

ORIENTALIA CHRISTIANA ANALECTA

304

BETWEEN THE CROSS AND THE CRESCENT

E X T R A C T A



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BETWEEN THE CROSS
AND THE CRESCENT

Studies in Honor of
SAMIR KHALIL SAMIR, S.J.
on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday

edited by

Željko Paša, S.J.

E X T R A C T A



PONTIFICIO ISTITUTO ORIENTALE
PIAZZA S. MARIA MAGGIORE, 7
I-00185 ROMA
2018

CONTENTS

Abbreviations	IX
Foreword	XVII
Epistolae gratulatoriae	
His Holiness BENEDICT XVI, Pope Emeritus	XXV
His Beatitude Eminence BÉCHARA BOUTROS CARD. RAÏ, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East	XXVI
His Beatitude LOUIS RAPHAËL I SAKO, Patriarch of Babylon of the Chal- deans	XXVII
His Eminence JEAN-LOUIS CARD. TAURAN, President of the Pontifical Coun- cil for Interreligious Dialogue	XXVIII
His Eminence LEONARDO CARD. SANDRI, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches	XXIX
His Eminence ROBERT CARD. SARAH, Prefect of the Congregation for Di- vine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments	XXXI
His Eminence KURT CARD. KOCH, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity	XXXII
His Excellency Mgr. CYRILLE S. BUTROS, Metropolitan of the Melkite Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Beirut and Byblos	XXXIII
His Excellency Mgr. GABRIELE GIORDANO CACCIA, Titular Archbishop of Sepino and Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines	XXXIV
His Excellency Mgr. KYRILLOS WILLIAM, Bishop of the Coptic Catholic Church of Assiut	XXXV
His Excellency Mgr. ANTOINE AUDO, S.J., Chaldean Bishop of Aleppo and Syria	XXXVI
His Excellency Mgr. YOUHANNA JIHAD BATAH, Vicar General, Diocese of Beirut in the Syrian Catholic Church	XXXVII
His Excellency Mgr. ANTONIOS AZIZ MINA, Bishop Emeritus of the Coptic Catholic Church of Guizeh – Canon of the Papal Basilica of Santa Ma- ria Maggiore	XXXVIII
R.P. SALIM DACCACHE, S.J., Rector of Saint Joseph University, Beirut ...	XXXIX
R.P. ABDO BADWI – R.P. ABBÉ ÉLIE KHALIFÉ-HACHEM – R.P. JOSEPH OBEID, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik	XLI
Tabula gratulatoria	XLII
 SAMIR KHALIL SAMIR, S.J.: BIOGRAPHY – BIBLIOGRAPHY	
Edward G. FARRUGIA, Samir Khalil Samir: Arab in Culture, Christian in Faith, Copt in Rite	3
Léna DABAGHY, Bibliographie de Samir Khalil Samir, S.J. de 2003 à 2018 .	41

BIBLE

- Nathan GIBSON, Miriam L. HJÄLM, Peter TARRAS, Ronny VOLLANDT, Vevian ZAKI, *Biblia Arabica. An Update on the State of Research* 57
- Juan Pedro MONFERRER-SALA, *Jewish and Christian Bible Encounters in Arabic? On a Fragment of Gn 27:31-34 from the Cairo Genizah in Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic (T-S AS 70.101)* 85

BYZANTINE AND MELKITE TRADITIONS

- Carmelo Giuseppe CONTICELLO, *Le monachisme sinaïtique: Les sources* . . . 105
- Salim DACCACHE, *Les manuscrits Farḥāt BO 1106 et Yūwāṣāf Vat. Ar. 673 sont-ils des œuvres authentiques? Seul al-Ṣafi Ibn al-ʿAssāl a résumé en arabe l'Échelle sainte de Jean Climaque!* 121
- Alexander TREIGER, *Who Was Macarius of Sinai, the Author of the Responsum on Cheesefare Week?* 137
- Vincenzo RUGGIERI, *The Barbarian Invasions and Byzantine Euchology* . . . 147
- Ray JABRE MOUAWAD, *Les juifs et le Temple dans des icônes melkites de Tripoli – Liban* 157
- Marlène KANAAN, *Deux miracles de Saint Georges d'après un manuscrit arabe inédit* 175
- Souad SLIM, *L'influence du « siècle des Lumières » sur le Patriarcat grec-orthodoxe d'Antioche* 187
- Carsten WALBINER, *Die Lage im griechisch-katholischen Patriarchat von Antiochia, Alexandria und Jerusalem gemäß einer Selbstdarstellung des Patriarchats aus dem Jahre 1879* 201
- Ronney el-GEMAYEL avec la collaboration de Léna et Mona DABAGHY, *Les manuscrits du Patriarcat grec-orthodoxe de Damas dans l'Histoire de Joseph Nasrallah: Index et concordance avec le catalogue d'Élias Gebara* 223

COPTIC AND ETHIOPIC TRADITIONS

- Youhanna Nessim YOUSSEF, *La Lettre de Denys l'Aréopagite à Timothée comme texte liturgique* 279
- Ugo ZANETTI, *Le Mardi Saint chez les Coptes: un lavement des pieds? des présanctifiés?* 289
- Adel SIDARUS, *Deux représentants tardifs de l'âge d'or de la littérature copto-arabe (al-Makīn Ibn al-ʿAmīd, le Jeune et Athanase de Qous, XIV^e siècle)* 299
- Mark N. SWANSON, *The Tell-Tale Rhyme: On the Original Language of Buṭrus al-Sadamantī's Instructive Lives* 317
- Rafał ZARZECZNY, *Inventory of Ethiopic Manuscripts Found in Two Public Libraries in Basel (Switzerland)* 335

SYRIAC AND MARONITE TRADITIONS

Sebastian P. BROCK, Dated Syriac Manuscripts Copied at Deir al-Surian . .	355
Maroun-Nasser GEMAYEL, Copistes Maronites et manuscrits	373
George A. KIRAZ, Towards a Lexicon of Syriac Loanwords in Christian Arabic	383
Emidio VERGANI, La Miscellanea Assemani della Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Due <i>mēmṛē Sulla fede</i> (il primo intestato a Efrem)	395
Martin TAMCKE, Ephraem und die Lutheraner	419
Kees den BIESEN, The Irresistible Love of God. Two Syrian Church Fathers on universal salvation in Christ	437
William TOMA, The Presence of Images in the Church of the East	449
Élie KHALIFÉ-HACHEM, La lecture de l'Écriture Sainte dans le monachisme syriaque	471
Jean-Paul DESCHLER, Aus dem Mimro IX Jakobs von Serug über die Taufe. Übertragung in deutsche Zwölfsilber	485
Željko PAŠA, Martyrdom of Babowai the Catholicos and Patriarch, and the Confession of the Faith of Barṣawma of Nisibis. Critical Edition and Translation	499
Bishara EBEID, La Chiesa giacobita tra politica imperiale e preservazione dottrinale. La formazione di una identità "nazionale"	527
M. MOUBARAKAH, Contribution du Patriarche maronite Étienne Douaïhy à une controverse française entre catholiques et calvinistes (1673)	547

DIALOGUE AND ISLAMO-CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER

Jean-Louis Card. TAURAN, Il dialogo interreligioso: Una sfida, o un'occasione da cogliere?	563
Gabriel Said REYNOLDS, God Has Spoken Before: On the Recitation of the Bible in Islamic Ritual Prayer	573
Rocio DAGA PORTILLO, Sunna, Nāmūs and Shari'a: A Christian-Muslim Debate in the First Centuries of Islam	593
Mariam DE GHANTUZ CUBBE, Scontro o incontro fra Islam e Cristianesimo? Il caso di una conversione al Cristianesimo nell'Aleppo del XVII secolo . .	611

