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Michael Pregill

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THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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ISRĀʾĪLIYYĀT, MYTH, AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHY: WAHB B. MUNABBIH AND THE EARLY ISLAMIC VERSIONS OF THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE*

Michael Pregill
Elon University

Introduction: converts and sages as *Kulturträger* and the Jewish influence on Islam

Early Islamic literature contains a significant amount of material that appears to derive from the Hebrew Bible or post-biblical Jewish sources. Contemporary scholarship seems to be moving toward a consensus that this material represents the literary remains of a gradual process of assimilation of converts to Islam from various scriptural communities (including not only Jewish and Christian sects, but also less coherent groups of "Jewish-Christian" or "Gnostic" tendency) over the course of many generations. Whether we are speaking of *tafsīr*, of *ḥadīth*, or of early historical writing, the penetration of biblical or quasi-biblical material into the nascent culture of Islam seems to have been an inevitable consequence of the growth of the *umma* through the conversion of members of other scriptural communities.

However, previous generations of scholars approached this phenomenon with a rather less nuanced perspective, seeing it as the clear result of a concerted effort to appropriate Jewish and Christian learning by certain members of the early Muslim community. Investigation into

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the Jewish sources of Islam was initiated virtually at the foundation of the modern discipline of Islamic studies itself with the work of Abraham Geiger; his well-known *Preisschrift* of 1832, "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume übernommen?", almost single-handedly inaugurated research into the fundamental role played by "borrowings" from Judaism in the formation of Islam. According to Geiger, this process began with Muḥammad himself, as the Qur'ān's pervasive reliance on biblical and rabbinic tradition supposedly demonstrates.[1]

The long-dominant paradigm of borrowing and dependence has been difficult to elude in subsequent studies of the complex historical relationships between Jews and Muslims in the early centuries AH; Geiger's work has cast a long shadow indeed. The assumption that members of the early Muslim community passively absorbed all sorts of influences from the Jews has been particularly pervasive due to the way in which it seems to be reinforced by claims made by the Islamic tradition itself. Naturally, Muslims have never acquiesced to allegations of Muḥammad's direct authorship of the Qur'ān, consistently rejecting any insinuation of his "borrowing" from Jewish sources. However, Western scholars' emphasis on Islam's fundamental dependence on Judaism does appear to be at least partially justified by the Muslim tradition's own acknowledgment that substantial amounts of lore regarding historical, exegetical, and cultic matters were transmitted to early Muslim authorities by Jewish informants.

Objectively speaking, it is by no means unusual for the institutions, texts, or practices of a religious community to show clear signs of their ultimate derivation from other, usually older, communities; indeed, historians of religion often depend on such traces as the absolute prerequisite for much of the work they do. But it is perhaps more unusual for a tradition to deliberately preserve narratives about such processes of borrowing, presenting evidence of its own seemingly derivative character. The Islamic tradition's assertion of its early reliance on Jewish converts and savants for all sorts of information has been readily accepted as a basic axiom of modern historical research into Islamic origins, apparently confirming the Orientalists' oldest and most deeply felt intuitions about where Islam "really" came from.

Thus, much of the modern scholarship on these intermediary figures essentially reiterates the positions taken by classical Muslim authors in

[1] See, e.g., *Judaism and Islam,* pp. 3–30, in which Geiger painstakingly seeks to establish both Muḥammad's particular interest in borrowing from Judaism and the logistical feasibility of his doing so due to the availability of Jewish informants in the Jāhilī milieu. On Geiger's project, see Lassner, "Abraham Geiger;" Heschel, "How the Jews invented Jesus and Muhammed;" Pregill, "The Hebrew Bible and the Qur'ān."

summing up the impact they had on their tradition. One important medieval authority has this to say about Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728), a figure of the generation of the Successors (*tābiʿūn*) who was so strongly associated with the transmission of Jewish lore that some authors were not sure whether he was a convert or had been born a Muslim:

> Wahb b. Munabbih, called Abū ʿAbd Allāh, of the Yemen, an authority on historical traditions and folklore (*qiṣaṣ*). He possessed knowledge of the historical traditions of ancient peoples and of the creation of the world (*qiyām al-dunyā*) and the stories of the prophets (*aḥwāl al-anbiyā'*)... and the lives of kings.
>
> In his book *al-Maʿārif,* Ibn Qutayba reported that he used to claim to have read seventy-two of God's scriptures. I myself have seen a composition of his entitled *On the Crowned Kings of Ḥimyar and Their History and Stories and Tombs and Poetry.* It is a single volume, and a useful work.[2]

Ibn Khallikān's biographical notice on Wahb is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it succinctly touches upon the two aspects of the work for which Wahb was best known: research into the scriptural lore of the *kitābī* or pre-Islamic monotheistic communities and the history of the ancient Ḥimyarite kingdom of South Arabia.[3] Second, most modern scholarship adds little to the medieval Islamic tradition's basic estimation of who Wahb was. It is usually taken for granted that he was an antiquarian with a genuine interest in biblical matters and Yemenite history, in spite of the obvious dose of mythologizing that has affected his portrayal. Modern treatments of Wahb seem to reflect a truly Borgesian historiographic impulse, in which biography reduces to bibliography — what a man read and what he wrote — with the historian's main task being construed as the corroboration of the baseline information given by the Muslim biographers with data from the literary and manuscript traditions.

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[2]Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, vol. 6, p. 35, no. 772; cf. Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, p. 459. According to Ibn Saʿd (*al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 5, p. 543), Wahb claimed to have read ninety-two scriptures, seventy-two in general circulation and twenty "known only to a few." In the *Iʿlān* of al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), Wahb is said to have read only thirty scriptures (Rosenthal, *History of Muslim historiography*, p. 335). Although many early authors attest that Wahb was born a Muslim, al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldūn both know him as a convert from Judaism, a view that prevails among modern critics.

[3]The subjects of biblical antiquity and Yemenite history are not as disparate as they may appear at first glance, since the Ḥimyarite kingdom had a long association with Christianity and Judaism in particular. See Newby, *History of the Jews of Arabia*, pp. 33–48.

If Wahb, a Yemenite Muslim of Persian descent, was perhaps only a conduit, two of the most famous informants from whom he supposedly transmitted information of a biblical or Jewish ambience were authentic sources for such lore, since they were converts of bona fide Jewish ancestry with original knowledge of Jewish learning. To some medieval authorities (and many modern ideologues as well), Kaʿb al-Aḥbār and ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām represent the virtual fountainhead of the original Jewish conspiracy that sought to infiltrate and infect Islam from the very time of its origin.[4] At least according to some sources, "Kaʿb of the rabbis" was an authentic Companion who proved useful to Muḥammad and his colleagues on a number of occasions, especially because the Prophet is supposed to have been personally interested in various aspects of Judaism. Even more than Kaʿb, Ibn Salām represents the stereotypical "good Jew" in Islamic literature, since he was a leader of the Jewish community of Medina who acknowledged the truth of Muḥammad's claim to prophethood.[5] Thus, both Kaʿb and Ibn Salām epitomize the type of the "respected witness," by means of whom Islam was able to partially acknowledge the legitimacy of older faiths while subordinating their claims to its own: they are esteemed because they knew the scripture and the history of the *Banū Isrāʾīl,* but only insofar as their testimony points to the truth of Islam.[6]

Geiger was the first modern scholar to posit that these figures had been crucial in the genesis of the Islamic tradition: according to his account, these *kulturträger* functioned basically as the midwives of Islam, since Geiger unambiguously held Islam to be a direct offspring of Judaism. Geiger repeatedly refers in this connection to Ibn Salām, as well as to others such as his wife Khadīja's cousin Waraqa — "who was for some time a Jew" — and Ḥabīb b. Mālik — "who for some time professed the Jewish religion."[7] Geiger's work in the early 19th century set the

[4]Regarding Kaʿb as the original Jewish conspirator plotting to overthrow Islam from within, note the article published in the Egyptian serial *al-Risāla* in 1946 by Maḥmūd Abū Rayya, a follower of Rashīd Riḍā: "Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, The First Zionist" ("Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, huwa al-ṣihyūnī al-awwal"). This piece has received significant scholarly attention; see Tottoli, "Origin and use of the term *Isrāʾīliyyāt*," pp. 209–10; Juynboll, *Authenticity of the tradition literature*, pp. 130–7; Nettler, "Early Islam, modern Islam and Judaism." Curiously, the earliest extant reference to the deleterious effect these figures had on Islam appears in the polemical epistle attributed to the 9th century Nestorian apologist ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī; see the edition of Tartar, *Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien*, p. 125.

[5]Cf. Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, vol. 1, pp. 516–7.

[6]See Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, pp. 172–8.

[7]Geiger, *Judaism and Islam*, pp. 17–8, on the authority of "Elbecar" cited in Marracci. This is Marracci's "Albacarius," Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Bakrī, author of a work known to him as *de Splendoribus*, i.e. *al-Anwār fī mawlid al-nabī Muḥammad.* On al-Bakrī, see Rosenthal, "Al-Bakrī," *EI*^{2}, s.v.; Shoshan, *Popular culture in medieval*

tone for much of the scholarship that followed. Both the basic historicity of these individuals and even their claim to be among the earliest genuine authors of the Islamic tradition was repeatedly asserted in the later 19th and early 20th century by Lidzbarski, Huart, Goldziher, and especially Horovitz. Further, beginning in the 1960s, such influential scholars as Abbott, Dūrī, Goitein, Sezgin, and Khoury sought to refine the theses of their predecessors, but for the most part did not question their basic presuppositions about the Jewish influence on Islam during its formative period, to say nothing of the historicity of putative intermediary figures such as Kaʿb, Ibn Salām, and Wahb.[8]

Thus, Sezgin gives Kaʿb pride of place in the section on *Weltgeschichte* in his *Geschichte des arabischen Schriftums.* Among the generation of the Companions, he was preeminently known as "eine große Autorität," "wegen seiner vielseitigen Kenntnisse," and he was succeeded in this role in the next generation by Wahb b. Munabbih, "über ein ähnliches vielseitiges Wissen."[9] One presumes that what was *vielseitig* about the knowledge of Kaʿb and Wahb was their familiarity not only with biblical or Jewish matters *per se*, but also with historical matters in general, pertaining both to antiquity and to the early history of the Muslim community. If one is inclined to assume that much of what is

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Cairo, pp. 23–39; and now Katz, *The birth of the Prophet Muḥammad*, *passim* but especially pp. 9–10. Rosenthal guesses at a 7th/13th-century milieu for this author; Shoshan prefers a much earlier date; and Katz holds that he is "unidentifiable and undatable" (9). (On the identification of "Albacarius" — not to be confused with "Albocharius"! — see Nallino, "Le Fonti Arabe Manoscritte," pp. 327–30.) According to the *Sīra*, Waraqa b. Nawfal, the cousin of the Prophet's wife Khadīja, was one of four men of the Quraysh who together abandoned their traditional religion. Like ʿUbayd Allāh b. Jaḥsh and ʿUthmān b. Ḥuwayrith, Waraqa actually cleaves to Christianity and not Judaism, although he is stated to have read scripture and been taught by people learned in both the *Tawrāt* and the *Injīl*. But *pace* Geiger, it is the fourth man, Zayd b. ʿAmr, who is specifically said to have sampled Judaism and Christianity and rejected them both before becoming a *ḥanīf*. Regarding Ḥabīb b. Mālik, besides his appearance in the *Anwār*, he is not in Ibn Hishām's redaction of the *Sīra*, nor have I been able to find him in standard reference works on the Companions such as those of Abū Nuʿaym, Ibn al-Athīr, and Ibn Ḥajar. He therefore seems to have made little if any impression on the classical biographers of the Prophet, and may be an invention of the *mawlid* tradition.

