of a religious nature and to highlight the underlying reasons for such reactions. Four of the essays in this book tackle cases of distinctly defensive reactions to the dissemination or imposition of doctrines and religious practices by one religion towards the other. In his extensive survey of Jewish responses to Islamic anti-Jewish polemics, Daniel Boušek delves into three main topics of this debate, all of them reflecting potential concerns behind transferring knowledge from a Jewish to an Islamic context: the misinterpreation or distorsion of the Hebrew Bible; references to Muḥammad in the Bible and Muḥammad's prophethood in particular; and the abrogation of Jewish law. Although limited in number and all written in Iberia between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Jewish polemics against the Qur'an prove to be a refined intellectual tool aimed at avoiding transfer and contamination affecting essential doctrinal claims on which Judaism based its religious identity. Boušek's essay demonstrates how Islamic doctrine raised enticing challenges to the Jewish and Christian religious identities in the context of the Muslim dominance in medieval Iberia and North Africa.

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[17] See Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman (eds.), *Scripture and Pluralism. Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Leiden: Brill, 2005; Lejla Demiri, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo. Najm al-Din al-Ṭūfī's (d. 716/1316) Commentary on the Christian Scriptures*, Leiden: Brill, 2013; Ryan Szpiech (ed.), *Medieval Exegesis and Religious Difference. Commentary, Conflict, and Community in the Premodern Mediterranean*, New York NY: Fordham University Press, 2015.

Polemical reactions to religious transfer are attested in the theological or legal thinking of all three Abrahamic religions impacting European society in the Middle Ages and beyond.[18] Switching from Jewish to Islamic theological literature, Nadjet Zouggar's study copes with a cutting Muslim critique against the transfer of Greek philosophical legacy – identified as a group of participants in a foreign cultural or a speculative theological system – to the Muslim world. According to the Muslim authors examined by Zouggar, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) in particular, the merging of Islamic doctrines and Greek philosophical thought (*falsafa*) gives birth to an unnatural alliance, which must be strenuously opposed on an intellectual level. As a further case in the trajectory of Islamic reactions to non-Islamic theological claims, Irina Synkova and Michail Tarelka analyze a series of polemical writings against idolatry excerpted from the Tatar manuscript heritage of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In their philological contribution, they show how Tatar literature makes careful use of quotations from both the so-called Old and the New Testaments as a reaction to the spread of both Jewish and Christian thinking. While sometimes omissions, interpolations, and changes in the original scriptural quotations occur accidentally during the copy process, they are often deliberately made by Tatar-Muslim authors for ideological, exegetical, or stylistic reasons. Tatar manuscripts outline some of the most challenging theological claims coming from the Jewish and the Christian polemical legacy – transferred to Central Europe also through the missionary efforts of the Jesuits in particular[19] – which the Tatar-Muslim minority communities in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania harshly rejected as idolatry.

In the framework of a broader project on *Muslim Minorities in the Iberian Peninsula: The Challenge of the* Convivencia *Model*, Ana Echevarría suggests a groundbreaking perspective on the legal and theological debate on the building of mosques in Christian lands of late medieval Iberia by examining canon and civil Christian laws concerning non-Christian religious buildings.[20] While in principle mosques and synagogues should not have been built in the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula, Echevarría shows that Islamic prayer halls in fact existed after the Christian conquest of former Islamic territories, having been moved inside medieval cities according to the needs of subjected minorities.

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[18] See, for instance, Gerard A. Wiegers, "Polemical Transfers: Iberian Muslim Polemics and their Impact in Northern Europe in the Seventeenth Century", *After Conversion. Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal, Leiden: Brill, 2016, pp. 229–49.

[19] See Stefan Schreiner, "Anti-Islamic Polemics in Eastern European Context. Translation and Reception of 'Western Writings' on Islam in Polish Literature (16th-18th Centuries)", *Esperienza e rappresentazione dell'Islam nell'Europa mediterranea (secoli XVI–XVIII)*, ed. Andrea Celli and Davide Scotto, special issue of the *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, 51/3 (2015), pp. 541–84.

[20] For the impact of this debate on present policies towards religion in Europe, see Stefano Allievi, *Conflicts over Mosques in Europe. Policy Issues and Trends*, London: Alliance Publishing Trust, 2009.

Through the permission or the tacit acknowledgement of Christian authorities, Muslims in the non-frontier areas of Castile and Aragon could establish or decorate mosques in places where previously they did not exist. Though Muslims could not undertake any new construction work, they could lease extant buildings for devotional purposes. This is a telling example of a reaction to religious transfer of a devotional and architectural nature which to contemporary eyes might appear ambivalent or even contradictory. The buildings of mosques in Christian lands was forbidden by law to avoid the dissemination of Islamic practices and its ostentation in the public sphere, but Muslims living among Christians were in fact allowed to keep or renew mosques or prayer halls, even beside Christian churches. This discrepancy between theory and praxis clearly reflects the model of peaceful yet legally unequal coexistence between the Christian ruling majority and Islamic communities in Spain (*aljamas*), which was largely adopted in Castile from the thirteenth century – especially after the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) – to the first years after the Christian conquest of Muslim Granada (897/1492), the last Islamic kingdom of Europe.

The phenomenon of fluctuation and the coexistence of polemical and conciliatory dynamics behind transfers between Abrahamic religions is also detectable throughout so-called modernity, implying distinctions with respect to premodern times mainly due to the secularization processes affecting society, and the increasingly central role of non-confessional forms of knowledge and science within this process. Several case studies collected in the second part of the book tackle the confrontation – by means of transfer of texts or intellectual patterns – of religious and theological stances of the Jewish or Islamic tradition with secular paradigms stemming from former Western or Western-Christian models of society. The examination of historical contexts, in which cultural and political ideas related to the construction of modernity come to light, reveals new models of religious transfer, which are mainly triggered by tendencies towards the secularization of previous religious paradigms. Between the eighteenth and the twentieth century, transfers between religions hardly contribute to the formation of new patterns of religious knowledge related to the three religions, but they are rather used to redefine or reenact well-established religious patterns in relation to other religions and secular worldviews, ideologies, and institutions. This intellectual tension creates new ground for religious transfer, brings transfer beyond a tripartite or Abrahamic religious scheme, and thus opens unprecedented perspectives for interfaith coexistence.

Religious traditions from the eighteenth century onwards are confronted with a wholly new type of challenge represented by the secularization of political discourses, social practices, and moral values. This challenge gives rise to the emergence of a series of unprecedented phenomena: non-confessional scientific approaches (*Wissenschaft*) to religious facts; political ideologies founded on nationhood and nationalism, and their connection to new waves of colonialism;

the bourgeoisification of knowledge and the vulgarization of Enlightenment philosophies; the ideologization of antijudaism through anthropological theorization of the concept of race; and the social competition between religious and secular institutions. On the one hand, these phenomena lead to conflicts with traditional religious paradigms, and on the other hand, they give birth to new dynamics of transfer with to some extent unexpected results in terms of coexistence. With the passage from the medieval and early modern times to the so-called Secular Age,[21] transfer of religious knowledge was necessarily conceived in relation to or in contrast with the dynamics of modernity and a range of new policies – based on nationalist and secularizing stances – towards the presence of religious groups within political and legal contexts where the role of religion was diminished, contested, or denied.