PHILOSOPHY

Cristina D'ANCONA, <i>Eudaimonia</i> aristotelica e dottrina neoplatonica dell'anima agli inizi della filosofia araba	621
Emilio PLATTI, O.P., Les "Logiciens <i>al-Mantiqiyūn</i> ", le particulier et l'universel	643
Peter STARR, Ishāq ibn Ḥunayn's Version of Περὶ φύσεως ἀνθρώπου: A 'Balance of Alternatives' in Translating <i>ἑαυτοῦ</i>	659

MISCELLANEOUS THEMES

Philippe LUISIER, La tétrarchie patriarcale d'après les sources orientales de tradition antiochienne et alexandrine et les témoignages byzantins . . .	669
Pino DI LUCCIO, L'acqua in tradizioni religiose del Mediterraneo	687
Jad HATEM, Thérèse d'Avila et la sixième demande du Pater	703
Hubert KAUFHOLD, Georg Grafs römische Kontakte	709
Paola PIZZO, Padre Henry Habib Ayrouth, S.J. (1907-1969). Precursore degli studi sociali e religiosi in Egitto	723

INDEXES

Index of Scripture References	739
Index of Quranic References	743
Index of Personal Names	745
Index of Subjects	765
Index of Works	777
Index of Geographical Names	787
Index of Manuscripts	793

GABRIEL SAID REYNOLDS

GOD HAS SPOKEN BEFORE: ON THE RECITATION OF THE BIBLE IN ISLAMIC RITUAL PRAYER¹

Abstract: This study considers the position of the Ḥanafī jurist Abū Bakr b. Mas'ūd al-Kāsānī (d. 587/1191) regarding the permissibility of reciting from the Bible in Islamic ritual prayer. This position distinguishes Kāsānī among Muslim jurists, including those from his own *madhhab*. Although Kāsānī claims the authority of Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) for this position, there is no evidence to this effect. Indeed both Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) and al-Shaybānī (d. 189/804-5) are remembered as opposing this position. For Kāsānī, I argue, the permissibility of recitation from the Bible in ritual prayer follows necessarily from his distinctive understanding of the term *qur'ān*. Kāsānī, like Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī (d. c. 483/1090) before him and 'Uthmān b. 'Alī al-Zayla'ī (d. 745/1342-43) after him, holds that the Qur'ān declares earlier revelation also to be "*qur'ān*." Only Kāsānī, however, concludes therefrom that the requirement of reciting "*qur'ān*" in ritual prayer can be met by reciting from the Bible, as long as one is able to identify Biblical passages which are free from any falsification.

Keywords: Qur'an, Bible, Prayer, *fiqh*, Kāsānī, revelation, *ṣalāt*, Muslim-Christian relations, Persian

It is difficult to do justice to the academic and pastoral career of Samir Khalil Samir, SJ. His work has shaped a number of fields, including not only Christian Arabic Studies but also Islamic Studies, Muslim-Christian relations, and Arabic philology. Moreover, for decades Fr. Samir has been a leading voice in Christian-Muslim dialogue, illustrating how theological rigor can be put to the service of the Church and society.

Among Fr. Samir's scholarly works are those which address the Muslim approach to the Bible and Christianity generally. For example, Fr. Samir has published a study, and a partial edition, of the dialogue between Elias of Nisibis (d. 1046) and the vizier Abū l-Qāsim al-Maghribī,² an edition, translation, and study (with Paul Nwyia) of the treatises exchanged between Abū 'Isā Ibn al-Munajjim (d. 275/888), Ḥunayn b. Ishāq (d. 873), and Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (d. 912),³ edited the text of the Arabic version of Timothy I's

¹ I am greatly indebted to Christopher Melchert for his comments on an earlier version of this article. All errors are my own.

² SAMIR, "Entretien d'Elie de Nisibe avec le vizir Ibn 'Alī al-Maghribī, sur l'Unité et la Trinité," 31-117. Also available in ID., *Foi et culture en Irak au XI^e siècle : Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam*, (article VII).

³ SAMIR, *Une correspondance islamo-chrétienne entre ibn al-Munajjim, Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq et Qusṭā ibn Lūqā*.

(d. 823) dialogue with the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 158/775-169/785),⁴ and edited the text of ‘Abd al-Jabbār’s (d. 415/1025) *Critique of Christian Origins*.⁵ The following study, which addresses a controversy among Muslim jurists having to do with the Bible, is meant as a tribute to this element of Fr. Samir’s work.

Abū Bakr b. Mas‘ūd al-Kāsānī

In his detailed work on the translation of the Qur’ān in Islamic thought and tradition, Travis Zadeh mentions how the Ḥanafī jurist Abū Bakr b. Mas‘ūd al-Kāsānī (d. 587/1191) held that the “Torah” and the “Gospels” might be validly recited during ritual prayer, “as long as one can attest that the meanings of these revealed books are not in any way distortions of the original revelation.”⁶ In fact, Kāsānī speaks only of the Gospel (*injīl*) and not “Gospels” (*anājīl*) and he also mentions the *zabūr*, a scripture associated with David in the Qur’ān and often assumed to correspond to the Psalms.

Kāsānī’s opinion on the possibility of reciting from the Bible in ritual prayer is exceptional among Muslim jurists, even jurists in his own Ḥanafī *madhhab*. In the present article I will argue that Kāsānī is led to this exceptional opinion not by anything approaching theological pluralism, but rather by a certain understanding of divine speech and the history of revelation. Kāsānī’s understanding, which is taught by at least one later Ḥanafī jurist, namely ‘Uthmān b. ‘Alī al-Zayla‘ī (d. 745/1342-43) and anticipated by another, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī (d. c. 483/1090), involves a distinct understanding of what the Qur’ān means when it speaks of *qur’ān*. The appearance of the term *qur’ān* in the Islamic scripture is usually taken as a meta-textual reference to Muḥammad’s own revelation. Sarakhsī, Kāsānī, and Zayla‘ī, however, have a broader understanding of this term. They all hold that earlier, pre-Muḥammadan, scriptures are also “*qur’ān*.” Only Kāsānī, however, concludes accordingly that these scriptures might be validly recited during Islamic ritual prayer.

Kāsānī, who was adorned with the *laqab* “king of scholars” (*malik al-‘ulamā*) is so named because of his family’s origins in Kāsān, in the Farghāna valley of Central Asia (modern day Uzbekistan). He was the disciple of the Ḥanafī jurist (and author of the *Tuḥfat al-fuqahā*), ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 539/1144).⁷ In his biographical dictionary on the city of

⁴ This text is found in PUTMAN, *L’Église et l’Islam sous Timothée 1*, Arabic pages 7-57.

⁵ ‘ABD AL-JABBĀR, *The Critique of Christian Origins*.

⁶ ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur’an*, 115.

⁷ On Kāsānī see the brief entry in *EI*², vol. 4, 690.