[8] In his translation and edition of Horovitz' *Earliest biographies*, Conrad provides an extensive bibliography of both the primary and secondary sources on Wahb (p. 31, n. 145), to which the following should be added: Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung*, pp. 89–90; Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, pp. 61–8; Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-'l-mufassirūn*, vol. 1, pp. 132–4; *ibid.*, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt fī 'l-tafsīr wa-'l-ḥadīth*, pp. 140–3; Abū Shuhbah, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt wa-'l-mawḍūʿāt*, pp. 148–9; Adang, *Muslim writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 10–2, 15–6, 18–9, 113–6; Tottoli, "Origins and use of the term *Isrāʾīliyyāt*," *passim*; *ibid.*, *Biblical prophets in the Qurʾān and Muslim literature*, pp. 138–46.

[9] Sezgin, *GAS*, vol. 1, p. 303.

reported about them in the classical sources of the Muslim tradition itself is accurate, then the importance of these figures for the formation of early Islamic culture has been generally underestimated.

It is noteworthy, for example, that in his bio-bibliographic essay *The earliest biographies of the Prophet and their authors*, Horovitz's discussion begins with authorities among the first Successors who, although they may not have committed anything to writing, nevertheless contributed strongly to the nascent *sīra* tradition by scrupulously collecting and transmitting information about Muḥammad's life and campaigns. But after discussing the Successors in question — namely the Medinans Abān b. ʿUthmān, ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr, and Shuraḥbīl b. Saʿd — Horovitz seems to cross a titanic gulf with Wahb. In sharp contrast to his predecessors, who left virtually no written works behind, Wahb is claimed to have transmitted not only extensive notes and "scripts" (*ṣuḥuf*) to his students and followers, but several actual books as well, including translations or resumés of books from the Hebrew Bible. Thus, if one is willing to accept Horovitz' account uncritically, at least according to the evidence he adduces here, Wahb b. Munabbih appears to have been the first real author in Islamic history.[10]

However, more recent developments in scholarship encourage us to question the role that was supposedly played by these converts and sages in the early Islamic milieu and to reevaluate their general cultural significance. As one might guess, the way the tradition portrays the situation is not the whole story. The various traces of evidence concerning these figures and their activity as intermediaries, including not only the historical and biographical accounts about them in literary sources but the materials preserved in later works transmitted in their name, as well as the pertinent manuscript evidence, need to be subjected to a comprehensive reevaluation. This essay represents only a modest step in this direction. The purpose of our inquiry here is not to deny the historicity of these persons outright; rather, our goal is to attempt a new interpretation of the function of Kaʿb, Ibn Salām, Wahb, and similar figures in the early Islamic milieu. This should enrich our understanding of the way in which the mature Islamic tradition confronted its nebulous, heterogeneous origins and went through a gradual process of "sorting things

[10] Horovitz, *Earliest biographies,* pp. 30–9. It is presumably Wahb's centrality in the early Islamic literary tradition that motivated Khoury's painstaking work on the manuscript fragments of PSR Heid Arab 23, which supposedly represents portions of Wahb's *Kitāb al-maghāzī* and *Kitāb al-mubtada'*. In her review of Khoury's work, even Abbott is skeptical about its attribution to Wahb, and it is significant that Khoury had to reconstruct much of the first part of the work, the *Ḥadīth Dāwūd,* on the basis of a manuscript containing a work attributed to a considerably later author, ʿUmāra b. Wathīma al-Fārisī (d. 289/902).

out" textually.

We see not only the historical and biographical accounts of these early converts and sages but even the actual attribution of different kinds of traditions to them as reflecting later attempts to come to grips with the past in order to promote an account of Islam's origins compatible with later doctrines and values. Attitudes towards these figures continued to evolve over a long period of time, as is clearly shown by the development of their representation in the biographical literature. Moreover, as Tottoli has recently proved, the polemic against the so-called *isrā'īliyyāt* or "Jewish traditions" that condemns these figures for their insidious, corrupting influence on Islam is of very late provenance.[11] Nevertheless, the period upon which we will focus is the high ʿAbbāsī era of the 9th and 10th centuries CE, during which two critical processes occurred.

First, the beginning of the 9th century CE is widely recognized as the time during which the coalescence of the Islamic literary tradition commenced; in previous generations, Muslims had commonly preserved and transmitted their nascent cultural and religious heritage orally, and the few written materials which may have been produced in the 7th and 8th centuries have generally not survived except as redacted in later works.[12] Second, during the course of the 9th century, a new cultural and religious orientation came to predominate in Muslim learned circles with the advent of the so-called culture of traditionism. Even as the received knowledge of the past and the various expressions of Muslim orthodoxy and orthopraxy came to be increasingly codified and preserved in compendious literary works, simultaneously — and somewhat paradoxically — the prevailing ethos of this culture became one in which the oral transmission of knowledge acquired ideological preeminence. At this time, the transmission of knowledge through chains of reliable guarantors from the era of the Prophet and his Companions to the present became virtually the sole criterion of historical authenticity and, more importantly, of religious truth.

Thus, in the imperial society of high ʿAbbāsī times, a relatively rapid transition was made from orality to literacy — or, more likely, from a *rudimentary* reliance on writing to a full-blown culture of the book. This occurred at about the same time that rigorous critical standards and a self-conscious, articulate ideology were developed in the juridical arena and subsequently extended to almost every other area of learned discourse. This ideology prioritized oral transmission, reliance on ethically and doctrinally sound informants, and, most of all, the Ḥijāzī Arab ori-

[11] Tottoli, "Origin and use of the term *Isrā'īliyyāt*," discussed below.

[12] On the shift from orality to writing, see Cook, "Opponents of writing," especially pp. 459–66, and also the works of Schoeler cited below, at note 60.

gins of virtually all worthwhile knowledge.[13] Whether we are speaking of Qur'ān commentaries, handbooks of *fiqh, ḥadīth* collections, or historical works, modern scholars have typically mined the surviving literary works from this period as potential repositories of objective historical information on the early Islamic period. These works have only recently begun to be appreciated as literary works *per se*, texts in which the selection of material, the representation and citation of sources, and the choice of organizational format all reflect a greater design that is often profoundly informed by religious, political, and social ideology.

Again, it is not our goal to prove that *ḥadīth* were widely fabricated or *isnād*s commonly forged as an end in itself. It must be acknowledged, however, that in the pre-literary period, traditionally transmitted materials were frequently subject to manipulation, standardization, and recontextualization, as scholars adapted to the pressures of a rapidly changing cultural and political environment. The historical conjunction of the transition to literary forms and a widespread book culture on the one hand and the onset of traditionism on the other hardly seems accidental; at the very least, it provided a unique opportunity to the historians, exegetes, and *ḥadīth* collectors of the 9$^{\text{th}}$ and 10$^{\text{th}}$ centuries to reshape the past according to their own preferences, values, and perceptions. Indeed, they could not have done otherwise.

In what follows, we will examine two versions of the story of the Fall presented in al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, and compare their contents, exegetical procedure, and attribution. This will serve as a way of provoking new questions about the protean Wahb b. Munabbih and his putative role in contributing significant amounts of biblical and Jewish lore to the early Muslim literary tradition, especially in the field of *tafsīr*.

[13] My thinking here has been particularly influenced by the discussion in Calder, *Studies in early Muslim jurisprudence*, especially Chapter 7, "Literary form and social context."

Al-Ṭabarī on the Fall, I: Wahb b. Munabbih and "biblicized" exegesis

Both versions of the story of the Fall examined here appear in al-Ṭabarī's comments on the first reference to it in the Qur'ān.[14] As anyone familiar with Qur'ānic exegesis knows, the longest section of any *tafsīr* tends to be the part dealing with Sūra 2 (*al-Baqara*), not only because Sūra 2 is the longest chapter, but also because it is a historical and legislative miscellany in which many subjects treated in other Sūras are encapsulated. Since the commentator encounters the first mention of so many topics in Sūra 2, he will tend to dwell here at length; this is very much the case with al-Ṭabarī.

The story of the Fall conforms to this general pattern. Although there are three direct references to the story in the Qur'ān, and that in Qur'ān 7:19–25 is the longest, al-Ṭabarī's most extensive comments on the circumstances behind Adam's expulsion from Paradise are elicited by the brief allusion to the episode found in Qur'ān 2:35–39. This occurs in a long polemical passage addressed to the Jews of Medina that centers on the recurring pattern of divine revelation via chosen messengers and their subsequent rejection by the Israelites; this pattern is easily the most characteristic trait associated with the history of the *Banū Isrā'īl* in the Qur'ān.

Qur'ān 2:30–141 is thus an extended history of the pre-Islamic prophets, beginning with the creation and fall of Adam and proceeding for the most part in chronological order through the stories of Moses, Jesus, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob. Qur'ān 2:35–39 states that Adam and Eve were originally at liberty to do as they pleased in the Garden, except that God forbade them to eat of the fruit of a particular tree; Satan then came along and caused them to transgress God's command (exactly how is not stated, although the implication here is that the fruit of this tree was involved). After the Fall, however, God showed mercy to Adam and advised him that henceforth anyone who follows divine guidance can be saved, but that those who ignore it will be doomed to perdition.[15]

[14] The literature on the post-biblical elaborations and interpretations of the story of Adam and Eve is vast. On the late antique Jewish and Christian traditions of interpretation, see Stone, *History of the literature of Adam and Eve*; *Paradise interpreted*, ed. Luttikhuizen; *Literature on Adam and Eve*, ed. Anderson, Stone, and Tromp; and Anderson, *Genesis of perfection*. There have been very few discussions of the Islamic material, but see Kister, "Ādam: a study of some legends in *Tafsīr* and *Ḥadīth* literature," and Schöck, *Adam im Islam*.

[15] While Qur'ān 7:19–25 is the longest version of the story of the Fall in the Qur'ān,

As is the case with so many stories in the Qur'ān, this version of the narrative of the Fall raises many questions and provides very few answers. It is conventional for scholars of *tafsīr* to refer to the milieu of public recitation and preaching in early Islamic society as the origin of the genre, and the Qur'ān's characteristic elliptical style as the underlying cause of early textual elaborations. The Qur'ān thus tended to provoke its hearers to search for clarification of various details, and it was most often the popular preachers (*quṣṣāṣ*) who eagerly supplied the answers. It should be noted that this approach to the early development of *tafsīr* relies on a basic distinction between the early, heterodox *qāṣṣ* and the later, credentialed, orthodox type of *ʿālim* known as the *wāʿiẓ*, to whom the *qāṣṣ* is a clear foil. This distinction was largely imported into modern scholarship from classical Muslim literature itself; further, the meager evidence we have for the milieu of early preaching and speculation on the text of the Qur'ān derives directly from later literary sources that are far removed from the freewheeling, heterodox atmosphere they describe.[16]

It is nevertheless understandable that elliptical, obscure passages like Qur'ān 2:35–39 would tend to attract the attention of the exegete and arouse the curiosity of the uninformed reader or hearer. Consequently, it has been claimed that a narrativistic or expansive style of commentary on the Qur'ān (appositely termed "haggadic" exegesis by Wansbrough[17]) was supposedly the earliest form of Qur'ānic commentary to arise in Muslim circles, stimulated by audience response to public recitation of the sacred text and preaching based upon its moral injunctions and edifying stories. The roots of this so-called "haggadic" exegesis in the question-and-answer format that would thrive in the context of public recitation and preaching are quite apparent in al-Ṭabarī's comments on Qur'ān 2:36:

> Then Satan made them go astray regarding it [i.e. the tree with the forbidden fruit], and caused them to be driven out

Qur'ān 2:35–39 is in fact part of the most complete treatment of the story of Adam as a whole that occurs in the text, for the verses that immediately precede this allusion to his transgression and fall address the circumstances behind the creation of man at some length. In contrast, while the passage at Qur'ān 7:19–25 explains the sin of Adam and Eve and their subsequent punishment rather more fully, this detailed discussion actually occurs in the context of a passage that centers on the fall of *Satan*; Adam's own temptation and fall is here portrayed as a direct consequence of this event and provides a dramatic complement to it.

[16] The standard reference on the *quṣṣāṣ* and their milieu remains Pedersen, "The Islamic preacher"; cf. also Schwarz' comments in his translation of Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kitāb al-quṣṣāṣ wa-'l-mudhakkirīn*, and also Berkey, *Popular preaching and religious authority*, *passim*.

[17] Wansbrough, *Quranic studies*, pp. 122–48.