If the impact of secularism unveiled a considerable difference between religious transfers in premodern times and those regarding modern scenarios, there simultaneously exist parallel features between the two timespans. This bridge between eras is well exemplified by Ulli Roth's comparatist study of the Christian attitudes towards Islam in the Council of Basel (1431–1437) and in the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). Inquiring into how both Councils reflected and encouraged the theological engagement of Christianity with Islam, Roth detects four aspects which make visible the analogies and continuity between the two. Both Councils share a certain self-perception and the way in which this influences their engagement with Islam; they show analogies in their respective historical contexts and the role that contact with Muslims played within it; they draw on similar models for their attitude towards Islam; and finally, they preconize similar ideas concerning the concrete ways of engagement with Muslims and their religion. Nonetheless, secularism in contemporary Europe and the rise of the debate on religious pluralism also explain some of the differences between the two conciliar experiences. The distinction between religious mission and the modern concept of interreligious dialogue, which was explicitly accepted only at the time of the Second Vatican Council, is a paradigmatic example of this shift.

A case study reflecting the way in which the transfer of secularized approaches to knowledge and literature challenged contemporary Islam is discussed in an article by Ruggero Vimercati Sanseverino. Arguing that rationalist prophetology, Hadith scepticism and modern Sīra writing are the symptoms of an intellectual and cultural crisis in modern Islam and the result of the influence of Orientalism, the Azhar scholar ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd developed a theological critique of

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[21] See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007; Adrian Pabst, "The Paradox of Faith: Religion beyond Secularization and De-secularization", *The Deepening Crisis: Governance Challenges after Neoliberalism*, ed. Craig Calhoun and Georgi Derlugian, New York City NY: New York University Press, 2011, pp. 157–81; John Milbank, *Beyond Secular Order. The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People*, Oxford: John Wiley & Sons and Blackwell, 2013.

Muslim reformism and of the de-theologization of the representation of the Prophet Muḥammad in contemporary Islamic thought. In the context of the modernization of religious education and the public debate about the role of Islam and Azhar scholarship in modern Egyptian society and culture, Maḥmūd intends to show that the transfer of secularized approaches to the prophetic tradition in fact dissolves the Muslims' personal attachment to their Prophet. Against reformist tendencies in contemporary Egypt, Maḥmūd argues that it is only though this personalist approach to the figure of Muḥammad that it is possible to make Islam intelligible to the modern middle class and thus to overcome the current crisis in Islamic thought and culture.

If the secular study of religion represented a challenge to Islamic scholarship in the modern period, the history of transfers between Christianity and Islam in the Middle Ages equally challenged the Eurocentric vision of modern Western historiography. Within the debate about the relationship between Orientalism and Colonialism, initiated by Edward Said's much-debated work,[22] Enas Aly Ahmed analyzes the knowledge-making processes of Spanish Arabists by situating the ideas of one of Spain's most prominent Arabists, Miguel Asín Palacios (1871–1944), in the context of intellectual tendencies that marked both European Orientalism and Spanish Arabism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[23] Taking as a key case study Palacios's study of Ibn Ḥazm's *al-Fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal*, Ahmed evaluates the engagement of the Spanish Arabist with the phenomenon of cultural transmission between Islam and Christianity. Contemporary Spanish Orientalists deemed this chain of transmission and the circulation of ideas it implied to be a crucial element for their scientific understanding of the Middle Ages. Through a new understanding and rewriting of past interactions between Christianity and Islam, national historiography and the underlying construction of political identity were explicitly or implicitly fostered.

A close examination of the relation between *Wissenschaft* and religion is also to be found in nineteenth-century European Judaism. As Ottfried Fraisse points out, Jews in the nineteenth century increasingly refer to Islam with the aim of modernizing their own tradition. The culturalization and historicization of their own and the other religion in Judaism and Islam at the turn to the twentieth century, contributes to the development of new theologies that escape the dominant concepts of Western history and culture of that time, which were deeply rooted in cultural homogeneity and self-referential universalism. The critical distance from the prevailing Western-Christian understanding of history and

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[22] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

[23] On the relation between European and Spanish Orientalism and the historiographic controversy on the exceptionalism of the latter, see Gonzalo Fernández Parrilla and Carlos Cañete, "Spanish-Maghribi (Moroccan) Relations beyond Exceptionalism: A Postcolonial Perspective", *The Journal of North African Studies*, 24/1 (2019), pp. 111–33.

culture allows Jewish and Muslim thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to build up a creative ambivalence or hybridity of modern secular and religious knowledge. At the same time, the defence of religious doctrines and practices emerged in Judaism against new forms of secular and theological antisemitism established in the nineteenth century. The criticism of Judaism, which culminated in the devaluation of the Jewish concept of God, was confronted with various strategies by Jewish-German thinkers, relying on common religious values and the transfer of religious knowledge between Judaism and Christianity. Alexander Dubrau exemplifies this discourse by examining Rabbi David Zvi Hoffmann's (1843–1921) writings on the relationship of Judaism to Christianity from a *halakhic* point of view. Hoffmann's expert report for the trial against the anti-Semitic agitator Theodor Fritsch (1852–1933) for the Leipzig court in 1912–1913 formed an integrative response to the accusation that Jewish law and religion from a Jewish orthodox-*halakhic* perspective was directed against non-Jews. A further example of the transfer of political theologies within religious doctrines is the inner-Protestant struggle with the Christian conception of salvation history (*Heilsgeschichte*) and 'the Jewish question', which was hotly discussed in Germany before and during the Second World War. Dealing with Gerhard Kittel's (1888–1948) writings on Judaism, Alon Segev points out how Kittel's metaphysical thinking about Christianity and Judaism is connected to political concepts which, according to Kittel, are historically realized with Hitler's seizure of power.

A crucial question that, implicitly or explicitly, appears in the case studies of the second part of the book is related to the borderline between religious knowledge or theology, and secular science or academia: who is legitimized to draw this line and where is it to be drawn? With the implementation of religious studies in modern and secular universities, the figure of the academic introduced to the public sphere a new form of expertise in matters of religion. The resulting configurations of religious authority lead to new dynamics of the production of religious thought and of its engagement with society. An Azhar scholar like Maḥmūd needed his academic background in order to appeal to an Egyptian middle class educated in modern or even Western institutions and attracted to a westernized way of life. Recent studies of social anthropology have already alluded to this development, showing that its relation to transfer merits further examination.[24] New forms of religious authority involve distinctive epistemologies, relativizing the importance of transmission and highlighting other ways of conferring legitimacy and authority to religious expertise. Transfers imply actors who represent and implement these unprecedented models of

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[24] See, for instance, Hatsuki Aishima and Armando Salvatore, "Doubt, Faith, and Knowledge. The Reconfiguration of the Intellectual Field in Post-Nasserist Cairo", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 15 (2009), pp. 41–56.

grounded religious expertise. Today, that secularism constitutes a major factor of mobilization and change, academics and intellectuals coping with the study of religions appear as major agents of religious transfers in modern societies.

The second part of this book tackles the engagement with secularism in its various manifestations, showing how it has uncovered new intellectual and discursive resources for the discussion about Abrahamic religions. If a principal defensive stance towards non-confessional approaches to religion can be observed, secularized ideas, methodologies or discourses nonetheless inspired or influenced representatives or even scholars of religions in their endeavour to make sense of their respective religious identities in a context where religious institutions and practices increasingly lost their social and political visibility and relevance. Paradoxically, transfers which reinforce secularization do not only lead to conflicts with religious traditions and to the formation of reactionary attitudes; if such cases are well documented, as in the example of modern Salafism or fundamentalist Christians,[25] this volume shows that transfers equally lead religious traditions to a dynamic engagement with the diverse intellectual, social, and political preconditions and challenges that characterize modern societies.

Ultimately, transfers reveal the remarkable flexibility of the three religious traditions and show how their internal pluralism or their tolerance of ambiguity[26] provides them with the ability to constructively enact transfers of knowledge in order to confer intelligibility onto their teachings and practices in a diverse context. The renewed recourse to scriptural sources and interpretative traditions, such as the Talmud, Sufism, or Church councils, either by re-interpreting, criticizing or further developing them, opens various options from a simple attempt of revival of religious discourses using alternative means of communication and performance, to their actual revision through the assimilation of other intellectual cultures or social practices. Whether a transfer affected only the external self-expression of a religion, or its internal structure or content as well, in all these cases, transfer triggered a dynamism which was felt by the religious actors themselves as a crisis or a critical moment for their religion and their communities.