Aleppo known as *Bughyat al-ṭalab*, Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262) notes that Kāsānī married Fāṭima the daughter of Samarqandī, a woman who was herself known to be a jurist and a scholar (*al-faqīha al-ʿālima*).⁸ As for Kāsānī, Ibn al-ʿAdīm emphasizes his polemics against the Muʿtazila. He writes that Kāsānī was “a knowledgeable jurist with correct faith, someone who greatly criticized the Muʿtazila and the innovators. He derided and cursed them in his studies.”⁹

Kāsānī’s opinion regarding the possibility of reciting scriptures other than the Qur’an appears in the chapter on ritual prayer (*Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*) of his major work on Ḥanafī *fiqh* entitled *Kitāb Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ fi tartīb al-sharāʾiʿ*, in a section entitled *Fasl fi bayān arkān al-ṣalāt*.¹⁰ After discussing at some length the question of whether different elements of Islamic ritual prayer (including the recitation of passages from the Qur’an itself) might be performed in Persian (as opposed to Arabic) he turns to the question of non-Qur’anic scriptures. Kāsānī writes:

If something from the *tawrāt*, the *injīl*, or the *zabūr* is read in ritual prayer, and if it is certain that it has not been falsified (*innahu ḡhayru muḥarrafīn*), this is considered licit by Abū Ḥanīfa for the reasons that we have stated. If one is not certain then it is not licit. For God Most High has reported their falsification with His statement, “They falsify words from their meanings” (*yuḥariffūna al-kalīma ʿan mawāḍiʿihi*).¹¹ Thus it is possible that what is recited would be falsified and therefore merely human speech. It is not with doubt and possibility that one can legislate the permissibility [of an act].¹²

The question of what might be recited in ritual prayer is not specified by the Qur’ān itself and accordingly became an important, and much discussed, question among jurists. A general consensus emerged that ritual prayer is to consist of certain non-Qur’anic declarations which are held to have been taught by the Prophet Muḥammad himself to his companions, along with the recitation of certain short passages of the Qur’an. However, the selection of those passages, and the length of passages one is to select, were open questions which jurists continued to debate. Most held that whereas the worshipper is obligated to recite the first Sura of the Qur’an at different moments, a certain freedom is allowed to choose

⁸ IBN AL-ʿADĪM, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fi tārikh Ḥalab*, 10:4348. Later in his entry Ibn al-ʿAdīm adds, “It is possible that at times the *shaykh* would be mistaken in his opinion. She would reproach him for that mistake and remind him of the right teaching and he would have recourse to her statement.” Ibid: 10:4348.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ AL-KĀSĀNĪ, *Kitāb Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ fi tartīb al-sharāʾiʿ*, 1:501-535.

¹¹ Droge renders this phrase, “alter words from their positions.” Cf. Q 2:75; 5:13, 41.

¹² AL-KĀSĀNĪ, *Kitāb Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ fi tartīb al-sharāʾiʿ*, 1:531.

other short Suras, one long verse, or a series of short verses of the Qur'an to complete one's recitation. What Kāsānī is arguing — and attributing to Abū Ḥanīfa — is that passages from the Bible (or rather from the *tawrāt*, *injīl*, or *zabūr*) might (theoretically at least) also be chosen. I will describe below how the logic of his argument unfolds.

On Pre-Qur'ānic Revelation

Before doing so, however, I find it important to add a comment regarding the terms which Kāsānī uses for these scriptures. Indeed it is noteworthy that he does not refer to the Bible, or to any division of the Bible that Jews or Christians might recognize (say, the “Book of Genesis” or “the Prophets” or “the New Testament”). Instead he refers only to the *tawrāt*, *injīl*, or *zabūr*, the Qur'anic terms for scriptures given to earlier prophets. As the following discussion will hopefully make clear, Kāsānī is not simply using Qur'anic terminology because he is unfamiliar with the ways in which Jews and Christians refer to their scripture (although that might of course also be the case) but principally because he means to make a point about Qur'anic teaching on earlier revelations.

The Qur'an refers to *al-tawrāt* (Q 3:3, 48, 50, 65, 93; 5:43-46, 66, 68, 110, *passim*), traditionally considered to be a scripture given to Moses,¹³ *al-injīl* (Q 3:3, 48, 65; 5:46, 47, 66, 68, 110; 9:111; 48:29; 57:27), which it associates with Jesus,¹⁴ and *al-zabūr* (4:163; 17:55; 21:105), which it associates with David.¹⁵ All of these books, according to the Qur'an, were revealed by God.

¹³ The Qur'an never explicitly declares that *al-tawrāt* was revealed to Moses. This connection is made by Islamic tradition, and also by critical scholars, who note that *al-tawrāt* is ultimately derived from Hebrew *tōrah*. The Qur'an does make it clear that it is the scripture of the Israelites. This much is seen in Q 3:93: “All food was permitted to the Sons of Israel, except for what Israel forbade himself before the Torah was sent down. Say: ‘Bring the Torah and read it, if you are truthful.’” The Qur'an is cited according to the translation of Droge, unless specified otherwise.

¹⁴ “And in their footsteps We followed up with Jesus, son of Mary, confirming what was with him of the Torah, and We gave him the Gospel, containing guidance and light, and confirming what was with him of the Torah, and as guidance and admonition to the ones who guard (themselves).” Q 5:46. Arabic *injīl* is derived ultimately from Greek *euangélion*, perhaps through Ethiopic *wāngel*. See JEFFERY, *Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an*, 71-72.

¹⁵ In Q 4:163 and Q 17:55 the Qur'an declares, “We gave David (the) Psalms (*al-zabūr*).” The plural *zabur* also appears in the Qur'an (3:184; 16:44; 23:53; 26:196; 32:25; 54:43, 52). In certain passages *zabur* seems to mean something closer to “scriptures” or even “record books” (note in particular Q 16:44; 25:53; 26:196; 54:43, 52). *Al-zabūr* is often thought to be derived ultimately from Hebrew *mizmōr* (see the opinion of AMBROS, *A Concise Dictionary of Koranic Arabic*, 314). However, the plural form *zabur*, especially where it refers generally to “scriptures” or “books” is likely related to the term for an Ancient South Arabian cursive script (used for writing on small pieces of wood) known as *zabūr* (meaning here “writing” and not

Early Muslim scholars, aware of the Qur'ān's teaching in this regard, accordingly came to the conclusion that proper Muslim faith involves faith not only in the Qur'an but in all of the books which God has revealed.¹⁶ However, this declaration of faith in earlier books does not have many practical consequences. As a rule Muslim scholars consider those books not to have been faithfully preserved.

In fact there is no one clear Islamic doctrine on the fate of these earlier, "pre-Muḥammadan" scriptures. One is to "believe" in them but are they still to be found somewhere? Can they still be read and be instructive to the faith and practice of Muslims? And how are Muslims to consider the scriptures which Jews and Christians read? Most Muslim scholars came to the conclusion that the "pre-Muḥammadan" scriptures mentioned in the Qur'ān cannot be identified with the Bible. This conclusion is suggested by those Qur'anic passages (one of which is quoted by Kāsānī in the citation above) which seem to imply that the Jews, and maybe the Christians too, have falsified God's word. In numerous passages the Qur'an speaks of those who "cover up,"¹⁷ "conceal,"¹⁸ or "exchange"¹⁹ revelation, write words with their own hands which they claim to come from God,²⁰ "twist their tongues,"²¹ falsify words from their places,²² forget some of the revelation,²³ and hide the truth.²⁴ As I have argued elsewhere, almost all of these references involve accusations against the Jews in particular.²⁵ Despite this, Muslim scholars came to the conclusion that both the Jewish *and* the Christian

"Psalm" — it is distinct from the monumental script known as *musnad*). See RYCKMANS – ABDALLAH – MÜLLER, *Textes du Yémen antique inscrits sur bois*.