> from where they had previously been (*mimmā kānā fīhi*).[18] Then We said, Get thee down, and each be the enemy of the other; you will find an abode and sustenance on the earth for a time...

After an extended philological analysis of the initial verb of the verse (*azallahumā*, "he made them stray," which was apparently read by some Qur'ān reciters as *azālahumā*, which felicitously yielded another perfectly viable meaning, "he caused them to be *removed*," that is, from the Garden), al-Ṭabarī then undertakes an examination of various traditions regarding the circumstances surrounding Satan's temptation of Adam and his wife.[19]

> It has been asked: how was it exactly that Iblīs caused Adam and his wife to sin, so that their expulsion from the Garden was attributed to him? To reply, the scholars said many things regarding this, some of which I will relate now.
>
> It was reported from Wahb b. Munabbih[20]: When God caused Adam and his spouse[21] (that is, his wife...) to dwell in the Garden, he forbade the tree to him. It was a tree with branches that were completely entangled, and it had fruit that the angels came to eat that bestowed upon them their immortality (*khuld*)[22]; it was the fruit that God prohibited to Adam and his wife.
>
> Now when Iblīs wanted to cause them to sin, he did so by entering the body of the snake. The snake was originally a

[18] The clause is ambiguous as to whether their actual location or their original state is intended.

[19] The name of Eve in Islamic tradition, *Ḥawwā'*, is not found in the Qur'ān and was only subsequently supplied by the exegetical tradition. Eve's anonymity in the Qur'ān seems rather appropriate, as throughout most of the text of Genesis 3 she is referred to simply as "the woman" (*hā-iššāh*), only receiving her proper name after the Fall.

[20] We have omitted the *isnād* tracing the tradition from al-Ṭabarī back to Wahb, which runs: al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥya (Ibn Abī'l-Rabī', one of al-Ṭabarī's main *shaykh*s) — ʿAbd al-Razzāq (al-Ṣanʿanī, the famous Yemenite scholar) — ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib — Wahb b. Munabbih. On al-Ḥasan and ʿUmar, see Ḥallāq, *Rijāl Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, nos. 580 and 1931.

[21] The word is *dhurriyatuhu*, which must refer to Adam's wife in this context, though the more conventional meaning of the term is "offspring." The printed edition retains a copyist's note here indicating that the *lectio difficilior* was found in al-Ṭabarī's autograph and is not a scribal error.

[22] In one of the other versions of the narrative of the Fall in the Qur'ān, the tree is referred to as *shajarat al-khuld*, "the tree of immortality" (Qur'ān 20:120), though it is nameless here in Sūra 2. This seems to reflect a conflation of the two separate trees found in the Genesis account, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life.

quadruped akin to the Bactrian camel, which is one of the finest riding-animals God has ever created. When the snake entered the Garden, Iblīs emerged from it, and he took fruit from the tree that God had prohibited to Adam and his wife, and then he took it to Eve, and he said, Look at this tree! How lovely is its scent, how lovely is its taste, how fine is its color! So Eve took and ate of it. Then she took it to Adam, and she said, Look at this tree! How lovely is its scent, how lovely is its taste, how fine is its color! So Adam then ate from it too.

Then their private parts became apparent to them (*fa-badat lahumā saw'ātuhumā*),[23] so Adam hid by the tree. Then his Lord called out to him, Adam, where are you? He replied, I am here, my Lord. He said, Won't you come out? But Adam replied, I stand ashamed before You, my Lord.

Then He said, Truly cursed is the earth from which you were created! Its fruit shall become thorns. (He then added: Neither in heaven nor on earth was there a tree that was finer than the acacia or the lote-tree.[24]) Then He said, O Eve! You, who duped My servant, verily, you shall not bear child without distress, and when you want to give birth to that which is in your belly, at that time will you be on the verge of death. And then He said to the snake, You, into whom the Accursed One entered so that he could dupe My servant, truly cursed are you; your legs will withdraw into your belly, and you will have no sustenance but the dust. You are the enemy of the sons of Adam, and they yours; when you meet one of them, you shall strike at his heel, and when he meets you, he will crush your head.

ʿUmar[25] said: Wahb was asked: What did the angels eat [after that]? He replied, God does as He pleases...[26]

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[23] Cf. Qur'ān 7:20–22 and 20:121.

[24] A parenthetical reference that should be understood as Wahb's gloss. The identification of the *shajarat al-khuld* with the lote-tree (*sidr*) is intriguing, since the *sidrat al-muntahā* or 'Heavenly Lote-Tree' (cf. Qur'ān 53:14–15) figures prominently in Islamic mythology. Traditionally, these verses are taken to allude to the Prophet's Night Journey, and the *sidrat al-muntahā* is generally understood to mark the place where Muḥammad came closest to God during his heavenly ascent.

[25] ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib, who transmitted this tradition from Wahb; note that the old Cairo edition of the *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* has "ʿAmr" here, but that the reading has been corrected in the Shākir & Shākir edition (vol. 1, p. 526, n. 3).

[26] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 525–6, no. 742. The passage also occurs verbatim in al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh* (see *Annales*, Series I, vol. 1, pp. 105–6); note that

It is quite obvious that this tradition related from Wahb has much in common with the biblical narrative of the Fall from Genesis 3. Accounting for how this "biblicized" tradition cited by al-Ṭabarī developed and how it came to be informed by both the general structure and the specific details of the version of the story found in Genesis is a complex problem with numerous implications for our understanding of the evolution of biblical tradition in Islamic literature.

In early Islamic culture, aspects of biblical tradition could quite feasibly have informed the material transmitted by Muslim exegetes in any number of ways, and we should not simply assume a straightforward dependence on a written text of the Hebrew Bible itself. Rather, it is entirely possible that this Arabic retelling of the story of the Fall could have been informed by a written translation of Genesis 3; an apocryphal adaptation of the narrative as is sometimes termed "rewritten Torah"; an oral transmission of some "popular" version of the episode that incorporated elements found in the original text as well as novel features; or some combination of these. Our analysis here will attempt to ascertain whether and to what extent positing a direct dependence of both literal and structural features of this version of the narrative of the Fall on the original biblical text might be possible or warranted.

Regarding the general contours of this version of the narrative attributed to Wahb by al-Ṭabarī, it might be best to first recall the basic structure of the various Qur'ānic versions of the episode. To understand the origins and development of various aspects of this exegetical tradition, we must consider what basic information the Qur'ān itself supplies to the would-be interpreter. In Qur'ān 2:35–39, immediately following the reference to Iblīs, who refused God's command to prostrate himself before Adam *and thus became one of the unbelievers* (2:34), we have the establishment of God's prohibition on the fruit of the tree, phrased as a command to Adam not to approach even the tree itself (2:35). Satan then tempts Adam and his wife and causes them to go astray (without any mention of how this was done), and God pronounces what might be interpreted as a rudimentary curse upon them, namely, *Get thee down, and each be the enemy of the other; you will find an abode and sustenance on the earth for a time...* (2:36). Afterwards, God becomes favorably inclined towards Adam again, and issues a warning that in the future those who follow His guidance will be saved, but those who reject it will be damned (2:37–39).

In contrast, in the version found in Qur'ān 7:19–25, several details are supplied that are lacking in Sūra 2. After God condemns Iblīs for his

here ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib is erroneously listed as *Maʿmar* b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. *Mihrān*; see the entry in Ḥallāq, *Rijāl,* no. 1931.

disobedience and the latter pledges to perpetually lead humanity astray in retaliation, Adam is warned not to approach the tree (7:19); then, in the next verse, we are told that Satan *whispered to the two of them so that their private parts, which had been concealed from them, would become apparent to them*, and that he told them that God had forbidden the tree to them lest they become like angels or immortal (7:20). Iblīs then swears that he is a reliable counselor to Adam and his wife and leads them to sample the fruit; they consequently become aware of their nakedness and sew garments of leaves to clothe themselves. At this point God castigates them for not heeding His warnings about the tree or Satan's enmity towards them (7:21–22). They ask for God's forgiveness, but He banishes them from the Garden, using the same words used in Qur'ān 2:36, i.e. *Get thee down, and each be the enemy of the other* etc. (7:23–24). It is then foretold that Adam and his wife will live and die on earth, and later on be resurrected (7:25).

The version of Qur'ān 2:35–39 supplies nothing that cannot be found in the version of 7:19–25, except for the specific emphasis placed there on divine forgiveness. On the other hand, it omits many details found in the longer version in Sūra 7, and we would be quite justified in seeing the former account as essentially presupposing the latter. The traditional chronology assigned to the Sūras reinforces this interpretation, for Sūra 2 is considered Medinan and Sūra 7 Meccan. Although it is also Meccan, Qur'ān 20:120–124 also seems to be derived from 7:19–25, or at least presupposes it: Satan tempted Adam by showing him *the Tree of Immortality* (*shajarat al-khuld*, 20:120); Adam and his wife ate, and *their private parts became apparent to them*, so they clothed themselves in garments of leaves (20:121); but God forgave Adam (20:122), although He pronounced the "curse" found in each of the other versions, *Get thee down, each be the enemy of the other* etc., telling them that those who follow His guidance will be saved and those who disregard it damned (20:123–124).[27]

[27] Note that while Qur'ān 2:36 and 7:24 give God's command, "get thee down," as *ihbiṭū*, the masculine plural imperative (implying that He is addressing Adam, Eve, and Satan together), 20:123 has *ihbiṭā*, the dual imperative, making it seem as if He is addressing Adam and his wife when He states, "be enemies to one another"! But, as we shall see, the *Tafsīr Muqātil* glosses this phrase as "*get thee down* — Iblīs and his offspring as enemies to Adam and his offspring." That is, the use of the dual might refer to the two main antagonists, Adam and Satan, and their respective 'camps.' In passing, we might also observe that although it may seem peculiar that the version in Sūra 20 refers to God's forgiveness of Adam and his wife before their exile from the Garden, this actually makes sense if one recalls the biblical version of the narrative. Here, Adam's exile from the Garden is not explicitly described as part of the punishment or curse, but rather is a preventive measure to keep him and Eve from tasting of the fruit of the Tree of Life after they have consumed the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (cf. Gen. 3:22–24). However, some

Recalling that al-Ṭabarī's citation of the tradition he attributes to Wahb b. Munabbih was supposedly occasioned by inquiry as to how exactly Satan had led Adam and his wife astray, it is certainly worth mentioning that the prospective exegete of Qur'ān 2:36, *Then Satan made them go astray regarding it* [i.e. the tree], *and caused them to be driven out from where they were previously,* could potentially employ one of two methods to address the question. One option would be for the exegete to supply details lacking in Qur'ān 2:35–39 through "cross-reference" to 7:19–25 or possibly 20:120–124, since the former certainly gives a far fuller picture of the situation, and the latter provides at least a few missing details. This technique, which might be called "intra-textual" glossing, later became a well-established interpretive method, one that gained primacy in the hermeneutics of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Kathīr.[28] While such a method might seem perfectly natural to modern sensibilities, especially in view of the characteristic occurrence of multiple versions of narratives in the Qur'ān, as Rippin has noted, "nothing is 'natural' in the development of exegetical tools. The tools reflect ideological needs and have a history behind them." Thus all methodologies employed for the interpretation of sacred texts are products of specific historical developments and are marshaled for specific ideological ends.[29] The preference of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Kathīr for *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-'l-Qur'ān* reflects their particular agenda and especially their attempts to revise or reorient the received corpus of *tafsīr* tradition as it was known in their day.

Beyond this, it would also have been at least hypothetically possible for the would-be exegete to employ some form of the original narrative, an earlier or even contemporary elaboration of the biblical story of the Fall originating and circulating within the Jewish or Christian community, to elucidate the Qur'ān's often oblique references to the episode. At the very least, the trope of the consultation of Jewish converts or sages learned in biblical and quasi-biblical lore to which we have already alluded reflects the basic fact that Muslims have perennially participated in a common discourse of Abrahamic scripturalism with Jews and Christians. At various junctures, they have been inclined to bring to bear in

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strains of traditional exegesis, particularly among Christians, have made much of this particular aspect of Adam's "punishment."