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[25] See the stimulating study by Olivier Roy, *Holy Ignorance. When Religion and Culture Part Ways*, trans. Ros Schwartz, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. In his new study *L'Europe est-elle chrétienne?* (Paris: Seuil, 2019), the same author shows how the reference to Christianity and to the Christian-Jewish roots of the Occident as an identity-marker against Islam in recent public discourse in the West is related to the massive secularization and culturalization of Christian identity.

[26] Thomas Bauer, *Die Kultur der Ambiguität. Eine andere Geschichte des Islams,* Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2011. For a fruitful discussion of this important book, see Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, "Compte rendu: Die Kultur der Ambiguität von Thomas Bauer", *Arabica*, 64 (2017), pp. 87–128.

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1

Polemical Responses and Intercultural Mediation

The Making of Religious Transfer in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times

Entangled Arguments

A Survey of Religious Polemics between Judaism and Islam in the Middle Ages*

Daniel Boušek

The polemics between Christianity and Judaism played a very important role in the process of religious self-definition within Christianity from its very beginnings. As Amos Funkenstein pertinently put it, 'Judaism and Christianity were confrontational cultures [...]. The conscious rejection of values and claims of the other religion was and remained a constitutive element in the ongoing construction of the respective identity of each of them.'[1] These mutual bonds of aversion and fascination found their expression in hundreds of Jewish-Christian polemical treatises.[2] However, as Jacob Katz observed, 'the antagonism between Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages [...] is that of conflicting exponents of the same tradition.'[3] In comparison, medieval Islam's debate with Judaism, and vice versa, stood at the periphery of both Muslim and Jewish theologians. The polemics against Judaism and the Hebrew Bible, although present in the Qur'an and in Hadith and Sīra literature, are far less abundant and were never really considered important by Muslim authors. Judaism and Islam were less interested in each other, or, in Funkenstein's words: 'Judaism and Islam were *not* confrontational cultures.'

Jewish-Islamic polemics differ from those of Christianity not only in quantity but also in character. While at the centre of Christian-Jewish polemics stood

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[1] Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1993, p. 170.

[2] For a general overview of the Jewish anti-Christian polemic see, for example, Samuel Krauss and William Horbury, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy. From the Earliest Times to 1789*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, and Jeremy Cohen, "Towards a Functional Classification of Jewish anti-Christian Polemic in the High Middle Ages", *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Friedrich Niewöhner, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992, pp. 93–114.

[3] Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 4.

the exegesis of the Hebrew Bible – the Holy Scripture of both sides of the dia-
logue – Muslims did not only target interpretations of the Script, but the Script
itself – both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament – which they do not con-
sider in their present form to be God's revealed word. The Muslim polemicists
tried, on the basis of verses from the Qur'an, to prove in a variety of ways
that throughout the course of their history the Jews and Christians had not
only tampered with their Scripture, but had also effaced all mention therein of
the advent of the ultimate prophet, Muḥammad. At the centre of the medieval
Islamic polemics against Judaism thus stands the text of the Hebrew Bible. Here-
in lies what is perhaps the most important difference between the Christian-
Jewish and Muslim-Jewish polemics. In the first case, a commonly shared divine
text is expounded in different ways; in the second, the text itself is subjected to
polemical scrutiny.[4]

This essay offers a survey of Muslim-Jewish polemical literature and its key
themes and polemical strategies from the period of early Islam through to the
fifteenth century. While Muslim-Jewish polemics have been extensively studied
starting from Moritz Steinschneider's seminal *Polemische und apologetische
Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden*,[5] the
Jewish side of the polemical discourse has remained at the periphery of scholarly
attention. Steinschneider's book, to which he added an appendix (one hun-
dred and forty pages long) on all medieval Jewish literature mentioning Arabs,
Muslims, or Islam, might be in some sense justifiably viewed as the first and
still the only monographical treatment of the subject. In spite of several studies
discussing particular polemical aspects or polemical tracts, a general survey
of Jewish anti-Islamic polemics is still lacking. This essay will therefore focus
mainly on Jewish responses to Islamic anti-Jewish polemic, while keeping in
mind that those responses can be rightly evaluated only when juxtaposed with
Islamic anti-Jewish polemic. In fact, the Jewish polemical discourse is mainly
an apologetic.

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[4] See Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds. Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism*, Princeton
NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 8–9.

[5] Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1877. His research subsequently enriched and contextualised Ignác
Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitāb", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen
Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 32 (1878), pp. 341–87; Martin Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der
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Gesellschaft*, 42 (1888), pp. 591–675; Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*,
New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1957, vol. 5, pp. 86–102; Moshe Perlmann, "Polemics
between Islam and Judaism", *Religion in a Religious Age*, ed. Shelomo D. Goitein, Cambridge
MA: Association for Jewish Studies, 1974, pp. 103–38; and some parts of the above-mentioned
Hava Lazarus-Yafeh book.

1. The Main Themes of Islamic Anti-Jewish Polemics

The phenomenon of Muslim polemics against Judaism and its adherents is as old as Islam itself. The Qur'an represents the very first source. Its suras, especially those from the period of Muḥammad's preaching in Medina, encapsulate, whether explicitly or implicitly, almost all of the themes of medieval Muslim polemics against Jews, Judaism, and the Hebrew Bible that later generations of Muslims would develop further and reformulate. Leaving aside the question of its historicity,[6] it is clear that the traditional Islamic narrative accounts for ill-will between the Prophet Muḥammad and the Jewish tribes by pointing to the latter's unwillingness to accept Muḥammad's message. Evidence of this narrative can be found in both the Qur'an and the Prophet's biography, Sīra, in which the Jews are presented as unreliable, treacherous, stubborn and ungrateful toward God.[7] They are 'strongest in enmity to the believers' (Q 5:78–82) and hostile to the Prophet, just as the Israelites had been to the messengers sent by God to their nation. The Qur'an dissolves the distance between past and present by directly associating Muḥammad's Jewish contemporaries with the misdeeds of their Biblical ancestors. A similar picture of the Jews, albeit more elaborate and hostile, emerges from the Hadith literature.[8] Yet, despite the intensity of Muslim-Jewish strife in the Medinan stage of Islam, classical Islam directed its polemics mainly against Christianity.[9]

These decidedly antagonistic statements formed the underpinnings of anti-Jewish expressions and became topoi in Islamic polemical and theological works, Qur'anic exegesis, and *adab* literature, throughout the centuries.[10] More numerous and important, however, are the arguments that concern the very foundation of the Jewish faith, namely the Torah. According to the Qur'an, this earlier scripture, revealed by God to Moses and now superseded by a new dispensation, contains references to the mission of the Prophet Muḥammad. However, the Torah is said to have been tampered with and falsified by the Jews. Thus, Islam's polemical discourse with Judaism was from the very beginning – and, to some extent, still is – centred on three partially contradictory and mutually overlapping postulates: that the Hebrew Bible was subjected to textual

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[6] See, for example, Gordon D. Newby, "The Sīrah as a Source for Arabian Jewish History: Problems and Perspectives," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 7 (1986), pp. 121–38.

[7] See Hartwig Hirschfeld, "Historical and Legendary Controversies between Mohammed and the Rabbis," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 10 (1898), pp. 100–16.

[8] Haggai Ben-Shammai, "Jew-Hatred in the Islamic Tradition and the Koran Exegesis," *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, ed. Samuel Almog, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988, pp. 161–70.

[9] For Islamic anti-Christian polemics, see Erdmann Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter. Beiträge zur Geschichte der muslimischen Polemik gegen das Christentum in arabischer Sprache*, Breslau: Müller & Seiffert, 1930.