¹⁶ This teaching is most famously articulated in the hadith "of Gabriel" in which the angel Gabriel (disguised as a figure with black hair in white clothes) asks the Prophet Muḥammad about faith (*īmān*), and Muḥammad replies that one must have faith in God, His angels, His Books, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and the predetermination of good and evil. See (in its classical form) MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1, "Kitāb al-Īmān," 1:146. See WENSINCK – RAVEN – WITKAM, *Concordances et indices de la tradition musulmane*, 5:317b.

¹⁷ *Talbisū*, Q 2:42; 3:71.

¹⁸ *Taktumū*, Q 2:42, 140, 146, 159, 174; 3:71, 187.

¹⁹ *Baddalū*, Q 2:59; 7:162.

²⁰ Q 2:79.

²¹ Q 3:78; 4:46.

²² As quoted above: Q 2:75; 4:46; 5:13, 41.

²³ Q 5:13, 14; 7:53, 165.

²⁴ *Tukhfūna* Q 5:15.

²⁵ On the Islamic idea of the falsification of divine revelation see: SCHAFFNER, "The Bible through a Qur'anic Filter: Scripture Falsification (*Taḥrīf*) in 8th- and 9th-Century Muslim Disputational Literature"; NICKEL, *Narratives of Tampering in the Earliest Commentaries on the Qur'ān*; REYNOLDS, "On the Qur'anic Accusation of Scriptural Falsification (*taḥrīf*) and Christian anti-Jewish Polemic," 189-202; GAUDEUL – CASPAR, "Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le tahrīf (falsification) des écritures."

Bible are falsified. Indeed there was comparatively more attention paid in the medieval Islamic world (and still today!) to polemics against supposed Christian falsification, something which is understandable in light of the greater numbers of Christians in the Islamic world.

It is important to add here that certain Muslim scholars also developed a notion that the Bible is not falsified in regard to its text (*tahṛīf al-naṣṣ*) but principally in regard to its interpretation (*tahṛīf al-ma'nā*). As a rule, however, those who developed the idea that only the interpretation of the Bible had been falsified did so for the sake of argument.²⁶ This idea allowed them selectively to quote passages of the Bible which — as they saw it — agreed with Islamic teaching or to look for predictions of Muhammad in response to certain Qur'anic verses (especially Q 7:157 and 61:6). Perhaps the clearest example of this position is a treatise attributed to Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) in which the author seeks to argue that a proper reading of the Gospels affirms Islamic theology.²⁷ Most polemical treatises, however, worked from the premise — in response to Qur'anic material which we have mentioned above — that the Bible is textually falsified.

Some Muslim scholars came to the conclusion that the Bible is falsified not only on the basis of Qur'anic declarations, but also by virtue of their analysis of the Bible. The Qur'anic references to the *tawrāt*, *injīl*, and *zabūr* suggest that these books should be something like the Qur'ān, that is, collections of divine declarations to a prophet or his community. In literary terms, however, neither the Hebrew Bible nor the New Testament resemble the Qur'ān. This was not lost on those Muslim scholars who took the trouble to read the Bible. 'Abd al-Jabbār, for example, insists that any "rational person" who reads the Gospels will realize that they are inauthentic:

Know — May God have mercy on you — that these three Christian sects do not believe that God sent down to Christ the *Injīl*, or a book of any kind. Rather, according to them Christ created the prophets and sent down to them the Books and sent down to them the angels. They only have four Gospels from four individuals. Each one of them wrote his Gospel in his era. Then another came after him and was not pleased with the [previous] Gospel, [holding] his own Gospel to be more proper. [The Gospels] agree in some passages but differ in other passages. In some of them are things not found in others. They are made up of

²⁶ See further my comments in: REYNOLDS "On the Qur'anic Accusation of Scriptural Falsification," 189-190. SCHAFFNER ("The Bible through a Qur'anic Filter") shows that the accusation of textual corruption (*tahṛīf al-naṣṣ*) was the principal teaching of Muslim scholars from the early period.

²⁷ See most recently the edition, translation and introduction to the work of Pseudo-Ghazālī: BEAUMONT – EL KAISY-FRIEMUTH, *Al-Radd al-jamīl*. See also AL-GHAZĀLĪ, *Réfutation excellente de la divinité de Jésus-Christ d'après les évangiles*, Ed. And Trans. Chidiac. It has also appeared in a German translation as *Al-Ghazālīs Schrift wider die Gottheit Jesu*, trans. Wilms.

anecdotes about groups of men and women from the Jews, Romans, and others, that they did this and said that. Yet there are many impossibilities, falsehoods, absurdities, manifest lies, and clear contradictions in them, which people have sought out and catalogued in detail. Any rational person who reads them will recognize them. There is a little in them of the speech of Christ, his commandments, and his works.²⁸

That Muslims found the Bible unsatisfying is also testified by the appearance in Islamic literature of works which claim to contain the “true” *zabūr* or Psalms of David. These “Islamic” psalms, which have been studied in detail by David Vishanoff, were meant to represent what God had truly revealed to David. Notably, they have little in common with the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible.²⁹ As Vishanoff has shown these texts are best understood as works composed intentionally in the style of the Qur’an, but presented as though they were the *zabūr* of David.

Despite all of this there is some indication that Muslim scholars nevertheless had recourse to the Bible. One sign that Muslims were indeed reading and referring to the Bible is the circulation of a hadith which warns them not to do so:

O community of Muslims, how is it that you seek wisdom from the People of the Book? Your book, brought down upon His Prophet — blessings and peace of God upon him — is the latest report about God. You read a Book that has not been distorted, but the People of the Book, as God related to you, exchanged that which God wrote [for something else], changing the book with their hands.³⁰

The appearance of this hadith did not discourage entirely Muslim scholars from having recourse to the Bible. Throughout the classical period of Islam scholars turned to the Bible in both historical and exegetical writings. Joseph Witztum argues, on the basis of citations from Abū Ja’far al-Ṭabarī, that Ibn Ishāq referred to an Arabic translation of the Peshitta in the 2nd/8th century in the composition of his biography of the Prophet.³¹ Of course, he does so tellingly in order to make a case that elements of the

²⁸ ‘ABD AL-JABBĀR, *The Critique of Christian Origins*, 96-97.

²⁹ See VISHANOFF, “An Imagined Book Gets a New Text,” 85-99; Id., “Islamic Psalms of David,” 85-99.

³⁰ AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Saḥīḥ*, “Kitāb al-Shahādāt,” 29, 2:182. The last line is an allusion to Q 2:79. Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) reports that the Prophet once found ‘Umar reading a leaf of the Torah. At this Muḥammad “got so angry that his anger showed in his face. He said: ‘Did I not bring it to you white and clean? By God, if Moses were alive, he would have no choice but to follow me.’” IBN KHALDŪN, *The Muqaddimah*, 2:438-439. On this see tradition see also GOLDZICHER, “Über muhammedanische Polemik gegen ahl al-kitāb,” 345.

³¹ See WITZTUM, “Ibn Ishāq and the Pentateuch in Arabic,” 1-71. See also VOLLANDT, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, especially chapter 3.