[28] In the introduction to his Qur'ān commentary, the latter terms this method *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-'l-Qur'ān* — "interpretation of the Qur'ān by the Qur'ān." Cf., e.g., *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿaẓīm*, vol. 1, p. 7.

[29] See Rippin's introduction to *The Qur'an: formative interpretation*, p. xvii. Rippin is drawing on Wansbrough's *Quranic studies*, in which he advances the argument that the various discrete stages of development discernible in the exegetical tradition, each marked by the predominance of distinct hermeneutic techniques and concerns, corroborates his theory of the gradual emergence of the Qur'ānic canon.

the interpretation of Qur'ānic passages whatever knowledge of biblical narratives they possessed. Despite the surprisingly late recurrence of such a tendency,[30] it is almost self-evident that Muslims would have been most prone to do this in the early Islamic period, when many in the community were not only on intimate terms with Jews and Christians, but perhaps still retained some memory of their own Jewish and Christian roots.

It may seem obvious that adducing biblical material in the exegesis of the Qur'ān was more likely to occur in the first and second centuries AH, in the period preceding the emergence of classical Islam and the codification of its scriptural, traditional, doctrinal, and juristic literature. In this context, the activity, or purported activity, of a Kaʿb or Wahb makes perfect sense. But on the other hand, it is now generally accepted that the Islamic tradition did not emerge from an entirely coherent, indigenous movement that sprung forth from the Arabian Peninsula fully formed in the early decades of the 7th century CE, but rather evolved its culture and central institutions somewhat more gradually in the heterogeneous milieu of the Near Eastern and eastern Mediterranean arena. In this context, the specific activity of a Kaʿb or a Wahb as an intermediary makes little sense, and may even appear superfluous. This is because Jewish and Christian "influences" would have entered Islam during the first and second centuries AH through multiple vectors: through conversion, through the permeation of the late Roman and Sasanian cultural landscapes with active and articulate communities of scriptural monotheists, and through Muslims' direct inquiry of learned sages, rabbis, monks, and priests.

Thus, the image of the convert or sage who acts as a bridgehead between the nascent world of Arab Islam and the older worlds of Judaism and Christianity, a *Kulturträger* under whose tutelage the former could supersede and subsume the latter, undoubtedly reflects wider processes of cultural formation. However, in light of the complexity of the social and religious situation in which Muslims gradually articulated a coherent

[30] Saleh has recently called attention to a heretofore unknown episode in intellectual history during the Mamlūk period in which the exegete and historian Ibrāhīm b. ʿUmar al-Biqāʿī was embroiled in a public controversy over his use of the Bible as a prooftext in his *tafsīr*, and staged a relatively successful defense of his hermeneutics against his critics in a treatise devoted to the subject. See Saleh, "A Muslim Hebraist: al-Biqāʿī's (d. 885/1480) Bible treatise and his defense of using the Bible to interpret the Qur'ān." Al-Biqāʾī's readiness to employ biblical tradition in *tafsīr* should be juxtaposed with the attitude of Ibn Kathīr, who explicitly states that the Qur'ān must not be compared with the opinions of *ḥukamāʾ al-Tawrāt*; cf., e.g., *al-Bidāya*, vol. 1, p. 218 ad Qur'ān 12:100 (which implies that Joseph's mother was still alive at the time of his ascendance in Egypt, versus the testimony of Genesis that Rachel had died in childbirth).

identity and a distinct religious self-awareness over the course of time, this image belies the real richness and texture of the early Islamic period. The image of the intermediary or *Kulturträger* can only be considered to be representative of one sort of generic social reality — the phenomenon of information exchange between parties belonging to different communities — while obscuring other, equally important, realities. Moreover, as a mythologized image, its veracity is only symbolic and not literal; at the very least, the image is *primarily* symbolic.

In the version of the narrative attributed to Wahb, after the introductory remarks about God's prohibition of the tree to Adam and his wife, we are given various details concerning the original state of the snake before the Fall; this is obviously *not* derived from the biblical source. But from the point at which Iblīs gains access to the Garden by concealing himself within the snake's body, this version pursues a line of narrative development that seems to follow the Genesis account closely. First of all, in Wahb's version, Iblīs begins by making overtures to Eve, who subsequently leads Adam astray after she has succumbed to Iblīs' temptation. Strikingly, the theme of woman being the downfall of man, so fundamental in the biblical version and so familiar to a Jewish or Christian audience, is utterly lacking in the Qur'ānic accounts. Moreover, in Wahb's account, Iblīs appeals to the good qualities of the tree in seeking to entice Eve, again echoing the biblical version rather than the more laconic renditions of the Qur'ānic narratives, which do not mention any of the qualities of the tree or its fruit. Further, looking at this version more closely, it is significant that Iblīs specifically appeals to the good qualities of the tree and *not* its fruit, though of course the purpose of his words is to attract Eve not just to the tree, but to the fruit itself: "Look at this tree! How lovely is its scent, how lovely is its taste, how fine is its color!" (*unẓurī ilā hādhihi 'l-shajara, mā aṭyaba rīḥahā wa-aṭyaba ṭa'amahā wa-aḥsana lawnahā*).

To some extent, this reflects the usage found in the Qur'ān, for in both of the Qur'ānic versions of God's prohibition to Adam, it is the tree and not the fruit that is mentioned: in Qur'ān 2:35, God's exact words are, *You two may eat freely of whatever you wish, but do not approach this tree, for then you will become wrongdoers*; the version in 7:19 uses almost exactly the same wording. It is clear that the fruit and not the tree is the real issue because of the explicit reference to eating, although, as we saw at the beginning of our tradition from Wahb, the author seems to have felt compelled to clarify what precisely was intended by the prohibition and what was at stake: "[The tree] had fruit that the angels came to eat that bestowed upon them their immortality; it was the fruit that God prohibited to Adam and his wife." But the emphasis upon the tree

here most likely has its basis in the language of the biblical precursor in Genesis.

In the words of God's prohibition given in Gen. 2:16–17, it is the tree and not the fruit that is mentioned, even though there is specific mention of consumption, as in the Qur'ān: *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may surely eat from any tree of the Garden; but do not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, for on the day on which you eat from it, you will surely die.* Further, the tripartite appeal Iblīs makes to the tree — "How lovely is its scent, how lovely is its taste, how fine is its color!" — is likewise significant, for in Gen. 3:6, when the serpent tempts Eve to partake of the fruit, there occurs a picturesque portrayal of its attributes, likewise tripartite in structure, and again focusing on the tree itself, though naturally it is the fruit that is meant: *And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, that it was enticing to the eyes, and the tree was pleasant to behold* (*wa-tēre hā-iššāh kî-ṭôb hā-ʿēṣ lĕ-maʾăkāl wĕ-kî taʾăwāh-hû lā-ʿēnayim w-neḥmād hā-ʿēṣ lĕ-haskîl*).

Wahb's narrative then proceeds to Adam and Eve's realization of their nakedness, Adam's feeble attempt to hide from God, and God's angry curses upon the various parties. Unlike the reference to the appealing qualities of the tree and its fruit, the specific detail of Adam and Eve's realization of their nakedness, although absent from the version of the episode in Sūra 2, is found in the versions in Sūra 7 and 20. Indeed, the phrase used in Wahb's version, "then their private parts became apparent to them" (*fa-badat lahumā saw'ātuhumā*), directly reproduces that found in Qur'ān 7:22, *...when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them...*; this phrase also appears in 20:121.[31] Although the phrasing used here in Wahb's version is directly derived from the versions in Sūra 7 and 20, this is where its dependence on the parallel Qur'ānic accounts ends; for while the reference in Qur'ān 7:22 to Adam and his wife sewing leaves for clothing (which recapitulates the famous fig leaves of Gen. 3:7), is wholly absent from Wahb's version, the latter includes many other details found in the biblical account that are lacking in all Qur'ānic versions.

Adam's futile attempt to hide himself, the reference to his shame, his dialogue with God, and finally the sequence of specifically targeted curses are all narrative elements seemingly directly derived from the biblical account. While all of the Qur'ānic versions of the story include the rudimentary curse, *Get thee down, and each be the enemy of the other...*[32],

[31] The occurrence of the phrase at Qur'ān 7:22 echoes a previous allusion to their "hidden" or "shameful parts" at 7:20.

[32] Qur'ān 2:36, 7:24, and 20:123. Very possibly God's subsequent words in the

Wahb's version supplies the curses in greater detail; and while this account does not match Genesis 3 perfectly either in its wording or even in the sequence in which the curses are delivered, nevertheless the two versions are profoundly similar, to the degree that parts of the curses in the version attributed to Wahb precisely replicate corresponding elements in the curses from Genesis:

Gen. 3:14–19:

> Then the Lord God said to the serpent, On account of what you have done, cursed are you among the wild animals, and among the beasts of the field; you will go upon your belly, and dust will you eat all the days of your life. Enmity will I place between you and the woman, and between your seed and hers; they will smite your head, and you will smite their heel.
>
> And to the woman He said, I will greatly increase your suffering in childbirth; in pain will you deliver children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will master you.
>
> And to the man He said, Because you heeded the voice of your woman, so that you ate from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat by saying "Do not eat from it," cursed is the earth because of you; in suffering will you eat of it all the days of your life. Thorn and thistle will it bring forth for you, and you will eat of the produce of the field. In the sweat of your brow will you eat bread until you return to the earth, for from it were you taken; dust you are, and to dust will you return.

Al-Ṭabarī , *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 526, no. 742:

> Then He said, Truly cursed is the earth from which you were created! Its fruit shall become thorns.
>
> Then He said, O Eve! You, who duped My servant, verily, you shall not bear child without distress, and when you want

verse as found at Qur'ān 2:36 and 7:24, *...you will find an abode and sustenance on the earth for a time,* should be construed as an echo of the curse of Genesis as well, as should the further remark found only at Qur'ān 7:25 which states, *... there will you live and there will you die,* etc. This is highly reminiscent of Gen. 3:18–19, *With the sweat of your brow will you eat bread until you return to the earth, for from it were you taken; dust you are, and to dust will you return...* Both versions, biblical and Qur'ānic, seem to emphasize human mortality as the new status quo after Adam's transgression of God's command. Rather than the onset of a permanent ontological state of fallenness, as in the typical Christian reading of the episode, here the departure from the Garden simply seems to mark the beginning of earthly life as it would henceforth be experienced by humanity.

> to give birth to that which is in your belly, at that time will you be on the verge of death.
>
> And then He said to the snake, You, into whom the Accursed One entered so that he could dupe My servant, truly cursed are you; your legs will withdraw into your belly, and you will have no sustenance but the dust. You are the enemy of the sons of Adam, and they yours; when you meet one of them, you shall strike at his heel, and when he meets you, he will crush your head.