[10] See, for instance, William M. Brinner, "The Image of the Jew as *Other* in Medieval Arabic Texts," *Israel Oriental Studies*, 14 (1994), pp. 227–40.

and/or interpretative alteration (*taḥrīf, tabdīl*); that the Hebrew Bible contains references to Muḥammad's mission (*aʿlām al-nubuwwa*); and that Muḥammad's revelation has abrogated Jewish Law (*naskh*).[11] The following pages expatiate upon these postulates.

   Among the medieval Muslim authors whose polemical works had the greatest influence on the development of these arguments and the genre overall, the Ẓāhirī (i. e. literalist) law school theologian Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba (d. 456/1064), and a Jewish convert to Islam from Baghdad, Samawʾal al-Maghribī (d. 571/1175), warrant particular attention. Ibn Ḥazm expounds his opinions about Jewish and Christian scriptures mainly in two works. The first is his monumental heresiology, *Al-Fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal* (Book of Distinctions of Religions, Sects, and Heresies).[12] Written between 418/1027 and 421/1030, the work incorporates material from another, now lost, work refuting Judaism and Christianity: *Iẓhār tabdīl al-yahūd wa-l-naṣārā li-l-Tawrāt wa-l-Injīl* (Exposure of Jewish and Christian Falsifications in the Torah and Gospels).[13] Ibn Ḥazm's second noteworthy work is *al-Radd ʿalā Ibn al-Naghrīla al-yahūdī wa-rasāʾil ukhrā* (Refutation of Ibn Naghrīla the Jew, and other letters),[14] a sharply polemical diatribe directed against Ismāʿīl ibn Naghrīla, or Samuel ha-Nagid (993–1056), the great Hebrew poet and statesman of Granada, whom the author charges with writing a pamphlet exposing alleged inconsistencies and logical contradictions in the Qurʾan.[15] Ibn Ḥazm is rightly considered the real founder of Muslim polemics against

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   [11] The modern Muslim anti-Jewish polemic enriched these three claims with several novel arguments based on Biblical criticism, quotations from the Talmud, and anti-Semitic slurs that are reminiscent of past infamous blood libels. The polemics are harnessed in anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli pamphlets for political gain in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. See Livnat Holzman and Eliezer Schlossberg, "Fundamentals of the Modern Muslim-Jewish Polemic," *Israel Affairs*, 12/1 (2006), pp. 13–27.

   [12] On Ibn Ḥazm's polemic, see particular chapters in Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible. From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm*, Leiden: Brill, 1996; Theodore Pulcini, *Exegesis as Polemical Discourse. Ibn Ḥazm on Jewish and Christian Scriptures*, Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1998.

   [13] On the incorporation of the earlier into the later work, see Moshe Perlmann, "Eleventh-Century Andalusian Authors on the Jews of Granada", *Preceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 18 (1948–1949), p. 270.

   [14] Ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-ʿUrūba, 1960; Emilio García Gómez, "Polémica religiosa entre Ibn Ḥazm e Ibn al-Nagrīla", *Al-Andalus*, 4 (1936), pp. 1–28.

   [15] On the discussion for and against the existence of such a pamphlet and for a different hypothesis of whose arguments Ibn Ḥazm actually refutes, see David J. Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings. Politics and Society in Islamic Spain 1002–1086*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985, pp. 199–205; Sarah Stroumsa, "From Muslim Heresy to Jewish-Muslim Polemics. Ibn al-Rāwandī's *Kitāb al-Dāmigh*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 107 (1987), pp. 767–72; Maribel Fierro, "Ibn Ḥazm and the Jewish Zindīq", *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba. The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker*, ed. Camilla Adang, Maribel Fierro, and Sabine Schmidtke, Leiden: Brill, 2013, pp. 497–509; and Ross Brann, *Power in the Portrayal. Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Islam*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. 75–90

the Hebrew Bible, as his knowledge of the text is unprecedented in medieval Muslim literature. He was also the first to paraphrase or cite extensive parts of the Bible. His polemics were resumed by Samaw'al al-Maghribī, who, after his conversion in 1163, wrote a slanderous and polemical pamphlet, *Ifḥām al-yahūd* (Silencing the Jews).[16] *Ifḥām al-yahūd* has undoubtedly exerted the most significant influence on the polemics, both Islamic and Jewish.[17]

Each of the three groups involved in the polemical dialogue, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, had its traditional weak point that served as a clear target for the other two groups. Christian and Muslim anti-Jewish polemics focused on the accusation of the falsification of the Torah and on the abrogation of the Mosaic Law. At the centre of the Jewish and Muslim anti-Christian polemics stood the concepts of God's Unicity and of the Trinity. The key theme of the anti-Muslim polemics of both the Jews and Christians was the prophecy, or more precisely, the question of Muḥammad's prophethood.

The accusation that Jews and Christians had adulterated and falsified their Scriptures (*taḥrīf*) is the most basic Muslim argument against both the Old and New Testaments. This polemical motif, used in pre-Islamic times by sectarian and traditional authors including Samaritans, Hellenistic pagan authors and Christians,[18] is used in the Qur'an to explain away the contradictions between the Bible and the Qur'an, and to establish that the advent of Muḥammad and the rise of Islam was predicted in the uncorrupted *true* Bible. The abuse of 'scripture' was thus a polemical notion adduced in support of the Muslim claim that God's salvific design had been achieved only with the revelation granted to Muḥammad. Since the Qur'an, however, does not state explicitly who affected this alleged tampering with the Torah – or, how and when – the Muslim exegetes and polemicists propounded a wide range of different interpretations of the relevant verses. If the Jews really cannot find the Prophet's name in their Scripture, it is

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[16] Moshe Perlmann (ed. and trans.), Samaw'al al-Maghribī, *Ifḥām al-Yahūd. Preceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 32 (1964). For the earlier recension, see *Samaw'al al-Maghribī (d. 570/1175), Ifḥām al-yahūd. The Early Recension*, ed. Ibrahim Marazka et al., Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006.

[17] Maimonides polemicized against *Ifḥām al-Yahūd* in his *Letter to Yemen*, as well as Sa'd ibn Kammūna, the author of *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li-l-milal al-thalāth*, and an anonymous Jewish author from the fourteenth century. See Haggai Mazuz, "The Identity of the Apostate in the Epistle to Yemen", *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, 38/2 (2014), pp. 363–74; Bruno Chiesa and Sabine Schmidtke, "The Jewish Reception of Samaw'al al-Maġribī's (d. 570/1175) *Ifḥām al-yahūd*. Some Evidence from the Abraham Firkovitch Collection I", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 32 (2006), pp. 327–49. Samaw'al's polemic could also be found in Josef Sambari's chronicle *Divrei Yosef* (1672).