Bible (namely the allusions to the coming of a “paraclete” in the Gospel of John) contain predictions of the Prophet Muḥammad. Early medieval scholars such as al-Ya‘qūbī (d. 292/897), who includes a lengthy section recounting the life of Paul on the basis of the Acts of the Apostles, al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345/956), and Ismā‘īlī scholars including Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/934) quote significant material from the Bible. In a famous debate paraphrased in a treatise known as *A‘lām al-nubuwwa*, Abū Ḥātim responds to the critiques of the philosopher and religious skeptic Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Rāzī (d. 313/925), someone who argued *tout court* against any claim of revelation, and argues that the scriptures of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims all preserve revealed knowledge.³² Later scholars, including al-Ṭūfī (d. 716/1316) and al-Biqā‘ī (d. 885/1480), also had recourse to the Bible in their scholarship.³³ Biqā‘ī dedicated a work to the argument that it is licit for a Muslim to do so.

Divine Revelation and the Arabic Language

All of this suggests that many Muslim scholars believed that the Bible still holds something of God’s word — even those who are only interested in the Bible to find prooftexts for their claims about Muḥammad or Islam more generally. From this perspective we can appreciate the opinion of Kāsānī regarding the use of the Bible in ritual prayer. His perspective shares something with that of scholars such as Ya‘qūbī and Biqā‘ī who cite the Bible in their historical and exegetical works. In each case it is assumed that the Bible is at least in part reliable or authentic. If one is able to triage the text then its authentic elements might be validly cited or even — according to Kāsānī — recited in ritual prayer.

However, the opinion of Kāsānī in this regard is decidedly not the stan-

³² See the edition and translation of Tarif Khalidi: Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *The Proofs of Prophecy*. See also KRAUS, “Extraits du *kitāb a‘lām al-nubuwwa* d’Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī,” 35-56, 358-378. Summarizing Abū Bakr’s thought Khalidi writes, “He takes no trouble whatever to hide his utter contempt for *all* religions and prophets, describing their basic creeds as myths and superstitions and attacking religious scholars for their irrational and ludicrous beliefs that serve only to increase enmity among mankind.” Introduction, xvii. Khalidi also notes the extensive quotations of the Old and New Testaments in Abū Ḥātim’s work and writes, “It may well be that this density and variety of citations is among the very highest to be found in any premodern Islamic text. The translations are uniformly of a high order of accuracy.” Introduction, xxi. Notably, Abū Ḥātim does not cite the Bible only in order to argue against its authenticity, or to find prooftexts for claims regarding Muḥammad’s prophecy (although he does some of the latter), but also to defend the notions of prophecy and revelation generally. Indeed he takes up the defense of the Bible against the attacks of Abū Bakr.

³³ DEJMIRI, *Muslim Exegesis of the Bible in Medieval Cairo*. For al-Biqā‘ī’s treatise on the legitimacy of citing the Bible in certain contexts see SALEH, *In Defense of the Bible: a Critical Edition and an Introduction to al-Biqā‘ī’s Bible Treatise*.

dard conclusion of jurists. Indeed while Kāsānī insists that his opinion has the authority of Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) himself, it is not clear on what basis he makes this assertion. As Zadeh notes, both Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798) and al-Shaybānī (d. 189/804-5) — our principal sources for knowledge of the teachings of Abū Ḥanīfa — take a stand against this position. In the *Kitāb al-Aṣl*, a treatise attributed to Shaybānī on the authority of Ibn al-Nadīm (d. 385/995) — but which in fact is a later compilation of Ḥanafī jurisprudence, we find the following passage:

Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad [al-Shaybānī] said: If someone recites something from the Torah (*tawrāt*), the Gospel (*al-injīl*), or the Psalms (*al-zabūr*), regardless of whether or not he has mastery of the Qur'an, his prayer is not valid. For this is speech which is neither found in the Qur'an nor in the [established] formulas of praise (*tasbīḥ*).³⁴

Burhān al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-Marghīnānī al-Bukhārī (d. 616/1219-20) agrees with Abū Yūsuf and Shaybānī that it is never licit to recite from another scripture: "If a man reads something from the *tawrāt*, *injīl*, or *zabūr* in his ritual prayer, his ritual prayer is not valid, whether or not he has mastery of the Qur'an."³⁵

The attention in the citations above to the question of whether or not believers have mastery of the Qur'an reflects the contours of a parallel debate regarding ritual prayer, namely the question of whether passages of the Qur'an, or other formulas of praise, might be recited in a language other than Arabic. In most legal handbooks the conversation on this question concerns in particular the permissibility of prayer in Persian, something which reflects the abundance of Muslim Persian speakers in the eastern part of the medieval Islamic world (attested by the spread of early translations of the Qur'an into Persian).³⁶

As for the question of whether one might recite the Qur'an in Persian during ritual prayer Abū Yūsuf and Shaybānī — and after them the Ḥanafīs Sarakhsī and Burhān al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan al-Marghīnānī (d. 593/1196) — held that Persian is permissible only for believers who are not competent (*ajaza*) in Arabic.³⁷ For his part Sarakhsī compares this situation to one

³⁴ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *K. al-Aṣl*, ed. al-Afghānī, 1:236. I have only slightly modified the translation of Zadeh, p. 55. On the *Kitāb al-Aṣl*, also known as *al-Mabsūṭ* see CHAUMONT, "Al-Shaybānī," *EI*², 9:393a.

³⁵ AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Al-Muḥīṭ al-burhānī fī al-fiqh al-Nu'mānī*, ed. al-Jundī, 1:308.

³⁶ On this see ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, section two (pp. 253ff.).

³⁷ Kāsānī writes: "Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad [al-Shaybānī] said, 'If they have mastery (*in kāna yuḥṣin*) [of Arabic] then [recitation in Persian] is not permitted. If they do not have mastery it is permitted" (AL-KĀSĀNĪ, *Kitāb Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i' fī tartīb al-sharā'i'*, 1:527). Zadeh comments: "This is a position which is thoroughly rejected and often ridiculed by the other juridi-

who is physically incapable of performing bows or prostrations, and who therefore is allowed to pray with gestures (*bi-l-īmā'*).³⁸

This position diverged from that of Abū Ḥanīfa himself, who allowed for Persian in ritual prayer under any circumstance.³⁹ In any case, it is interesting to note that Shaybānī and Abū Yūsuf do not come to the same conclusion regarding non-Qur'anic scriptures. Recitation from the *tawrāt*, *injīl*, or *zabūr* is forbidden to even to those who do not have mastery of the Qur'an.⁴⁰

Those outside of the Ḥanafī school, with the notable exception of Twelver Shi'ites within the tradition known as Akhbārī, tended not to countenance at all the idea that the Qur'an could be recited in another language, let alone the idea that a scripture other than the Qur'an could be recited in ritual prayer. In his *Risāla* Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820) insists that every Muslim *must* learn Arabic for the sake of prayer:

It is obligatory upon every Muslim to learn the Arab tongue to the utmost of his power in order [to be able] to profess through it that "there is no God at all but God and Muḥammad is His servant and Apostle," and to recite in it [i.e., the Arabic tongue] the Book of God, and to utter in mentioning what is incumbent upon him... Whatever is addition of the language which God made to be the language of him [Muḥammad] by whom He sealed His prophethood and by whom

cal schools. It became a point of embarrassment for later Ḥanafīs, who tried to explain away what was viewed as Abū Ḥanīfa's incredible leniency on this issue. Unlike his disciples Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Shaybānī who believed that the use of translations should be restricted to those who had no command of the Arabic liturgy, Abū Ḥanīfa, the eponymous founder of the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence (*madhhab*), is said to have permitted anyone, regardless of their level of expertise in Arabic, to recite the Qur'an using a translation" (p. 54). See also AL-SARAKHSĪ, *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ*, 3:138. To make his point of the permissibility of reciting the Qur'an in Persian Sarakhsī refers (on the authority of Abū Ḥanīfa) to a tradition that the Prophet's companion Salmān al-Fārisī translated the first Sura of the Qur'an (*al-Fātiḥa*) into Persian and that the Persian speakers of his time would recite his Persian translation "until their tongues were adapted to Arabic." AL-SARAKHSĪ, *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ*, 1:138. See also AL-MARGHĪNĀNĪ, *al-Hidāyā sharḥ Bidāyat al-mubtadī*, 1:48-49. Marghīnānī agrees that while Abū Ḥanīfa considered prayer in Persian always valid, Shaybānī and Abū Yūsuf allowed it only for those unable to pray in Arabic. See also the English translation of his handbook: *al-Hidāyah: The Guidance*, trans. Nyazee, 1:111.