In Genesis, God first curses the serpent, then Eve, then Adam; in Wahb's version the earth is cursed first, then Eve, and then the serpent. The absence of a curse directly upon Adam in the latter is hardly surprising, despite the fact that in Genesis he receives the most extensive of the curses, for in the original biblical context, it is clear that the earth itself bears the brunt of the curse that is only nominally directed at Adam. The perceptive reader of Wahb's version will further notice that not only does Adam appear to elude punishment, but so does Iblīs; if one knew only the Qur'ānic renditions of the story, the curse upon the earth would simply appear inexplicable, and it would likewise seem unfair that Eve and the snake should be penalized for "duping" God's servant Adam when neither he (who presumably should be accountable for his own actions) nor Iblīs (who was the ultimate architect of Adam's downfall in the first place) appear to receive any punishment at all. This apparent inequity in the narrative seems to be due entirely to the profound impact of the biblical version upon the basic structure of Wahb's account, in that it provides the framework for the unfolding of the narrative. The answer to this quandary from a literary perspective is that just as Adam's curse has already been enacted in the form of that which is cast upon the earth, Iblīs' curse has been enacted in the form of that which is cast upon the snake, since originally the snake itself was the sole antagonist of the story. However, here in the version attributed to Wahb, it (or she) has been reduced to a mere accomplice.[33]

Moreover, the curse in Wahb's version is more economical than its biblical counterpart, but most of the core elements of the original curses

[33] Nowhere does the Arabic narrative explicitly note that the serpent is female; the use of feminine declensions, verb conjugations and pronouns for it could simply reflect the demands of grammar, since the noun *ḥayya* (serpent) is feminine. The splitting of the antagonist of the original biblical narrative (*hā-nāḥāš*, the snake, is never explicitly identified with Satan in the Genesis account) into two discrete *dramatis personae* in the Wahb tradition is mirrored in other Arabic accounts in which it is the peacock who is duped into being Iblīs' unwitting accomplice. Notably, roughly contemporary Jewish retellings of the episode display similar elaborations on the relationship between Satan and the serpent.

remain. The earth is stripped of its effortless productivity and will readily bear only thorns; likewise, Eve is deprived of *her* effortless productivity, meaning that for both earth and woman, bearing fruit will come only at the price of great toil and suffering. Whereas in Genesis the snake is targeted first, in Wahb's version the curse on the snake becomes the coda: it is permanently transformed (explicitly in Wahb's version, though at most only implicitly in Genesis[34]), and then God establishes everlasting enmity between the snake and humanity, using practically the same wording found in Gen. 3:15. Although the Qur'ānic phrase *each be the enemy of the other* (*baʿḍukum li-baʿḍin ʿaduwwun*, Qur'ān 2:36) seems to be a distant echo of the phrasing of the biblical verse, it is clear that in elaborating upon the Qur'ānic version, the tradition attributed to Wahb has ironically remodeled the Qur'ānic phrase upon the language of the Bible, attending so closely to the wording of the latter that the Arabic reads practically like a translation of the Hebrew — which, in the final analysis, it may very well be.[35]

Beyond the elaboration of the curses, there are other particularities of al-Ṭabarī's version that indicate that specific aspects of the phrasing of the Arabic have been dictated by direct reliance on the Hebrew of the biblical account. An incidental detail that is nevertheless of great importance is the curious reference to Adam's actions after he realized he was naked, or rather, after "his nakedness became apparent to him." In our translation of Wahb's tradition above, we rendered the peculiar phrase *fa-dakhala Ādam fī jawfi 'l-shajara* as "so Adam hid by the tree," which is the apparent meaning of the Arabic phrase. However, the literal meaning of this phrase is "then Adam *entered* the tree," which one might construe as meaning "then Adam *hid inside* the tree."

The word *jawf* literally means "center," "inside," "interior," and the phrase *fī jawfi* usually signifies "within," "in the middle of." One element of the narrative seems to imply that the use of this phrase was not accidental: when Iblīs infiltrates the Garden concealed inside the

[34]One could readily infer from Gen. 3:14, *You will go upon your belly, and dust will you eat all the days of your life...*, that some sort of fundamental change of the serpent's physical state has indeed occurred. Numerous elaborations on this theme are to be found in aggadic tradition, which states that the snake was originally a quadruped (as in the Arabic version we have examined here), possessed wings, and so forth.

[35]Cf. also the tradition that appears a few pages later, attributed by al-Ṭabarī to Muḥammad b. Qays; this gives somewhat different versions of the curses on Eve and the serpent. The curse on Eve posits menstruation as her punishment for her role in the affair; on the other hand, the curse on the serpent, although a rather freer rendition than that given in the Wahb tradition, is still recognizably biblical in character — "you will go slithering off on your face, and he who meets you will crush your head with a stone" (*Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 530–1, no. 752).

snake, the phrase used is *fa-lammā arāda Iblīs an yastazillahumā dakhala fī jawfi 'l-ḥayya* — "when Iblīs wanted to cause them to sin, he entered into the snake" (or "hid inside the snake"). Whatever the ultimate significance of Adam's "entering the tree," certainly a deliberate, and ironic, literary symmetry is intended here: when Iblīs undertakes to lead Adam astray, he conceals himself *fī jawfi* the hapless snake in order to enter the Garden; when his work is done and Adam has transgressed God's commandment and become aware of his nakedness, he is ashamed — or afraid — and attempts (unsuccessfully, of course) to hide himself *fī jawfi* the tree, the very tree that caused his downfall. The point is clear: Adam cannot avoid through concealment the consequences of what Satan has accomplished through concealment.

Naturally, there still remains the question of what exactly is meant by describing Adam's action as *fa-dakhala fī jawfi 'l-shajara,* since the notion that he literally hid himself inside the trunk of the tree seems absurd. One possible solution may be provided through reference to the description of the tree early on in the tradition: "It was a tree with branches that were completely entangled (*fa-kānat shajaratan ghuṣūnuhā mutasha*ʿʿ*ibun ba*ʿ*ḍuhā fī ba*ʿ*ḍin*), and it had fruit that the angels came to eat that bestowed upon them their immortality." In context, this notice about the entangled branches seems superfluous, but it is entirely possible that its inclusion here, incongruous as it may seem, is intended to supply a necessary narrative detail that explains Adam's later action: the tree had branches that spread out and were all tangled up together, making a kind of thicket around the tree. When Adam realized that he was naked, he sought to hide himself among the branches of the very tree that had been his undoing.[36]

Additionally, this detail seems to provide us with even more corroboration of the proximity of the Wahb tradition to the Hebrew text of Genesis 3. In the latter, after Adam and Eve have eaten of the fruit and realized their nakedness, *... the man and his wife hid themselves before the Lord God among the trees of the garden* (3:8). The specific phrase used here, *betôk* ʿ*ēṣ ha-gān*, uses the term ʿ*ēṣ*, "tree," usually a singular noun, as a collective; further, the preposition *betôk,* "among," but more literally "within," "inside," is a compound, based on the noun *tôk*, "inside," "center" — in Arabic, *jawf.* A slavishly literal rendition of this phrase would therefore be that Adam and Eve hid themselves from God not "among the trees," but rather "*inside* the *tree*" — in Arabic, *fī jawfi 'l-shajara.*

[36]Cf. Tottoli's translation of the key phrase *fa-dakhala Ādam fī jawfi 'l-shajara*: "Adam went towards the tree to hide himself in the bushes" (*Biblical prophets*, p. 140). Rosenthal's translation of the corresponding passage from the *Ta'rīkh* renders the phrase literally: "Adam went inside the tree (to hide)" (*History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, p. 277).

Sorting things out: Pseudepigraphy and the problematic origins of "Isrāʾīliyyāt"

Our analysis of the Wahb tradition clearly demonstrates the likelihood of its direct dependence upon Genesis 3. Not every version of a biblical narrative found in early Islamic literature should necessarily be thought of as the product of a direct engagement with the original text of the Hebrew Bible; however, the numerous conspicuous parallels between the Masoretic text of Genesis 3 and the Wahb tradition indicate that this is probably the case here. Similarities in structure and phrasing between the two texts make it likely that a written version of the Hebrew original was used to produce Wahb's version of the narrative. While it may be remotely possible that a subtle adaptation of the biblical prototype such as this one could be produced by relying on an intermediate translation into Arabic, Syriac, or some other cognate language, or that it might reflect the influence of orally transmitted traditions rather than the use of a written text of the Bible, these seem like less plausible alternatives for explaining the origin of this narrative and its relationship to its proximate source.[37]

Scholars such as Sezgin and Khoury have seen traditions such as this one as confirming the veracity of reports in classical Muslim sources concerning Wahb's activity as a translator and transmitter of biblical and Jewish lore. Given the sheer quantity and variety of material of a scriptural or quasi-scriptural nature attributed to Wahb preserved in sources from the early and medieval periods, it is perhaps not surprising that modern scholars have generally accepted Wahb's well-established reputation as a conduit for the introduction of this material into Islam as an indisputable fact. However, we would argue that the role played by Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, Wahb b. Munabbih, and similar figures in early Islamic culture is very likely to have been more symbolic than properly historical *per se*. Scriptural lore of all kinds undoubtedly entered Islam through numerous vectors; among the many complex processes of transmission, reception and adaptation that occurred, simple osmosis was by no means the least significant, as Jewish and Christian converts entered the Muslim community and brought their knowledge of their indigenous scriptural traditions with them. In this context, the deployment of bib-

[37] It goes without saying here that, contrary to the conventional argument regarding the origins of *tafsīr* in the milieu of the *quṣṣāṣ*, this tradition clearly originated as a carefully tailored literary piece, and not as a product of "haggadic" exegesis transmitted orally over generations.

lical traditions in exegesis, as in other fields and disciplines, naturally became prevalent.

But as the fledgling Muslim tradition began to sort out questions essential to its self-definition, this seems to have involved connecting the transmission of scriptural and quasi-scriptural traditions with specific sages and authorities versed in the law, lore, and history of the communities that had preceded Islam. Frequently these authorities were themselves converts, though not always. For example, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās, a cousin of the Prophet and the putative founder of the *tafsīr* tradition, is said to have often referred questions to the converts Kaʿb and Ibn Salām, both of whom were generally recognized as authorities on *kitābī* lore among the Companions. But it is Wahb who is most strongly associated with this ongoing process of consultation, often but not solely in connection with the transmission of the knowledge of Kaʿb and Ibn Salām. Wahb's engagement with this material, as well as his independent researches into biblical and Yemenite lore, by some accounts already represents a culmination of this consultation process, the final development in the "canonization" of what Muslims were to adopt from the "People of the Book."

The traditions transmitted directly from Wahb and supposedly preserved in his written works were employed and disseminated not only by al-Ṭabarī but also by other luminaries of the early Islamic scholarly tradition such as Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150/767), Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), and Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889). Moreover, some parts of the sizeable corpus of written works attributed to him, especially a *qiṣaṣ*-type work variously called the *Kitāb al-mubtada*' or *Kitāb al-isrā*'*īliyyāt* (the latter title surely anachronistic[38]), are held to survive in both manuscript fragments and later recensions. As transmission of *kitābī* lore must have occurred in a variety of ways, however, it is probable that the more diffuse and gradual processes through which Islam assimilated and appropriated this lore were telescoped and projected upon personages like Wahb, who came to epitomize those processes.[39] As such, the authenticity of at least some of the extant material attributed to Wahb must

[38] Cf. the discussion of the term below; Tottoli has determined that the term does not seem to be attested before the second half of the 10th century at the earliest.

[39] An analogous example from classical Islamic historiography is found in the "Alexandria to Baghdad" tradition, a narrative cycle concerning the transmission of Greek learning from antiquity. Like the traditions concerning Kaʿb, Wahb, and others we have considered here, these narratives focus on a handful of historical personages whose representation has clearly been subjected to mythologization; these individuals are rendered the primary actors in major processes of cultural transmission and adaptation, and larger political, social, and economic factors are thereby minimized. See Lameer, "From Alexandria to Baghdad," and Gutas, "The 'Alexandria to Baghdad' complex of narratives." I owe these references to Adam Becker.

be questioned.

As was the case with his contemporary Ibn Isḥāq, Wahb's supposed literary output was redacted and transmitted by his students and associates, some of whom quite evidently amended and expanded that material considerably — a fact that even Khoury, the most sanguine among the scholars of Wahb's legacy, would readily admit. Likewise, as Khoury would also admit, others outside the immediate circle of Wahb's descendants and students sought to arrogate his authority as a well-known purveyor of biblical and antiquarian lore to themselves. Further, even members of Wahb's own family were accused of exploiting his reputation on behalf of forgeries (or perhaps exploiting forgeries on behalf of his reputation).[40] Khoury himself relies on this notion of forgery to explain away the contradictions and inaccuracies found in material attributed to Wahb. The problem is that we have few if any criteria upon which to base a solid distinction between genuine and false material so attributed. The contradictions exhibited by these traditions are by no means insubstantial or irrelevant; rather, they often pertain to fundamental questions concerning the nature of Wahb's activity as a traditionist and putative transmitter of biblical lore.