[18] William Adler, "The Jews as Falsifiers. Charges of Tendentious Emendation in Anti-Jewish Christian Polemic", *Translation of Scripture (Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement)*, Philadelphia PA: Annenberg Research Institute, 1990, pp. 1–27; Irven M. Resnick, "The Falsification of Scripture and Medieval Christian and Jewish Polemics", *Medieval Encounters* 2 (1996), pp. 344–80; Edmund Stein, "Alttestamentliche Bibelkritik in der späthellenischen Literatur", *Collectanea Theologica*, 16 (1935), pp. 1–48.

because they either misinterpreted it (*taḥrīf al-maʿnā*), or distorted its text (*taḥrīf al-naṣṣ*). Muslim religious authorities present divergent opinions on this question. According to Ibn Ḥazm, the Torah's text has undergone so many alterations and distortions in the course of history that it should no longer be regarded as a true expression of divine will. This is proved by highlighting passages to show that the Hebrew Bible is replete with chronological, historical, and geographical inaccuracies; theological impossibilities, including anthropomorphisms, and stories that attribute preposterous behaviour to Biblical personalities including patriarchs and kings considered by Muslim theologians to be prophets, and thus infallible. Ibn Ḥazm proclaims, therefore, that the 'damned and counterfeit book called by Jews *al-ḥumāsh*' has nothing in common with the Torah handed down by God to Moses.[19] The Jews might have found cold solace in the fact that Ibn Ḥazm and some other polemicists considered *Injīl* to be even more corrupted than *Tawrāt*.[20]

These theoretical considerations had practical consequences. Adherents of *taḥrīf al-maʿnā* considered it their duty to honour these books as they contain God's revelation. Thus the Shāfiʿite jurist al-Nawawī (d. 677/1278) charges those who impugn and revile the Torah and Gospel with committing the same sin as that of disparagement of the Qurʾan.[21] Contrariwise, the followers of *taḥrīf al-naṣṣ* make it their religious duty to condemn the adulterated Scriptures authored not by God but by a falsifier or falsifiers, declaring that Muslims ought not to study them. It is therefore no wonder that, when the exegete al-Biqāʿī decided to use the Bible as a proof text to interpret the Qurʾan in 1456, his move caused outrage among Muslim religious intellectuals. At the centre of the ensuing dispute, which proved to be one of the major religious controversies of late Mamlūk Cairo, stood the question of whether Muslims were allowed to quote and use the Bible for religious purposes. Luckily for us, al-Biqāʿī wrote a polemical treatise defending his revolutionary decision, *al-Aqwāl al-qawīma fī ḥukm al-naql min al-kutub al-qadīma* (The Just Words on the Rule regarding Quotations from the Ancient Books), the most extensive discussion of the status of the Bible in Islam.[22]

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[19] Ibn Ḥazm, *Al-Fiṣal fī l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal*, ed. Aḥmad Shams ad-Dīn, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiya, 1328 AH (2007), vol. 1, p. 181.

[20] See Alfred Morabia, "Ibn Taymiyya, les Juifs et la Torah", *Studia Islamica*, 50 (1979), pp. 84–5; Sidney A. Weston (ed.), "The Kitāb Masālik an-Naẓar of Saʿīd ibn Hasan of Alexandria", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 24 (1903), p. 340.

[21] Goldziher, "Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen Ahl al-kitāb", pp. 366–7. Cf. Camilla Adang, "A Fourth/Tenth Century Tunisian Muftī on the Sanctity of the Torah of Moses", *The Intertwined Worlds of Islam. Essays in Memory of Hava Lazarus-Yafeh*, ed. Nahem Ilan, Jerusalem: Hebrew University in Jerusalem, 2002, pp. VII–XXXIII.

[22] See Walid A. Saleh, "A Fifteenth-Century Muslim Hebraist: Al-Biqāʿī and his Defence of Using the Bible to Interpret the Qurʾan", *Speculum*, 83/3 (2008), pp. 629–54. Walid A. Saleh is also the author of the edition, *In Defence of the Bible. A Critical Edition and an Introduction to al-Biqāʿī's Bible Treatise*, Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Intertwined with the theme of the Torah's corruption is the question of the absence of *tawātur*, the lack of reliable transmission. The purpose of this argument was to prove that the invasions and assaults that devastated Biblical Israel, the subsequent exiles and persecution experienced by the Jewish people during their history, and even the deliberate burning of the scrolls of the Torah and deletion of parts of its text – especially those containing the references to Muḥammad – by some of the sinful kings of Israel, had irreparably impaired the transmission of their holy text, which therefore could not be regarded as reliable. The question of *tawātur* plays a key role in Ibn Ḥazm's polemic. He asserts that Ezra the Scribe, identified with the enigmatic person of the Qur'anic 'Uzayr, falsified the Hebrew Bible. The origin of this charge may lie in the Rabbinic interpretation, according to which Ezra was in some sense a second Moses who had set out to spread the Torah after it lapsed into disuse (B*Sukkah* 20a). In the tenth century, the Qaraite author al-Qirqisānī expressed concern that such stories had become known to Muslims: 'Were the Muslims to learn of this, they would need nothing else with which to revile and confute us.'[23] It was due to Ibn Ḥazm that Ezra, who until then had been presented mainly in a very positive light in Islamic literature, came to be seen as a falsifier.[24] It was he who altered the original version of the Biblical text of which only one exemplar was preserved in the Temple, which was later destroyed or forgotten by the Israelites following the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the subsequent Babylonian exile. According to Ibn Ḥazm, in Ezra's text,[25] concocted from memory and held in possession by the Jews until his time, only fragments of the original text remained, namely verses preserved by God in order to testify to Muḥammad's prophethood and to the corruption of the Torah.

The second most common argument against the Bible deals with *aʿlām* or *dalā'il al-nubuwwa* – 'Signs' or 'Proofs of Prophethood' which, according to interpretations of several verses in the Bible, announce the coming of Muḥammad

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[23] Al-Qirqisānī, *Kitāb al-anwār*, I.3.3; trans. Bruno Chiesa and Wilfried Lockwood, *Ya'qūb al-Qirqisānī on Jewish Sects and Christianity. A Translation of "Kitāb al-Anwār", Book I, with two Introductory Essays*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984, pp. 105–6. Cf. Geoffrey Khan, "Al-Qirqisānī's Opinions concerning the Text of the Bible and Parallel Muslim Attitudes towards the Text of the Qur'ān", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 81 (1990), pp. 59–73.

[24] See Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds*, pp. 41–7, 50–74. Martin Whittingham argues that 'Ibn Ḥazm was not the originator of the Ezra motif amongst Arab Muslims, though he was to be its chief publicist', "Ezra as the Corrupter of the Torah? Re-Assessing Ibn Hazm's Role in the Long History of an Idea", *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 1 (2013), pp. 253–71.

[25] Ibn Ḥazm's younger contemporary in the east, 'Abd al-Malik Al-Juwaynī (d. 1085), even knows that Ezra wrote this corrupted Torah copy 545 years before the coming of Jesus. See Michal Allard, *Textes apologétiques de Ğuwainī*, Beirut, 1968, pp. 44–57; for an English translation see Francis E. Peters, *A Reader on Classical Islam*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 161–4.

and Islam.[26] This argument is based on the Qur'an's claim (Q 61:6) that Jesus brought to his people good tidings about a prophet who would come after him, named 'Aḥmad'. Since the Qur'an did not give any specific indication as to where in the Bible these tidings or allusions should be located, the task was left for the next generations of Muslims. It is usually assumed by Islamicists that, because of limited knowledge of the Biblical text during the first century or so of Islam, no serious attempts were made to substantiate the Qur'anic claim. However, Uri Rubin has convincingly argued that Muslim reliance on the Bible had already been demonstrated in early biographical sources and Hadith compilations.[27] Still, it was primarily the polemical encounter with Christian arguments that the Hebrew Bible contained explicit references to Jesus, but not to Muḥammad, that forced Muslims to repay their critics in kind. While, in the middle of the eighth century, John of Damascus speaks in his anti-Islamic polemic about Muslims' fecklessness when called upon to present specific reference to Muḥammad in the Bible ('they are surprised and at a loss'),[28] from the second half of that century we encounter, in Muslim literature, the development of a specific literary genre called 'Signs' or 'Proofs of Prophethood'.[29] Three of the earliest texts of this kind were composed in the ninth century by al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869), 'Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. around 251/865), and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889).[30] The authors tried to show that Muḥammad's unique personality, the miracles he performed, and the worldly success of his message prove the authenticity of his prophethood. The books typically contain a section with verses from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament that purportedly foretold the coming of Muḥammad and rise of Islam. One of the traditional ways of detecting references to Muḥammad was to interpret names, as well as adjectives and verbs from the root *ḥ-m–d* in the Arabic translation of the Bible, as representative of the verb 'to praise'.