³⁸ AL-SARAKHSĪ, *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ*, 138.

³⁹ In *Kitāb al-Aṣl* Shaybānī relates the following exchange with Abū Ḥanīfa: "I said, 'Have you a judgement concerning a man who recites in Persian during ritual prayer and who has a command of Arabic?' He said: 'His prayer is valid.'" *Kitāb al-Aṣl*, 1:236. Quoted from ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 55.

⁴⁰ A natural question in light of this teaching is what believers who do not know Arabic are then to do for their prayer. Whereas the Ḥanafīs generally held that translations of the Qur'an might be used, Shāfi'ī argues that one might instead recite formulas of praise such as the *takbīr* (*allāhu akbar*) — but not the Qur'an — in one's own language as a "temporary substitution" as one learned Arabic. For this opinion see AL-SHĀFI'Ī, *Kitāb al-Umm*, 2:229-232. See also ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 76-77.

He revealed the last of His Books — is for his [man's] welfare, just as it is his [duty] to learn [how] to pray and recite the *dhikr* in it, to visit the [Sacred] House and perform its duties, to turn [in prayer] in the direction to which he should turn, and to be a follower [in the performance] of the duties imposed upon him or recommended to him, [rather] than to be followed.⁴¹

Scholars from the Mālikī school generally held that the Qur'an was inimitable in regard to its literary qualities. Accordingly any translation of the Qur'an ceases to be the inimitable Qur'an (and hence the word of God) and therefore cannot be recited in ritual prayer.⁴² In his *Mughnī*, the Ḥanbalī Ibn Qudāma (d. 620/1223) teaches that the Qur'an is inimitable *both* because of its *lafẓ* (articulation or linguistic form) and its meaning (*ma'nā*); if its linguistic form were to be altered, then it would cease to be the Qur'an and would, instead, become an exegesis (*tafsīr*) of it. This leads him to conclude that whoever does not know Arabic must learn it in order to perform the ritual prayer, which is part of a Muslim's religious obligation.⁴³

The Uṣūlī Shi'ite Al-Ṭūsī Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifa (d. 460/1067) holds that it is not permissible to recite a translation in prayer, and cites Shāfi'ī to this effect.⁴⁴ However, certain later Akhbārī Shi'ites were inclined to accept the permissibility of translating the Qur'an, as was Majlisi (d. 1110/1698).⁴⁵

It is precisely in a section of his handbook on the recitation of the Qur'an in Persian that Kāsānī arrives at his opinion regarding recitation from Biblical texts. In this section Kāsānī cites the opinion of Abū Ḥanifa that the *tasmiya*, or the *basmala* (the invocation "In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate") which opens Qur'anic Suras can be licitly recited in Persian whether or not the reciter has mastery of Arabic, and the opinion of Abū Yūsuf that this is licit only when the reciter does not have such mastery. He contrasts these views to that of Shāfi'ī (which we have noted) who insists that it is never licit, that whoever is unable to recite the

⁴¹ AL-SHĀFI'Ī, *Al-Shāfi'ī's Risala: Treatise on the Foundations of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 93, para. 62.

⁴² "The Mālikī school also generally rejected the use of anything other than the Arabic of the Qur'an during the performance of ritual prayer; a point that had already been advanced in the *Mudawwana* collection redacted by Ṣaḥnūn [d. 240/855]. This is the ruling which the Mālikī jurist of Baghdad, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), supports in his *Intiṣār li-l-Qur'ān*, where he asserts that it is not permissible to recite the Qur'an in Persian, as the inimitability of the Qur'an is located, above all, in its sublime literary eloquence." ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 124-125. For Bāqillānī see AL-BAQILLĀNĪ, *Intiṣār li-l-Qur'ān*, 1:20-21.

⁴³ ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 124. IBN QUDĀMA, *al-Mughnī*, 1:487.

⁴⁴ See AL-ṬŪSĪ, *Mabsūt*, 1:107. Ṭūsī cites Shāfi'ī to conclude that everyone must learn the Arabic liturgy. He refers to Q 12:2 ("Surely We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an") to argue that the Qur'an was temporally produced (*muḥdath*) in Arabic.

⁴⁵ AL-MAJLISĪ, *Bihār al-anwār*, 85:64-65. See ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 131

Arabic Qur'ān should use non-Qur'anic formulas of praise (and not recite the Qur'an in Persian).⁴⁶ Kāsānī then summarizes the argument of Shāfi'i:

They [the followers of Shāfi'i] say, "The Qur'ān was revealed in the language of the Arabs. God says, 'We revealed it as an Arabic *qur'ān* [Q 12:2].'" So the Persian is not "*qur'ān*" ...for the Qur'ān is inimitable and its inimitability (*i'jāz*) in terms of its articulation (*lafẓ*) disappears with the disappearance of the Arabic composition (*naẓm*). The Persian is not *qur'ān* because of the absence of inimitability."⁴⁷

In order to appreciate the contours of this discussion it is important to recognize the particular way in which Shāfi'i (as quoted by Kāsānī) employs the word "*qur'ān*." In this discussion he does not mean thereby the codex with its 114 Suras but rather divine speech more generally. This distinction will be important for understanding Kāsānī's own position.

After quoting Shāfi'i, Kāsānī then turns to the perspective of Abū Ḥanīfa. Like Shāfi'i, Abū Ḥanīfa has recourse to the Qur'an in elucidating his position:

Abū Ḥanīfa says, "The obligatory act in ritual prayer is to read the Qur'ān, inasmuch as its articulation indicates the speech of God, which is an attribute that coexists with Him (*ṣifatur qā'imatur bihi*) inasmuch as it comprises expression, exhortation, that which instills desire [for paradise] and fear [of hell], praise, and magnification, not inasmuch as it is an Arabic articulation. The essence of "indicating" does not differ between one articulation and another. God says, "Surely it is in the scriptures [*zūbur*] of those of old" (Q 26:196). He says, "Surely this is indeed in the former pages [*ṣuḥuf*], the pages of Abraham and Moses" (Q 87:18-19). Clearly 'it' was not in their books with this [Arabic] articulation but rather with this meaning."⁴⁸

The two passages which Abū Ḥanīfa quotes from the Qur'an are both meant to make the point that God's speech is found in earlier, pre-Qur'anic scriptures. This can be appreciated by seeing these passages in context. In

⁴⁶ "If he does not have mastery of Arabic then he should praise [God] and declare that there is no god but God (*yusabbihū wa-yuḥallilu*)." AL-KĀSĀNĪ, *Kitāb Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i' fi tartīb al-sharā'i'*, 1:527.