Thus, a major caveat is in order regarding the considerable role that might have been played by students, transmitters and editors in the generations after Wahb. They shaped his legacy as it was bequeathed to later generations of students and scholars who committed his material to writing, adapting them in literary sources of the 3rd–4th century AH that are still extant, such as Ibn Qutayba's *Kitāb al-maʿārif* and al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*. Even when the extant sources appear to proceed from the pen of the master himself, as in the case of the Heidelberg papyrus studied by Khoury, we should be skeptical when attempting to determine their exact provenance. The creative, dynamic role of subsequent generations in collating and presenting this material must be appreciated, as is the case with other famous members of the generation of the Successors and afterwards. As with the literary output of other important intellectual figures of the 8th century such as Ibn Isḥāq and Mālik b. Anas (both of whom are actually later than Wahb), it is perhaps more prudent to speak of Wahb's works as the product of a circle of students

[40] In his discussion of Wahb, Dūrī remarks: "There is no question that the accounts and tales of Wahb became a kind of inheritance, as it were, for his family, which tried to circulate them, and perhaps also to add to them through the work of ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Idrīs and Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Maʿqil b. Munabbih (d. 210 AH), both of whom probably resorted to fabrication in order to glorify Wahb's name." He then cites Ibn Ḥajar, who condemned ʿAbd al-Munʿim for transmitting material plagiarized from books in the name of Wahb (*Rise of historical writing*, pp. 127–8). See below for further discussion of ʿAbd al-Munʿim's role in propagating Wahb's reputation and supposed literary output.

who transmitted material in his name over the generations immediately following his death. Without denying the actual historicity of the early authorities around whom the disciplines of law, tradition, exegesis and history first coalesced, we should acknowledge that the earliest works of the classical tradition were most likely corporate products reflecting at least a generation or two of editorial shaping. This obviously has consequences both for our general understanding of the phenomenon of authorship in the early Islamic tradition and for specific issues of provenance and dating.[41]

In the specific case of Wahb, it is particularly likely that the material transmitted in his name represents a reorganization or consolidation of traditions that may have originally circulated anonymously. The trope of the consultation of learned converts by the Prophet or his Companions may represent the maturing Islamic tradition's attempt to account for material of conspicuously *kitābī* origin preserved in the tradition by associating them with distinct authorities held to have once been active in the transmission of such lore. What was ostensibly being transmitted in such cases was, in fact, not really 'foreign' at all, but originally part of the indigenous cultural inheritance of Islam brought into the community by converts and through other means. The attribution of such material to Wahb b. Munabbih, as with the construction of a complementary image of Kaʿb al-Aḥbār or ʿAbd Allāh b. Salām, served to help later generations of Muslims account for the origins of scriptural and quasi-scriptural material of a *kitābī* nature in an acceptable way. As Muslims of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AH sought to articulate a more rigid sense of their own identity vis-à-vis other monotheistic communities — communities with whom they had once most likely been on more intimate terms — the delineation of boundaries between self and other became more urgent. Discriminating between 'native' and 'foreign' strata within the mass of legal, exegetical, and historical material handed down from previous generations was an integral part of this effort; this, in turn, was facilitated by accounting for the precise avenues through which the 'foreign' material had come to enter Islam in the first place. The promotion of an image of Kaʿb, Ibn Salām, or Wahb as *Kulturträger* represents nothing less than the later tradition's attempt to provide a sanitized, defensible account of its own origins.

The success of this legitimizing strategy is clearly reflected in the strident reaction against this phenomenon in the medieval period. As Tottoli has demonstrated, the term *isrāʾīliyyāt* is not native to early or classical Islamic tradition, at least as it was later employed; its earliest

[41] On the gradual development of the Mālikī canon, see Calder, *Studies,* chs. 1 and 2; cf. also our remarks on the work of Schoeler below.

attestation is in a 10th-century work (al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*), but it did not take on fully pejorative connotations until the 14th century in the work of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Kathīr. As they used it, *isrā'īliyyāt* connotes 'foreign' traditions of a suspect nature that lack the authority of traditions handed down from the Prophet through rigorously scrutinized chains of transmitters — that is, of the authentic Sunna. That the term was *never* employed universally or systematically, before or after them, is proved by the fact that their own identification of *isrā'īliyyāt* tends to be vague and arbitrary. It was not until the modern era that the polemic first articulated by these medieval Ḥanbalī jurists was first widely disseminated, or conscious efforts made to prune objectionable traditions of this sort from the corpus of received material in *ḥadīth, tafsīr,* and related genres.[42]

In any event, there is a fundamental irony to the rejection of the *isrā'īliyyāt* by both medieval authorities and modern ideologues. Their polemic against *isrā'īliyyāt* and the best-known figures associated with it obviously reflects their belief that Kaʿb, Ibn Salām, Wahb, and other such figures were actually responsible for transmitting copious amounts of *kitābī* material to their contemporaries among the Companions and Successors. That is, the legitimating strategy pursued by the early transmitters of this material who attributed it to Wahb and the others proved to be convincing. At the same time, the polemic against *isrā'īliyyāt* also subverts this legitimating strategy, in that the reputations and intentions of the purveyors of these traditions — not only the converts but even Arab kinsmen of the Prophet such as Ibn ʿAbbās — are thereby impugned. Thus, the very device intended to justify the preservation of these 'foreign' traditions eventually led to their wide-scale condemnation and repudiation. Despite the fact that the knowledge transmitted from the *ahl al-kitāb* was meant to be validated by the creation of narratives about the role of the early converts and their students, this attempt to provide the circulation of scriptural and quasi-scriptural traditions with an authentic pedigree or even a myth of origins eventually backfired. For Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Kathīr, as well as for their modern followers, what makes the *isrā'īliyyāt* so insidious is the fact that it has masqueraded as authentic, reliable tradition practically from the time of the foundation of the Muslim community, lending it a false appearance of credibility and authority. We would argue that this was exactly what the authorities of the 2nd and 3rd centuries had in mind in promoting the image of Wahb b. Munabbih and others like him in the first place.

[42] Tottoli, "Origin and use of the term *Isrā'īliyyāt*," p. 201 ff.; *Biblical prophets*, p. 165 ff.

Wahb's legacy and the collector-transmitters of the 3rd/9th century

As the reputation of Wahb b. Munabbih and his esteemed predecessors Kaʿb and Ibn Salām became established as a way to account for apparent *kitābī* inroads into early Islamic tradition, the inscription of interactions between these figures and the Companions and Successors (or even the Prophet himself) into biographical, exegetical, and historical sources lent prestige to their purported teachings. As such, it became desirable to attribute traditions to them, inasmuch as citing Kaʿb, Ibn Salām, or Wahb could enhance and legitimate material of a scriptural or quasi-scriptural character. While we cannot prove that Wahb did not actually transmit traditions or author works of this sort, the sheer diversity of the material attributed to him in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AH appears to corroborate our claim that this material became associated with him at some time considerably after his *floruit*. This point can be demonstrated by comparing the tradition on the Fall preserved by al-Ṭabarī discussed above with analogous materials also attributed to Wahb. In each case, the tradition associated with a particular transmitter or redactor of Wahb's work appears to reflect a distinctive exegetical style.

Al-Ṭabarī's tradition on the Fall must have circulated relatively early, since it is also preserved in the *Tafsīr* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 211/827). Notably, ʿAbd al-Razzāq's version of the Wahb tradition on the Fall is nearly identical to al-Ṭabarī's.[43] The latter's immediate informant for this tradition is al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā, who supposedly transmitted it from ʿAbd al-Razzāq himself; the latter's informant was ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who transmitted it from Wahb, according to the *isnād* attached to both citations of the tradition. This *isnād* can also be corroborated through the tradition's citation in a third early source, the *Tafsīr* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/938), a contemporary of al-Ṭabarī. Ibn Abī Ḥātim likewise received the tradition from al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā (whom he calls al-Ḥasan b. Abī 'l-Rabīʿ), and thus the *isnād* preceding al-Ḥasan here is the same as that given by al-Ṭabarī.[44] Admittedly, Ibn Abī Ḥātim's version is severely truncated compared to the

[43] *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq*, vol. 2, pp. 76–7, no. 892. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib appears in the *isnād* here as ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Darya, and the editor explains that ʿUmar's father Ibn Muhrib was also known as Ibn Darya.

[44] According to Ibn Ḥajar, al-Ḥasan's full name is al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā b. al-Jaʿd b. Nashīt al-ʿAbdī, Abū ʿAlī, Ibn Abī 'l-Rabīʿ; he was a native of Jurjān who lived in Baghdad. Ibn Ḥajar acknowledges that he transmitted from ʿAbd al-Razzāq, and Ibn Abī Ḥātim is mentioned as transmitting from him, though al-Ṭabarī is not (*Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. 2, pp. 324, no. 563). In his own work on transmitters, *Kitāb al-jarḥ*

versions of ʿAbd al-Razzāq and al-Ṭabarī, but this may be due to arbitrary omission, accidental abridgment, or even editorial tampering.[45]

If this tradition's attestation in the *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq* is reliable, it proves that the dissemination of material under Wahb's name must have commenced no later than the first half of the 9th century CE. While this may not provide conclusive evidence of the genuine engagement of the historical Wahb b. Munabbih with biblical or Jewish traditions, it *does* demonstrate the connection of such traditions with Wahb's name almost a century before al-Ṭabarī. This indicates that, by about 850 CE at the latest, Wahb's reputation had been established, at least in certain circles.[46]

As attested in the works of ʿAbd al-Razzāq, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn Abī Ḥātim, the *isnād*s attached to this tradition on the Fall do not necessarily demonstrate that Wahb was its actual source. We only know that ʿAbd al-Razzāq claimed to have had it from ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, who said that he heard it from Wahb. The obvious common link in these *isnād*s is ʿAbd al-Razzāq himself. We cannot verify this tradition's circulation before his time, though the testimonies of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim seems to confirm its connection with him and may corroborate the text of the tradition as given in ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *tafsīr*.

The attribution of material to Wahb in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AH was pseudepigraphic, and was caused by the symbolic role constructed for him by later tradition; this becomes clear when we compare the ma-

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wa-'l-taʿdīl, Ibn Abī Ḥātim not only confirms that ʿUmar's father ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib was also called Ibn Darya, but also states that he was generally known for transmitting from Wahb and that ʿAbd al-Razzāq transmitted from him (vol. 3, p. 121, no. 657).

[45] Only the first part of the tradition is included here: "When God caused Adam and his wife to dwell in the Garden, he forbade the tree to him. It was a tree with branches that were completely entangled, and it had fruit that the angels came to eat that bestowed upon them their immortality; it was the fruit that God prohibited to Adam and his wife" (Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, p. 87, no. 382). The latter part of the tradition containing the narrative of the Fall is entirely missing.

[46] It is possible that Ibn Abī Ḥātim related the second part of the tradition in another part of his *tafsīr*, but I have been unable to locate it; there is no allusion to the episode in the appropriate place in his commentary on either Sūra 7 or 20. Koç has soundly criticized the editorial procedures followed in assembling al-Ṭayyib's edition of the *Tafsīr Ibn Abī Ḥātim*; see "*Isnād*s and *Rijāl* Expertise in the Exegesis of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (327/939)." While he does not allege that material perceived as questionable was deliberately expurgated here, one does wonder if the edition can be fully trusted.