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[26] Elijahu Ashtor (Strauss) published an (incomplete) list of Biblical verses used in Muslim polemics, "Methods of Islamic Polemics" (Hebrew), *Memorial Volume for the Vienna Rabbinical Seminary*, Jerusalem: Ruben Mas, 1946, pp. 182–97.

[27] Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder. The Life of Muḥammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*, Princeton N J: Darwin Press, 1995, pp. 21–43.

[28] Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam. The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"*, Leiden: Brill, 1972, p. 135.

[29] Sarah Stroumsa, "The Signs of Prophecy. The Emergence of an Early Development of a Theme in Arabic Theological Literature", *The Harvard Theological Review*, 78 (1985), pp. 101–14.

[30] See David S. Margoliouth, "On the Book of Religion and Empire by 'Alī b. Rabban al-Tabari", *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 14 (1930), pp. 165–82; Ibn Qutayba, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, in Carl Brockelmann, "Ibn Ġazī's Kitāb al-wafā' fī faḍā'il al-Muṣṭafā nach der Leidener Handschrift untersucht", *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*, vol. 3, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1898, pp. 2–59. Gérard Lecomte, "Les citations de l'ancien et du nouveau testament dans l'œuvre d'Ibn Qutayba", *Arabica*, 5 (1958), pp. 34–46; Georges Vajda, "Judaeo-Arabica 1. Observation sur quelques citations bibliques chez Ibn Qotayba", *Revue des études juives*, 99 (1935), pp. 68–80; Camilla Adang, "Medieval Muslim Polemics against the Jewish Scriptures", *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions. A Historical Survey*, ed. Jacques Waardenburg, New York NY: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 145–7.

Consequently, all passages with the words *muḥammad*, *ḥamd*, *maḥmūd*, *aḥmad*, and so on were interpreted as explicit references by name to the Prophet. It seems that the information required to sustain this interpretation was supplied by Christian and Jewish converts to Islam, who, unlike Muslims, had ready access to the original scriptures. Additionally, Christian converts to Islam could make use of ready-made collections of Messianic passages, called *Testimonia*,[31] and the Christological interpretation of a Biblical verse simply transferred from Jesus to Muḥammad.

The aforementioned Ibn Rabban,[32] a Nestorian convert to Islam, devoted the bulk of his *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla* (The Book of Religion and Empire) to more than sixty Biblical testimonies, covering almost all of the books of the Bible. At the beginning of the book, where Ibn Rabban claims that the *People of the Book* had hidden Muḥammad's name and altered his portrait in their Scripture, he boasts that he was better equipped than his predecessors to 'demonstrate this, disclose its secret, and withdraw the veil from it, in order that the reader may see it clearly and increase his conviction and his joy in the religion of Islam.'[33] The 'Proofs of Prophethood' that form a stock ingredient of Muslim-Jewish polemics were Genesis 17:20 and Deuteronomy 18:18 and 33:2.

1. 'And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation' (Gen. 17:20). It is no surprise that Arabs, i.e. Muslims, who were by universal agreement considered descendants of the Biblical Ishmael, took this passage – and the entire cycle of stories about Hagar and Ishmael, son of the bondwoman, *ben ha-amah* – as a direct reference to a future mighty Islamic community. Using a typically Jewish technique of computation known as *Gematria* (*ḥisāb al-jumal*) to combine the numerical value of letters, Muslims identified another reference to the coming of Muḥammad. In this case, the allusion is found in the Hebrew expression *bi-me'od me'od* 'exceedingly'. The numerical value of the consonants contained in the expression amounts to 92, which, in turn, equate to the numerical value of the letters of the Prophet's name – *M-Ḥ-M-D*.

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[31] The Church fathers devoted a large part of their oeuvre to *proofs from prophecy*, using Old Testament 'proof-texts' to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, that the ritual commandments in the Law are no longer obligatory, and that the Church, not the Jews, is now the people of God. The Apologists, such as Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, and Tertullian, worked out a great amount of the *Testimonia*, which was eventually assembled in collections such as Cyprian's *Testimonia ad Quirinum* (d. 258).

[32] 'Alī Ibn Rabban, *Al-Dīn wa-l-dawla fī ithbāt nubuwwat al-nabī Muḥammad*, Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1402 AH (1982); Alphonse Mingana, *The Book of Religion and Empire. A Semi-Official Defence and Exposition of Islām Written by Order at the Court and with the Assistance of the Caliph Mutawakkil (A.D. 847–861) by 'Ali Ṭabari*, Manchester: The University Press, 1922.

[33] 'Alī Ibn Rabban, *al-Dīn wa-l-dawla*, p. 35; *The Book of Religion and Empire*, p. 3.

2. 'The Lord came from Sinai, He shone upon them from Seir, He appeared from Mount Paran' (Deut. 33:2–3). Muslims have taken the statement as prophecy of the rise of three religions in three successive revelations: Sinai symbolises Judaism, Seir Christianity, and Paran Islam.[34]

3. 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your own people like me [...]. I will raise up a prophet for them from among their own people, like yourself' (Deut. 18:15–18). According to Muslim exegesis, the words 'from among their own people' allude to the descendants of Ishmael.

Although the traditions about miracles filled the biographies of Muḥammad and *dalāʾil al-nubuwwa* literature, and Muslim dogmatists stressed the importance of the miracle as a tool for proving the authenticity of prophecy, the only miracle unanimously accepted by all Muslims was the Qurʾan's miraculous inimitability (*iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*).[35]

The third main theme of Muslim polemics against the Hebrew Bible and Judaism is that of *naskh*, or abrogation of the Mosaic law. The concept of abrogation – the supersession of one revealed law by another – did not appear in interreligious polemics upon the arrival of Islam, but had been at the centre of Christianity's polemics against Judaism for centuries. In Islam it is based primarily on Q 2:106: 'Such of Our revelations as We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, we bring (in place) one better or the like thereof.'[36] The original intention of this verse was to explain the contradictions between various verses of the Qurʾan or between the Qurʾan and Prophetic tradition (*sunna*). Upon these foundations, Muslim scholars built a sophisticated system through which to determine which verse had been revealed at a later date and thus represented a legally binding standpoint.[37] Muslim authors applied this exegetic rule of Islamic jurisprudence to their polemics against earlier religions and their Scriptures in order to explain why God later replaced his revelations to the Jews and Christians with Islam.

In their polemics, Muslims strained to convince Jews of the principle of abrogation by pointing out the *fact* that the Torah allowed for this concept as

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[34] Mount Paran is taken to stand for Mecca, because Ishmael is said in Gen. 21:21 to have dwelled in Paran, and according to Q 2:119 in Mecca.

[35] See Abdul Aleem, "'Ijāzu'l-Qurʾān", *Islamic Culture*, 7 (1933), pp. 64–82, 215–33.

[36] According to Marmaduke Pickthall's translation, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran. An Explanatory Translation*, London: A.A. Knopf, 1930.

[37] John Burton, "*Naskh*", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition,* Leiden: Brill, 1960–2002 (below *EI²*), pp. 1009–12. The hermeneutic principle of abrogation played an important role primarily within the exegesis of the Qurʾān, holy traditions (*ḥadīth*), and scholarship on the four (or five) sources of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies. Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, New York NY: Prometheus Books, 2004, pp. 192–202; David S. Powers, "The Exegetical Genre *nāsikh al-Qurʾān wa mansūkhuhu*", *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qurʾān*, ed. Andrew Rippin, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 117–38.

well, given that Mosaic Law had replaced the earlier, divergent Law of Jacob. At the same time, however, they emphasized that abrogation did not imply God changing his mind (*badāʾ*) – a notion rejected by both Sunni Islam and Judaism. Within the polemical context, this meant that, prior to the arrival of Islam, God had assigned each religion a previously defined period of validity – 'for every age there is a Book revealed' (Q 13:38). Christianity had abrogated Judaism (*sharīʿat Mūsā*) at its appointed time, and Islam (*sharīʿat Muḥammad*) – God's last and final revelation to mankind (Q 33:40) – nullified and replaced both prior revelations.