⁴⁷ Ibid. He also notes that Shāfi'i refers to Q 73:20 to defend his position: "So recite what is easy (for you) of the *qur'ān*" (*fa-gra' mā tayassara min al-qur'ān*; Q 73:20) which he interprets as a command to recite the Qur'ān in ritual prayer. Early Muslim scholars such as Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728), Ḍaḥḥāk, and Mujāhid all held that there are words from every language in the Qur'ān (See ZĀDEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 195). Shāfi'i, however, rejected this idea on the basis of the declarations in the Qur'an (e.g., Q 16:103; 26:195) that it is "pure Arabic" speech. See 75. This was also the position of the philologist Abū 'Ubayda (d. 209/824-4). See ZĀDEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 196.

⁴⁸ AL-KĀSĀNĪ, *Kitāb Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i' fi tartīb al-sharā'i'*, 1:527-528.

Sura 26 the Qur'an begins by referring to the revelation given to Muhammad as a revelation (*tanzīl*) and then continues (in the verse quoted by Abū Ḥanīfa) by identifying that *same* revelation with "scriptures of those of old":

Surely it is indeed a sending down from the Lord of the worlds. The trustworthy spirit has brought it down on your heart, so that you may be one of the warners, in a clear Arabic language. Surely it is indeed in the scriptures of old (Q 26:192-196).

In Sura 87 the Qur'an declares that "this" (*hādhā*) — that is, the revelation being given to the Prophet Muḥammad — is also in the former "pages." Both passages, in other words, suggest that the *same* revelation now given to Muḥammad was given to earlier prophets. Although Abū Ḥanīfa does not say so explicitly, it is clear from what follows that he assumes those other scriptures were *not* in Arabic.

Linguistic Expressions of God's Word

As this discussion continues, Kāsānī addresses directly the arguments brought forward by Shāfi'ī, and even questions his exegesis:

The Arabic nature (*kawn*) of the Qur'an does not negate that other [scriptures] could also be a *qur'ān*. There is nothing in the verse ["We revealed it as an Arabic *qur'ān*;" Q 12:2] which negates this. The Arabic is called a "*qur'ān*" because it indicates what is *qur'ān* and that is the attribute which is the very essence of speech (*ḥaqīqatu l-kalām*). For this reason we said, "Indeed the Qur'an is not created," that is with reference to that attribute and not to the Arabic expressions (*ibārāt*), and the meaning of the indication is found [also] in Persian. So it is licit to name [a scripture not in Arabic] *qur'ān* as is indicated in His statement, "If we had made it a foreign *qur'ān*" [Q 41:44]. Thus he communicated that if He were to express it in a foreign tongue it would be a *qur'ān*.⁴⁹

The key to understanding Kāsānī's response to Shāfi'ī's position is the word *qur'ān*. While at times he uses this word to indicate the book (the Qur'an) as we know it with its 114 Suras, here he also employs *qur'ān* in a more general sense (discussed above in regard to the quotation of Shāfi'ī) to refer to any true divine revelation. The revelation in the "scriptures of those of old" (Q 26:196) is *qur'ān*. The revelation in the *ṣuḥuf* of Abraham and Moses (Q 87:18-19) is *qur'ān*. It follows naturally that the revelations of the *tawrāt*, *injīl*, and *zabūr* would be *qur'ān* as well. And if they are "*qur'ān*"

⁴⁹ AL-KĀSĀNĪ, *Kitāb Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i' fi tartīb al-sharā'i'*, 1:529-531.

then they can be recited as *qur'ān* during Islamic ritual prayer.⁵⁰ The only complication is the Islamic teaching of *taḥrīf*. Since the scriptures of the Jews and the Christians are considered to be falsified versions of these original revelations, one must take care to identify therein those passages which have been spared from the process of falsification.

Kāsānī is not alone in his understanding of the term “*qur'ān*.” It is anticipated by Sarakhsī who refers to Q 26:196 while making the point explicitly that the “scriptures of old” were *qur'ān* although they were not in Arabic:

What is obligatory for the [worshipper] is what is inimitable and inimitability is found in meaning. The Qur'ān is a sufficient proof for all people and if Persians are unable to perform this [in Arabic] they should bring [it] forth in their own tongue. The Qur'ān is the word of God Most High, not created and not produced (*muḥdath*) and all languages are produced. We know that it is not permissible for it to be said that it is *qur'ān* [only] in one specific language because He (Most High) said, “It is in the scriptures of those of old” (Q 26:196) and it was in their tongue.⁵¹

A later Ḥanafī scholar by the name of ‘Uthmān b. ‘Alī al-Zayla‘ī (745/1342-43), alluding to a number of Qur’anic passages which we have already encountered, comes to a similar position. Zayla‘ī first notes, in the context of a discussion of the permissibility of reciting the Qur’an in Persian, the opinion of Abū Yūsuf and Shaybānī that the term *qur'ān* should be reserved for Arabic scripture. He then continues by noting the contrary opinion of Abū Ḥanīfa:

Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad [al-Shaybānī] said: “[Recitation of the Qur’an in other languages] is not permitted for one who can pronounce Arabic well because ‘*al-qur'ān*’ is a name for an Arabic composition (*ism li-manẓūm ‘arabī*), according to His — most high — statement, ‘We have made it an Arabic Qur’ān’ (Q 43:3) and He — most high — said, ‘Surely We have made it an Arabic Qur’ān’ (Q 12:2) meaning its composition (*naẓmuhu*).”

And for Abū Ḥanīfa’s [argument] is His — most high — statement, “It is in the scriptures [*zūbur*] of those of old” (Q 26:196) although it was not in them with the same composition [*naẓm*], and His — most high — statement, “Surely this is indeed in the former pages [*ṣuḥuf*], the pages of Abraham and Moses” (Q 87:18-19). The pages of Abraham were in Syriac and the pages of Moses were in

⁵⁰ Zadeh expresses this point differently, writing: “The fundamental unity of the Qur’anic revelation with all other revealed scriptures is, according to Kāsānī, the basis for the juridical acceptance of the use of the Torah and Gospels during ritual prayer.” ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur’an*, 115.

⁵¹ AL-SARAKHSĪ, *Kitāb al-Mabsūṭ*, 3:138. His position is summarized by ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur’an*, p. 114.

Hebrew and this [Q 87:18-19] indicates their nature as “*qur’ān*.” What the two of them [Abū Yūsuf and Shaybānī] related does not negate that something which is not in Arabic could be *qur’ān* because this is not mentioned [*maskūt ‘anhu*]. The correct view [of Abū Ḥanīfa] is that [recitation] is permitted in any language, not only Persian, because what was revealed is the meaning according to him and that does not differ with the difference of languages.⁵²

Now Zayla’ī does not deduce therefrom that prayer from pre-Muḥammadan scriptures (*tawrāt, injīl, zabūr*) is licit. Nevertheless (and whether or not Zayla’ī was aware of Kāsānī’s argument), we can see that this broader understanding of “*qur’ān*” is not unique to our jurist but was transmitted among Ḥanafī scholars.