The tradition also appears in a handful of later sources, but these citations almost certainly rely upon the sources we have discussed here. Cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, vol. 1, pp. 204–5 (citing Wahb, and probably taken from al-Ṭabarī); Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, vol. 1, pp. 33–5 (likewise from al-Ṭabarī; on this version, see note 94 below); al-Qurṭūbī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 1, pp. 312–3 (quoted on the authority of ʿAbd al-Razzāq *ʿan* Wahb).

terial al-Ṭabarī ascribes to him with that found in the *kitāb al-maʿārif* of Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889). In this work, Ibn Qutayba presents summary treatments of many subjects discussed both in the Qurʾān and in *kitābī* scriptures, including the lives of pre-Islamic prophets like Adam. In discussing various accounts of Adam's life, Ibn Qutayba contrasts what he has read in the Torah with what Wahb is supposed to have transmitted. This is surprising in view of the direct reliance of the tradition al-Ṭabarī attributes to Wahb on the original Genesis account.[47]

Oddly, Ibn Qutayba pays no attention at all to the story of the Fall, even though the Qurʾān clearly describes it. Among the events of Adam's life he does relate, he highlights the birth of Cain and Abel and the subsequent fratricide, relating these accounts "according to what he has read in the Torah." He then juxtaposes this with an apocryphal story according to which Cain and Abel were each supposed to marry the other's identical twin sister, but this was foiled by Cain's desire for his own sister. Irritated at the defiance of his decree regarding their marriages, Adam sends the brothers off to perform sacrifices to determine who will marry Cain's twin, and — as in Genesis — Cain murders Abel after his sacrifice is rejected. Despite its partial agreement with the basic narrative outline of the original story, this account is rather un-biblical in both ambience and details: for example, the story concludes with Adam cursing the earth for drinking up the blood of his slain son Abel. It is this story that Ibn Qutayba specifically attributes to Wahb. It is noteworthy that al-Ṭabarī also has the same story, but does not attribute it to Wahb. Instead, he cites it on the authority of "some people of knowledge from *ahl al-kitāb al-awwal.*"[48] Further, the original source of this tradition is apparent, since it agrees closely with a similar account

[47] Regarding Ibn Qutayba's biblical literacy, Adang notes that he in fact sometimes incorrectly attributes material to the Torah, and in at least one case, this material is cited in Wahb's name! With the exception of one passage from Exodus, all of the genuine biblical quotations in *Kitāb al-maʿārif* (as well as *ʿUyūn al-akhbār*) are from Genesis, and she conjectures that he may have relied on an abridged translation of Genesis for these. Regarding the prooftexts cited in his *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa,* on the other hand, she surmises that he relied on an established list of apologetic *testimonia* and did not generate the requisite biblical references for this work himself. See Adang, *Muslim writers*, pp. 112–7; cf. esp. p. 114 for another example of Ibn Qutayba's juxtaposition of genuine and apocryphal biblical material.

[48] Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* (*Annales*, Series I, vol. 1, pp. 140–1); cf. the parallel in *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 6, p. 121 ad Qurʾān 5:27. Al-Ṭabarī's full *isnād* is Ibn Ḥumayd — Salama — Ibn Isḥāq — *ʿan baʿḍ ahl al-ʿilm min ahl al-kitāb al-awwal.* Regarding the "People of the First Book," see Rosenthal, *History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, p. 311 and Adang, *Muslim writers*, pp. 121–2 for comment. One might think that de Goeje's text is corrupt here, except that this expression in fact recurs throughout the *Taʾrīkh.* The lower part of the chain seems to be particularly associated with transmissions from Wahb in both al-Ṭabarī's chronicle and Qurʾān commentary.

in the *Cave of Treasures*, a Late Antique Christian apocryphon.[49]

After citing more apocryphal traditions, Ibn Qutayba goes on to relate another in the name of Wahb that strengthens the connection to the *Cave of Treasures* since it is about the legendary Cave itself. It describes how Adam's remains were placed in the *ghār al-kanz* (i.e. the *maghārat al-kunūz,* the eponymous *meʿarāth gazzē* of the Syriac apocryphon). Noah then took them away during the Flood, replacing them when the waters receded. Ibn Qutayba concludes by saying that he read in the Torah that Adam lived to be 930 years old, while Wahb, on the other hand, claimed that he lived to be 1,000.[50]

Again, Ibn Qutayba does not include anything about the story of the Fall here. This is perhaps unsurprising, because the treatment of the story of Adam in the *Kitāb al-maʿārif* is only three pages long, whereas al-Ṭabarī has numerous traditions devoted to him. This contrast is due primarily to the nature of their respective works. But one is struck by the fact that there is virtually no description of the Fall in the *Cave of Treasures* either. This might suggest that Ibn Qutayba is mainly interested in rectifying Wahb's account of the story of Adam by citing the biblical account directly, but nevertheless allows Wahb's account (that is, the account of the *Cave of Treasures*) to dictate the basic scope of the narrative.[51]

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[49] See *Caverne des Trésors*, ed. Ri, vol. 1, pp. 36–45 (Syriac), vol. 2, pp. 16–21 (French). Ri gives two different recensions of the text here, "Occidental" and "Oriental"; there is little variation between them in this particular narrative. Against the tendency of Ri and older scholars to date the text (or at least the *Urtext*) as early as the 2nd c. CE, recently Leonhard has argued against the possibility of isolating an early *Urschatzhöhle* and claimed that the work as a whole cannot be earlier than the 4th century, possibly originating as late as the 5th or 6th century (Leonhard, "Observations on the date of the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*"). The tradition about the twin sisters is represented several times in al-Thaʿlabī's *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, related variously on the authority of "people knowledgeable in *qiṣaṣ*," "Ibn Isḥāq in the *Mubtada'*," or al-Kalbī. Regarding the citation of Ibn Isḥāq, Brinner suggests that this is actually a reference to the *Kitāb al-mubtada'* of Wahb or of Isḥāq b. Bishr (74, n. 40). Other Muslim authors of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AH are known to have relied on the *Cave of Treasures,* including Ibn Saʿd and al-Yaʿqūbī; see Adang, *Muslim writers*, pp. 16, 117–8. So far, we have no comprehensive study of the reception of this influential work in early Islamic culture.

[50] *Al-Maʿārif*, pp. 17–9. On Ibn Qutayba and his *oeuvre*, see Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba*, and now Lowry, "Ibn Qutayba (828–889)" in *Arabic literary culture, 500–925*, pp. 172–83, for a concise overview with up-to-date bibliography.

[51] Regarding Ibn Qutayba's critical perspective, Adang observes that at a certain point in the development of Arabic literary culture, scholars became interested in rectifying the traces of biblical material that had become quasicanonical in Islamic tradition by that time. The Wahb tradition on the Fall in al-Ṭabarī probably represents such an attempt at "rectification," and may reflect a 3rd/9th-century consciousness of the questionable reliability of much of the aggadic material in circulation, not a 2nd/8th century interest in the Bible as a ground of authentic revealed truth and

Beyond the specific issue of Ibn Qutayba's reliance on the *Cave of Treasures,* however, it is striking that, although both associate Wahb b. Munabbih with biblical and *kitābī* lore, Ibn Qutayba's Wahb and al-Ṭabarī's Wahb do not seem to be the same person, at least as defined by the material each author ascribes to him. Each of them attributes qualitatively different kinds of literary activity to the same person, to the extent that Ibn Qutayba's Wahb and al-Ṭabarī's Wahb are clearly not doing the same thing when they are transmitting scriptural or quasi-scriptural material. Judging by the long tradition on the Fall examined here, al-Ṭabarī knows Wahb as an authority on the Bible in the strictest sense, as a source for moderately adapted translations from scripture — in short, for Torah in Arabic. But Ibn Qutayba knows Wahb as an "aggadist," a *darshan* or *qāṣṣ,* a source of apocryphal and homiletic expansions of scripture. Although they are not wholly incompatible, these are generally recognizable as two distinct exegetical modes.[52]

Further, in various modern scholarly discussions of Wahb, he sometimes wears both of these hats, or sometimes one or the other: he was a translator and transmitter of scripture, or he was responsible for producing "Islamicized" versions of scriptural accounts, essentially aggadic narratives that draw loosely on biblical stories but deviate from them freely. For example, Khoury wants to have it both ways in representing Wahb as a *Bearbeiter*, an arranger-adapter of scripture, who often produces loose or "impressionistic" readings of biblical materials, but who can still be called upon as a putative source of genuine, literal renditions of scripture as well. But this inconsistency is illogical: why would an exegete sometimes rely upon a more "impressionistic" technique of rendering scripture and then take a much more literal approach at other times? What hermeneutic outlook could this oscillation possibly reflect?

Further, if Wahb was able, willing, and interested in producing actual translations of biblical stories, why would he prefer to transmit apocrypha instead, and choose to rely on received materials like the *Cave of Treasures* when he was well acquainted with the original biblical text? Admittedly, one can imagine a *Bearbeiter* skillfully juxtaposing the actual text of scripture with elaborations and emendations for maximum homiletic or exegetical effect; this is exactly the procedure one sees in classical *midrash*, as well as in the Wahb tradition from al-Ṭabarī, which utilizes legendary flourishes alongside a very literal reproduction of verses from Genesis. But Ibn Qutayba's Wahb is not such a *Bear-*

source of trustworthy historical information.

[52]To complicate matters, note that al-Ṭabarī's tradition on Cain and Abel taken from the *Cave of Treasures* is followed by a passage on the dialogue between Cain and God that is a literal translation of Gen. 4:9–16; see Rosenthal, *History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, p. 312, n. 877 and Adang, *Muslim writers*, pp. 121–2 for commentary.

beiter: rather, his Wahb transmits pure apocrypha *independent* of the literal text of scripture, and Ibn Qutayba engages with and reproduces the biblical text specifically in order to correct (and perhaps chastise) him.

It is obvious that a thorough comparison of the material attributed to Wahb by Ibn Qutayba and by al-Ṭabarī is necessary before any conclusive verdict on this issue may be reached. However, if we examine more material on the Fall narrative from early Islamic sources, even more diversity becomes evident — different exegetical styles, varying degrees of interpenetration of biblical and aggadic themes, parallels with different sources of Jewish or Christian provenance, and, most significant of all, conspicuous heterogeneity of attribution.[53] One suspects that in these attributions, Wahb may alternately represent one or the other exegetical style or preference, biblical or aggadic, but without any consistency. Given the enormous scope of his *oeuvre*, attributions to Wahb may even prove to be internally inconsistent *within* al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*, for the latter has material from Wahb through at least three *isnād*s: one in which the key figure is ʿAbd al-Razzāq, another in which it is Ibn Isḥāq, and a third in which it is ʿAbd al-Ṣamad b. Maʿqil b. Munabbih, Wahb's nephew.[54]

As a further illustration of this point, the material on the Fall attributed to Wahb in Ibn Hishām's *Kitāb al-tījān* is noteworthy. While some of the brief traditions on the Fall cited in Wahb's name in the passage on Adam and Eve at the beginning of this work do correspond vaguely to aspects of the tradition cited by al-Ṭabarī, the overall treat-

[53] Khoury's detailed study of Wahb facilitates such comparative analysis, since he provides comprehensive lists (now somewhat outdated due to publication of new material) of all the traditions attributed to Wahb to be found in classical sources, sorted according to the biblical figure in question. (The list of attested traditions on Adam appears on vol. 1, pp. 229–30.) Of course, one cannot rely solely on this list to conduct thorough research, because it only includes material explicitly attributed to Wahb. Comparison of these passages with those attributed to other famous mediators of *isrā'īliyyāt* would prove instructive; for example, the *Iklīl*, a history of the Yemen by the 10th century traditionist al-Hamdānī, contains a fragment on Adam and Eve, supposedly transmitted from Kaʿb al-Aḥbār.