The oldest records of literary debates between Muslims and Jewish theologians on the subject of abrogation appear from the second half of the ninth century, with the first documented debate taking place between the Muʿtazilite theologian Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām (d. 221/836), and an otherwise unknown Jew named Manasseh ibn Ṣāliḥ.[38] By the tenth century, defence or rejection of the concept of abrogation had become the primary expression of Jewish-Muslim polemics. Discussions of *naskh* are a fixed ingredient in *kalām* tracts and may also be found in works informing readers of the varied positions held on the matter by the Rabbanites, Qaraites, Samaritans, and the ʿĪsāwiyya sect.

2. Polemics against Rabbinical Literature

While Christian anti-Jewish polemics first dealt systematically with Rabbinical literature in the *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* (1110) of the Spanish Jewish convert to Christianity Petrus Alfonsi,[39] it appeared much earlier in Muslim literature. The Rabbinical concept of unwritten revelation, the oral Torah, was already known to the authors of early Islam, who viewed it as a damnable precedent that should be avoided in Islam. Their readiness to condemn the concept was probably motivated by their hope of diminishing the authority of the ever-growing Hadith literature, or of preventing it from being written down. Several *aḥādīth* discussed by Ignác Goldziher[40] elucidate the word *mathnāt* – the Mishnah – as meaning

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[38] Louis P. Cheikho (ed.), *Trois traités anciens de polémique et de théologie chrétiennes*, Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1923, pp. 68–70; English translation by A. S. Tritton, "'Debate' between a Muslim and a Jew", *Islamic Studies* (Karachi) 1 (1962), pp. 60–64; and John Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu. Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 110–2.

[39] Petrus Alfonsi, *Dialogue Against the Jews*, trans. Irven M. Resnick, Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006. See also Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law. Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity*, Berkeley: California University Press, 1999, pp. 201–18.

[40] Ignác Goldziher, "Kämpfe um die Stellung des Ḥadīt im Islam", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 61 (1907), pp. 860–72, especially pp. 865–9.

'a book wilfully composed by Jewish rabbis'. Ibn al-Nadīm's bibliographical
lexicon *Fihrist*, written in 987, defines *al-mishnā* as a part of the Hebrew Bible
written by Moses, 'from which the Jews derive the science of the law, with reli-
gious ordinances and judgments. It is a large book, its language being Kasdānī
and Hebrew.'[41]

The principal reason for polemical Muslim literature employing Talmudic
aggadic material was to bolster the claim that Judaism's perceptions of God
were primitive and anthropomorphic. Samaw'al al-Maghribī ascribes the present
form of Judaism and its Rabbinical jurisprudence to the social conditions of
exile and the rabbis' policy of non-assimilation of the Jews into the majority
society by segregation. Their laws are incorporated in the Mishnah (*al-mishnā*)
and the Talmud (*al-talmūd*) and have a negative influence upon Jewish life and
the position of Jewish society as intentionally segregated. The rule of Talmudic
jurisprudence and the Jews' dispersion in exile, through which they load upon
themselves ever newer burdens and limitations beyond the demands of Moses'
Torah, make their lives more difficult and prevent them from reflecting critically
on their religion and integrating into the majority society. In their efforts to pre-
serve the religious identity of the Jews by segregating them, the rabbis deviated
from Biblical law by prohibiting mixed marriages with non-Jews and banning
the consumption of meat slaughtered by them. Thus, according to Samaw'al, the
cause of the Jews' suffering in exile is not only the constant institutional humili-
ation and persecution caused by the majority society, but the unreasonable
legislation imposed by the rabbis and enshrined in Rabbinical literature. Both
factors prevent them from realizing the absurdity of their adherence to an out-
of-date and irrational religion and accepting Islam.[42]

Ibn Ḥazm was the first Muslim author to give a rather more detailed, albeit
somewhat misleading, account of the Rabbinical literature. If the Hebrew Bible
is a wholly falsified book in Ibn Ḥazm's understanding, the Talmud is worse still,
a genuine heresy composed by the rabbis. While Ibn Ḥazm does not mention
the Mishnah, he defines the Talmud as the '[Jew's] trusted pillar in questions
of their jurisprudence, rules, religion, and law, and it contains sayings of their
rabbis as all unanimously agree.' Despite this definition, Ibn Ḥazm's notion
of the Talmudic canon seems to have been somewhat vague. He erroneously
(based on al-Qirqisānī) identifies the *Shi'ur Qomā* (The Measure of the [Divine]
Body) – a mystical work from Late Antiquity dealing with secret measures

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[41] Gustav Flügel (ed.), *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, Leipzig: F.C.W. Vogel, 1871, vol. 1, p. 23; Bayard
Dodge (ed. and trans.), *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*,
New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1970, vol. 1, pp. 43–44. However, it is entirely pos-
sible that he was referring to the Book of Deuteronomy, which al-Bīrūnī (d. 441/1048) calls *al-
muthannā*. Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-āṯār al-bāqiya ʿan al-qurūn al-khāliya. Chronologie orientalischer
Völker von Albērūnī*, ed. C.E. Sachau, Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1878, p. 19.

[42] Moshe Perlmann (ed.), *Ifḥām al-yahūd*, pp. 71–85 (Arab.), pp. 64–70 (Eng.).

of the Godhead – as a part of the Talmudic corpus. Ibn Ḥazm speaks of the anthropomorphic portrayal of God in this mystical tract with utmost horror and disgust and calls into question Jewish monotheism itself.[43]

Another book that Ibn Ḥazm identifies as part of the Talmud is the Mishnaic tractate *Sāder nāshīm* (Seder nashim). Ibn Ḥazm quotes a story in which God is served by an angel called Sandalphon while wearing a ring on his finger and a crown on his head.[44] While he typically recounts various anthropomorphic stories without stating their source, he asserts that all of these sayings are part of the Talmud.

As stated above, Ibn Ḥazm attributes the authorship of the Talmud to 'heretical rabbis'. They are the true creators of Judaism as they deformed the original religion of Moses beyond recognition, invented beliefs, and instituted all kinds of practices that have no basis in Scripture, including prayers and religious institutions like the synagogue. According to Ibn Ḥazm, the rabbis simply invented a new religion. Jewish liturgy, rituals, and commandments are not based on the Hebrew Bible, but on a different *nova lex*, the oral Law recorded in the Talmud. Moreover, they think themselves higher than God and the prophets, and consider the Talmud, their own invention, to be of greater value than God's revelation in the Torah. Ibn Ḥazm's judgement thus closely echoes Peter the Venerable's remarks a century or so later that the Jews 'prefer' their doctrines to God.[45]

Critics of these Rabbinical inventions applied the term *mawḍūʿāt* to them, which can be translated as 'invented traditions'. Unsurprisingly, the Qaraites used the term with the same meaning.[46] Camilla Adang has convincingly argued[47] that it was probably the Qaraites of Talavera or Toledo who provided Ibn Ḥazm with the anti-Rabbanite passages of Yaʿqūb al-Qirqisānī's (d. c. 328/940) systematic legal compendium, *Kitāb al-anwār wa-l-marāqib* (The Book of Lights and Watchtowers),[48] or Salmon ben Yeroḥam's *Milḥamot ha-Shem* (Wars of the

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[43] Ibn Ḥazm's anti-Talmudic polemic was treated for the first time by Ignác Goldziher, "Proben muhammedanischer Polemik gegen den Talmud I", *Jeschurun*, 8 (1872), pp. 76–104.