In the midst of Kāsānī’s response to Shāfi’ī (quoted above) we find an interesting note which connects his teaching to another doctrinal issue. Kāsānī writes: “For this reason we said, ‘Indeed the Qur’ān is not created (*makhlūq*),’ referring to that attribute without the Arabic expressions.” He means thereby to argue that the doctrine of the uncreated Qur’ān (a doctrine accepted also by the Shāfi’ī *madhhab* — it was contested only by the Mu’tazila and some Shi’ites) leads one naturally to his position on what constitutes *qur’ān*. God’s speech, Kāsānī holds, transcends any particular articulation (*lafẓ*) including that of the Arabic Qur’ān (the articulation being *muhdath*, or produced). God’s speech is an eternal attribute which co-exists with God, as Kāsānī puts it. He seems to understand this question in a manner close to that of Ash’arī (d. 324/935-936) and Ibn Kullāb (d. ca. 241/855) before him who distinguished between God’s eternal speech (*kalām nafsi*) and the “expression” (*ibāra*) of that speech in the Arabic Qur’ān (*kalām lafẓī*).⁵³

Kāsānī implies that Shāfi’ī’s position, which would limit *qur’ān* to the Arabic Qur’ān, would also imply that God’s eternal speech is Arabic, a position which was generally not held by those in the theological orbit of the Ash’ariyya.⁵⁴ Thus in the articulation of his argument Kāsānī is interested in a larger debate on language, and languages, and the Qur’an. When Kāsānī declares that God’s speech is an attribute that co-exists with him

⁵² AL-ZAYLA’Ī, *Tabyīn al-ḥaqā’iq*, 1:288.

⁵³ “The command of God was transferred to humankind through a reflection or expression (*ibāra*) of divine undifferentiated speech.” This involved distinguishing between *kalām nafsi*, “eternal and an essential quality of God” and *kalām lafẓī*, “a temporal expression from God.” ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur’an*, 186. Zadeh refers to Ash’arī, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn in Die dogmatischen Lehren der Anhänger des Islam*, 2:584-585.

⁵⁴ Zadeh summarizes Ash’arī’s position vis-à-vis the Ḥanbalis “The written and recited words of the Qur’an represented the speech of God only figuratively (*majāzan*) and not veritably (*ḥaqīqatan*).” Zadeh comments, “As God’s *kalām* is eternal, humankind can only apprehend it through a temporal form.” ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur’an*, 186.

(*qā'imatun bihi*) he is signaling a certain teaching regarding the speech of God, namely that it is not marked by letters and sounds.

To Kāsānī the Arabic text of the Qur'an is an articulation of divine speech in human language or, to use the term of the early theologian Ibn Kullāb, an expression (*ibāra*) of divine speech. This led Ibn Kullāb to argue the position that would later be held by Kāsānī, namely that God's speech cannot be limited to any particular language. It "appears in the linguistic form (*rasm*) of Arabic or Hebrew as an expression (*ibāra*) of a divine undifferentiated totality."⁵⁵

Thus Kāsānī's position on the recitation of Jewish or Christian scriptures in Islamic ritual prayer is closely connected to a larger debate in Islamic jurisprudence and theology regarding the nature of God's word. This debate turns on the interpretation of certain key verses of the Qur'an, including not only Q 26:196 and Q 87:18-19 (quoted above) but also Q 41:44 (cited in the passage above): "If we had made it a foreign *qur'an*, they would have said, 'Why are its signs not made distinct? Foreign and Arabic?'" Kāsānī cites this verse to make the point that God can reveal "a *qur'an*" in any language.⁵⁶ This debate is connected to the question of the uncreated nature of the Qur'an (or *qur'an*), a question which became a shibboleth of orthodoxy in Sunni circles.⁵⁷ Kāsānī, as we noted above, had a reputation as a nemesis of the Mu'tazila and this theological disposition might have shaped his position regarding what constitutes *qur'an*.

It is possible, of course, that Kāsānī had (or also had) certain concerns which we might call "pastoral" or "missionary." Perhaps he was concerned with the integration of new converts to Islam, or with clearing any obstacles which might impede a Jew or Christian from converting to Islam. Perhaps he thought that the prospect of reciting the Biblical text in Syriac or Hebrew (as opposed to an unfamiliar Qur'anic text in Arabic) would lead more Jews and Christians to convert to Islam.

Nevertheless it is clear that Kāsānī's concerns were principally doctri-

⁵⁵ ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 186.

⁵⁶ AL-KĀSĀNĪ, *Kitāb Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i' fi tartīb al-sharā'i'*, 1:531. See ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an*, 109. The term in this verse for "foreign" is *'ajamī*, a term which appears in Q 16:103 where the Qur'an contrasts the Arabic revelation given to its Prophet with the *'ajamī* speech of a person (kept anonymous) whom the Prophet's opponents suspect is acting as his informant.

⁵⁷ This debate is also indirectly related to the question of variant readings (*qirā'āt*; *wujūh*, *ḥurūf*) of the Qur'anic text. It was generally considered permissible to recite the Qur'an according to canonical variants of the 'Uthmanic codex. In addition, numerous reports relate how certain companions of the Prophet recited the Qur'an in ways which depart significantly from the codex of 'Uthmān (some, of course, are said to have had their own codices). On this see LEEHUIS, "Readings of the Qur'an," 1:353-363. The debate surrounding variants illustrates another way in which the notion of *qur'an* is less static than might be assumed.

nal and theoretical. This much is implied by Kāsānī's use of the Qur'anic terms *tawrāt*, *injīl*, and *zabūr* for pre-Muḥammadan scriptures. The Jewish Bible of course includes not only the Torah (and the Psalms) but also the prophetic and historical writings (or the *nebi'im* and the *ketuvim*). The Christian New Testament does not contain one "Gospel" but rather four "Gospels" along with letters and other writings. Kāsānī of course has some awareness of that the problem, as he insists that only those elements which have not been falsified may be used in ritual prayer.

In any case, Kāsānī in no way affirms the authenticity of the Bible but rather makes a point (principally directed against Shāfi'i) about the nature of divine revelation, namely that God's speech cannot be limited to the Arabic Qur'an. This much he holds in common with other members of his Ḥanafī school,⁵⁸ and of course with Abū Ḥanīfa himself. What distinguishes Kāsānī is his understanding of the term *qur'ān* and the consequences which follow from that understanding. If earlier scriptures are also *qur'ān*, Kāsānī holds, they therefore have a natural place in Islamic ritual prayer.⁵⁹

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⁵⁸ Regarding Sarakhsi's commentary on Shaybānī's *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghīr*, ZADEH, *The Vernacular Qur'an* (p. 113) writes, "Sarakhsi argues that the principle aim (*aṣl*) of ritual prayer is the remembrance (*dhikr*) of God, which can be performed in any language." Furthermore: "Sarakhsi syllogistically reasons that the Qur'an is a universal message addressed to both Arabs and non-Arabs alike. He thus concludes that the Qur'an's miraculous nature cannot be located in its language alone, for its message would be limited only to the Arabs; rather, meaning must also be the locus of the Qur'an's miraculous inimitability (*i'jāz*)."

⁵⁹ In his article "Quotations of Extra-Qur'anic Scripture in Early Renunciatory Literature," Christopher Melchert shows that quotations from Biblical texts (or passages attributed to pre-Muḥammadan scriptures but not actually found in the Bible) are relatively common in works of *zuhd*. In that article Prof. Melchert also notes the statement of Suyūṭī (d. 911/505) that much of the Qur'an had been already revealed previous to the prophetic career of Muḥammad. Melchert summarizes Suyūṭī's position: "All of the Qur'an but the *Fātiḥah* and a handful of verses at the end of Q. 2 were revealed to earlier prophets as well as to Muḥammad." See MELCHERT, "Quotations of Extra-Qur'anic Scripture in Early Renunciatory Literature," 97-107 and AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *al-Itqān*, 1:123-125.

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