[44] The debate about the crown on the Creator's head is not found in *Seder Nashim* but in bChag 13b.

[45] Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, p. 191.

[46] See Marina Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community. The Jews of the Fatimide Caliphate*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2008, p. 113.

[47] Camilla Adang, "Éléments karaïtes dans la polémique anti-judaïque d'Ibn Ḥazm", *Diálogo filosófico-religioso entre cristianismo, judaísmo e islamismo durante la edad media en la Península Ibérica*, ed. Horacio Santiago-Otero, Turnhout: Brepols, 1994, pp. 419–41. Karaite origin of Ibn Ḥazm's diatribes had already been established by Ignác Goldziher, who was the first to publish this text of Ibn Ḥazm's together with a German translation. See his "Proben muhammedanischer Polemik gegen den Talmud I", p. 102, n. 16.

[48] Chiesa, B. and Lockwood W. (trans.), *Yaʿqūb al-Qirqisānī on Jewish Sects and Christianity*, pp. 124–33.

Lord), c. 955.[49] These authors studied the Talmud and the *Shi'ur Qomā* with the express purpose of picking out objectionable *aggadot* and holding them up to ridicule in order to prove the theological backwardness of the Rabbanites.[50] Also Alfonsi's *Dialogi contra Iudaeos* draws inspiration from these sources of anti-Talmudic and anti-Rabbinic polemics, as well as al-Kindī's *al-Risāla* (Treatise).[51] However, while growing awareness among the Christian theologians of the existence of an extensive body of post-Biblical Jewish literature – especially of the Talmud and Midrashic literature – radically changed the content and the function of medieval Christian anti-Jewish polemics from the twelfth century onwards, the same does not hold true with regard to Muslim medieval polemical literature, where it played a rather marginal role.[52]

It is possible to point to a further divergence between Christian-Jewish and Muslim-Jewish medieval polemics. In Muslim countries, accusations against the Jews and Judaism remained confined to literary polemics. Volumes of the Talmud or other forms of Rabbinical literature were never condemned for blasphemy and thrown into the bonfire after public dispute between representatives of both religions, as was the case in Paris in 1242, in Toulouse in 1319, in Rome in 1553, or in Venice in 1586.[53]

3. The Mamlūk Period: Fatwas and Polemics Against Dhimmīs

The Muslim world underwent a profound transformation during the thirteenth century. The Crusaders intruded into the Middle East and remained there for nearly two centuries (1098–1291), and most of Spain was lost to the armies of the Reconquista. By the close of the eleventh century, all of Sicily had submitted to

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[49] Salmon ben Yeruḥim, *The Book of the Wars of the Lord*, ed. Israel Davidson, New York NY: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1934, pp. 108–32.

[50] Another plausible source for Ibn Ḥazm's arguments could have been the pre-Kabbalistic work *Sefer Raziel,* where the angel that binds the phylacteries on God's head is called Sandalphon, and not Michael or Metatron, as by al-Qirqisānī. See Saul Liebermann, *Shkiin. A Few Words on Some Jewish Legends, Customs and Literary Sources Found in Karaite and Christian Works*, Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1970, pp. 11–4.

[51] See Barbara Hurwitz Grant, "Ambivalence in Medieval Religious Polemic: The Influence of Multiculturalism on the *Dialogues* of Petrus Alphonsi", *Languages of Power in Islamic Spain*, ed. Brann Ross, Bethesda MD: CDL Press, 1997, pp. 156–77.

[52] Amos Funkenstein, "Basic Types of Christian Anti-Jewish Polemics in the Later Middle Ages", *Viator*, 2 (1971), pp. 373–82 (this article appeared in an extended form in Hebrew, *Zion*, 33 (1968), pp. 126–44).

[53] Baron, *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 9, pp. 62–71. The same is true with regard to the censorship of Hebrew books, which is never mentioned in the Muslim literature or practised, yet was a widespread practice in Christian Europe from the thirteenth century onward. The sole call for censorship is found in a polemical pamphlet penned by a Jewish convert to Islam from fourteenth-century Morocco. See below. Moshe Perlmann, "'Abd al-Ḥaḳḳ al-Islāmī: A Jewish Convert", *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 31 (1940–1941), p. 177.

the Normans. The Mongol horde swept across Asia and took Baghdad, putting an end to the caliphate. Under threat, Islam responded by highlighting religious and social boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims. Amidst waning tolerance and deterioration of the social, economic, demographic, and legal positions of *dhimmīs* – 'the protected people' – during the Mamlūk period in Egypt and Syria (648–923/1250–1517), a flood of Muslim polemical literature emerged, targeting Jews and, in particular, Christians.[54] This literature is eclectic and only seldom presents new polemical motifs. This is true especially of al-Qarāfī's (d. 684/1285) *Kitāb al-ajwiba al-fākhira ʿan al-asʾila al-fājira* (The Glorious Answers to Wicked Questions) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's (d. 751/1350) *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī ajwibat al-yahūd wa-l-naṣārā* (Guide of the Perplexed in Reply to the Jews and the Christians).[55] It is a telling fact that until the late Middle Ages, Islamic legal books do not include the equivalent of *De judies*, a section devoted to Jewish law in the Latin canon law. It was only in the Mamlūk period that Muslim lawyers felt the need to delineate the social and religious boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus, it is no coincidence that the jurist Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, author of the aforementioned polemical tract, also authored the most comprehensive lawbook dealing with the more general Islamic law for *dhimmīs*: *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma* (The Laws Pertaining the Protected People).[56] The whole period was indelibly marked by the ongoing debate of jurists concerning the legality of the construction, repair, or continuance of the sacral buildings of non-Muslims in the realm of Islam. Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), an influential Syrian Ḥanbalī jurist and Ibn Qayyim's teacher, penned several formal legal opinions (*fatwā*, pl. *fatāwā*) ordering the closure of synagogues and churches (*Masʾala fī l-kanāʾis*).[57] Further legal opinions were authored by scholars such

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[54] See Eliyahu Ashtor (Strauss), "The Social Isolation of Ahl Adh-Dhimma", *Etudes orientales à la mémoire de Paul Hirschler*, ed. Ottó Komlós, Budapest: J. Kertész, 1950, pp. 73–94; Doran Arad, "Being a Jew under the Mamluks: Some Coping Strategies", *Muslim-Jewish Relations in the Middle Islamic Period. Jews in the Ayyubid and Mamluk Sultanates (1171–1517)*, ed. Stephan Conermann, Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2017, pp. 21–40.

[55] See Jon Hoover, "The Apologetic and Pastoral Intentions of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Polemic against Jews and Christians", *The Muslim World*, 100 (2010), pp. 472–489. For his indebtedness to Samawʾal al-Maghribī see Moshe Perlmann, "Ibn Qayyim and Samauʾal Al-Maghribi", *Journal of Jewish Bibliography*, 3 (1942), pp. 71–4.

[56] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, ed. T. Saʿd, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1423 AH (2002). Similar treatises, however, were also written by Maghrebian jurists. See Georges Vajda, "Un traité Maghrébin «Adversus Judaeos»: «Aḥkām ahl-Ḏimma» du Sayḫ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Maġīlī", *Études d'orientalisme dédiées a la mémoire de Lévi-Provençal*, Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1962, vol. 2, pp. 805–⁸13.

[57] Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, pp. 25–33; Alfred Morabia, "Ibn Taymiyya, les Juifs et la Torah", *Studia Islamica*, 49 (1979), pp. 91–122; 50 (1979), pp. 77–107; Martin Schreiner, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der theologischen Bewegungen im Islām", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 52 (1898), pp. 559–60. For his polemic against Christianity, see David Thomas, "Apologetic and Polemic in the *Letter from Cyprus* and Ibn