[54] Of these three, Horst acknowledges only the Ibn Isḥāq *isnād* (Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd — Salama b. al-Faḍl — Ibn Isḥāq — Wahb b. Munabbih), attested forty-one times in the *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, in his discussion of the *isnād*s in al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*. (The same *isnād* provides al-Ṭabarī with a considerable number of *ḥadīth* from Ibn ʿAbbās transmitted by Ibn Isḥāq.) See Horst, "Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar aṭ-Ṭabarīs," p. 303. Cf. p. 301, however, where the al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā — ʿAbd al-Razzāq chain is noted as generally linking al-Ṭabarī not to Wahb through ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib, but rather to such luminaries of the early *tafsīr* tradition as Qatāda, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and al-Zuhrī through Maʿmar b. Rāshid. Traditions transmitted from Wahb's nephew ʿAbd al-Ṣamad (always transmitted through *his* nephew, Abū Hishām Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Maʿqīl b. Munabbih) are attested throughout both al-Ṭabarī's chronicle and Qur'ān commentary, but not often enough to figure in Horst's analysis.

ment of the narrative is considerably different here. The main passage on the Fall in the *Kitāb al-tīǰān* does not even mention the snake, but it invokes other themes that are conspicuously absent from the tradition in al-Ṭabarī. One example is that of the *ṣaḥīfa* God bestowed upon Adam when He placed him in the Garden. Unlike the tradition in al-Ṭabarī, here the episode centers on God's warnings to Adam: not only should he not partake of the fruit, but he is explicitly warned not to be taken in by Iblīs' temptation. The narrative then unfolds with Satan's attempt to persuade Adam to eat the fruit — a scene reminiscent of the seduction of Eve in Genesis — and his initial failure, as Adam remembers God's warning with Eve's help. It is only upon his second try, a year later, that Iblīs successfully leads Adam to transgress God's command.[55]

Strikingly, this narrative has relatively little in common with either the account in Genesis or the apocryphal details alluded to in al-Ṭabarī's Wahb tradition. In Genesis and in al-Ṭabarī's Wahb tradition, Satan's primary interlocutor is Eve, whereas here Adam is in the foreground. The snake is not mentioned at all; it is only at the conclusion of the episode that Ibn Hishām segues to *another* tradition transmitted from Wahb, in which he states that according to some scholars Iblīs entered the garden riding on the snake; the snake's original nature as a quadruped is then mentioned. After a brief quotation of the enmity verse (Qur'ān 7:24), this short passage concludes by stating that the snake then lost his limbs and was cast down to earth by Gabriel, landing on a mountain in Khurāsān.[56] Likewise, in the main passage on the Fall, there is no mention of God placing a curse on Adam, Eve, or Iblīs; instead, when Adam admits his guilt, God replies *He forgot, and we find him without resolve* (i.e., Qur'ān 20:115).[57] The whole episode is thus structured around the theme of God's warnings going unheeded or being carelessly forgotten, a theme absent from the tradition in al-Ṭabarī.

Thus, the passage in Ibn Hishām's work, explicitly transmitted from Wahb, has little in common with the tradition in al-Ṭabarī as regards its content or its exegetical style. It does not invoke the same narrative details, underscore the same themes, or quote the Genesis narrative directly. Nor is it even particularly "biblical" in phrasing or ambience.[58]

[55] Ibn Hishām, *Kitāb al-tīǰān*, pp. 8–9.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[57] The whole line runs *wa-laqad ʿahidnā ilā Ādam min qablu fa-nasiya wa-lam najid lahu ʿazman* (we gave Adam orders previously, but he forgot, and we find him without resolve). It introduces the version of the story of the Fall found in Sūra 20. It is never cited in the Wahb tradition in al-Ṭabarī.

[58] *Pace* Horovitz, *Earliest biographies*, p. 37 and Dūrī, *Rise of historical writing*, p. 125, n. 22; cf. also Khoury, "Quelques réflexions." All of them characterize Ibn Hishām's account of Genesis as generally faithful to the biblical text, but this assertion obviously does not stand up to close scrutiny, at least in this specific case.

There is some parallel to the basic style of Ibn Qutayba's tradition on Cain and Abel, in that some vague interest in biblical or *kitābī* themes might be observed here, but in the case of the tradition from Ibn Hishām, we cannot even link it to a known apocryphal source, and so its ultimate provenance can only be conjectured. Ibn Hishām's Wahb is thus different both from the Wahb of Ibn Qutayba and from that of al-Ṭabarī: he is mediating neither the Bible *per se* nor a famous Christian source like the *Cave of Treasures,* but is simply a purveyor of a homiletic narrative on the Fall of Adam and Eve. In retrospect, we might think of him as even more of a *darshan* or "aggadist" than Ibn Qutayba's Wahb.[59]

While Khoury and others may posit a distinction between Wahb's authentic *oeuvre* and material that was falsely ascribed to him, a more practical way to account for the divergences and discrepancies of the corpus attributed to Wahb may be to focus on the aforementioned phenomenon of loosely defined "schools" cohering around the work (or even the mere reputation) of an influential teacher. For example, Schoeler has repeatedly argued that in early Islamic culture the works of an author would be altered, amended, and supplemented as they were transmitted from his students to his students' students, and so on; the original author's work would thus change dramatically through transmission over just a few generations, developing organically through this process. Under these conditions, the susceptibility of a work to change through transmission was such that it was not until the 3rd/9th century that any substantial distinction could be made between author (*Verfasser*) and transmitter (*Überlieferer*).[60]

We do not intend to argue for the existence of a formal "school" of any sort centered on Wahb's work. However, the different texts and exegetical materials purportedly transmitted from Wahb might perhaps be seen as representing the emergence of different strands of tradition associated with his name, all handed down according to different lineages within a diffuse movement of followers who promoted his reputation as the preeminent *shaykh* on whose authority *kitābī* materials had entered Islam. At the very least, these followers could have exploited his reputation in order to justify and "domesticate" such materials. The tradition transmitted from Wahb by ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān arguably repre-

[59] In terms of the classic paradigm invoked to explain the rise of *tafsīr*, it is Ibn Hishām's Wahb who is most like the stock type of the *qāṣṣ*, freely elaborating on scripture without relying on textual sources or being constrained by the rigorous citation of authentic *ḥadīth*.

[60] See Schoeler, "Frage der Schriftlichen oder Mündlichen Überlieferung," *passim*; and cf. his later elaboration of this idea, "Weiteres zur Frage der Schriftlichen oder Mündlichen Überlieferung." A number of Schoeler's earlier articles on this theme have now been reworked into a monograph in English, *The oral and the written in early Islam*.

sents one strand of the tradition; that cited by Ibn Qutayba seems to represent another, and that cited by Ibn Hishām a third. Overall, four or five such strands within the Wahb tradition can be delineated, and the coalescence of the discrete text or texts associated with each seems to have occurred gradually between one to two centuries after Wahb's death (see Figure 1).

Perhaps the most important strand is that which produced the Heidelberg papyrus dated 229 AH (844 CE), edited by Khoury. Unfortunately, there seems to be considerable confusion surrounding the individuals cited in its *isnād*. The central figure is undoubtedly the *muḥaddith* ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Idrīs, who died in 228/842,[61] only a short time before the papyrus was written. This individual was apparently responsible for at least one widely disseminated redaction of material connected with Wahb; notably, Ibn al-Nadīm ascribes a *Kitāb al-mubtada'* to ʿAbd al-Munʿim, without recognizing it as a work of Wahb's *per se*. One section of the Heidelberg papyrus dealing with *maghāzī* claims to be the work of ʿAbd al-Munʿim as transmitted to one Abū Ṭalḥa Muḥammad b. Baḥr; ʿAbd al-Munʿim's family *isnād* for the material is traced back through his father Idrīs b. Sinān, who apparently transmitted it from an unknown Abū Ilyās, who transmitted it from Wahb.[62] Most of the available *rijāl* sources name Idrīs b. Sinān as Wahb's grandson; he is often called *ibn ibnat Wahb*, or some variation on this.[63] However, in Ibn Saʿd's biography of ʿAbd al-Munʿim, he says that it was ʿAbd al-Munʿim himself who was *ibn ibnat Wahb*; although Ibn Saʿd is the earliest of the *rijāl* authorities whose work is available for our direct consultation, this seems to be a mistake.[64] Wahb reportedly died in 110/728 at the age of about sev-

[61] Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, p. 525; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, vol. 1, p. 94.

[62] Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih*, p. 118. This part of the papyrus has received considerable scholarly attention for the significant amount of genuinely early historical information it contains about the Prophet's career, in particular regarding the famous ʿAqaba meeting.

[63] Among the earlier *rijāl* authorities, Bukhārī (*al-Ta'rīkh al-kabīr*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 36–7, no. 1604), Ibn Abī Ḥātim (*al-Jarḥ wa-'l-taʿdīl*, vol. 2, p. 264, no. 952) and Ibn Ḥibbān (*Kitāb al-thiqāt*, vol. 6, p. 77) all clearly state in their *tarājim* of Idrīs that he was *ibn ibnat Wahb*. In Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *tarjama* of ʿAbd al-Munʿim the name appears as "ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Idrīs b. ibnat Wahb b. Munabbih" (vol. 6, p. 67, no. 353). One could easily misread this as indicating that it was ʿAbd al-Munʿim who was the *ibn ibnat Wahb* (as if there was a comma after "Idrīs"), and the references in Ibn Qutayba (*al-Maʿārif*, p. 525) and Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, vol. 1, p. 94) to ʿAbd al-Munʿim are similarly ambiguous. In their entries on Idrīs, the later *rijāl* authorities al-Mizzī (*Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 2, pp. 298–9, no. 291), al-Dhahabī (*Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, vol. 1, p. 317, no. 680 [2248]), and Ibn Ḥajar (*Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, vol. 1, pp. 194–5, no. 364) all confirm that he was Wahb's grandson as well.

[64] *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, vol. 9, p. 365, no. 4429. The same mistake occurs in Ibn Ḥibbān's *tarjama* of ʿAbd al-Munʿim in his *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, vol. 2, p. 157. In his *tarjama* of Idrīs in his *Kitāb al-thiqāt* (see above), Ibn Ḥibbān calls Idrīs *Ibn bint*

enty, while according to Ibn Qutayba, Ibn al-Nadīm, and others, ʿAbd al-Munʿim died in 228/842 at the age of a hundred or thereabouts. ʿAbd al-Munʿim was therefore born around 128/746, a number of years after Wahb's death as a septuagenarian. Considering the time span between them, it is more reasonable to conclude that ʿAbd al-Munʿim was Wahb's great-grandson, and that it was his father Idrīs who was the *ibn ibnat Wahb*.[65]

A more vexed question is the identity of Abū Ilyās to whom Wahb purportedly transmitted this material and who transmitted it to Idrīs. Formally speaking, the position of this obscure individual in the *isnād* makes sense, since Idrīs was Wahb's grandson and might not have been able to hear *ḥadīth* from him directly, and it would have been highly unusual for him to have received Wahb's material from his mother. One would thus conclude that Abū Ilyās was perhaps a student of Wahb's who could serve as a link between him and his descendants. As presented by Khoury, the *isnād* mentioned in the manuscript is clearly Muḥammad b. Baḥr Abū Ṭalḥa — ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Idrīs — *ʿan abīhi* (i.e. Idrīs) — *ʿan* Abū Ilyās — *ʿan* Wahb b. Munabbih. But among the early *rijāl* authorities, the reports on Idrīs given by Bukhārī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim attest to the fact that the *kunyā* Abū Ilyās belonged to Idrīs himself; Bukhārī mentions this in quoting Muʿāfā who knew Idrīs as "Idrīs b. Sinān, Abū Ilyās al-Yamānī." This is most likely Muʿāfā b. ʿImrān al-Mawṣilī, who transmitted from Idrīs according to Ibn Abī Ḥātim; surely Idrīs' own student would know his authentic *kunyā*.[66] This suggests that

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Wahb, and he is claimed to transmit from his *grandfather* Wahb (*yarwī ʿan jaddihi Wahb*). But in Ibn Ḥibbān's report on ʿAbd al-Munʿim in the *Majrūḥīn*, it is *ʿAbd al-Munʿim* who is *Ibn bint Wahb*; he transmits from his grandfather through his *father* (*yarwī ʿan abīhi ʿan Wahb*); further, ʿAbd al-Munʿim's mother's name is given as "Umm Salama b. Wahb b. Munabbih." (This seems to be the earliest text to call Wahb's daughter by name.) As the phrasing of the entry on Idrīs in the *Thiqāt* is unambiguous, there is no way to reconcile the conflicting data.

[65] The relationship between these figures has been much discussed in scholarship and appears even more confused here than in the classical *rijāl* literature. Khoury has it right, citing al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar, and ignoring the report in Ibn Saʿd (*Wahb b. Munabbih*, vol. 1, p. 184, and cf. his version of Wahb's family tree, vol. 1, p. 201). Horovitz calls ʿAbd al-Munʿim Wahb's grandson and thinks Idrīs was the husband and not the son of Wahb's daughter, citing Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Qutayba, and Ibn al-Nadīm; the erroneous report in Ibn Saʿd seems to have lead him to misinterpret the other two reports (*Earliest biographies*, p. 38). Dūrī follows Horovitz in calling ʿAbd al-Munʿim Wahb's grandson, explicitly citing Ibn al-Nadīm (*Historical writing*, p. 126), but the family tree he presents has ʿAbd al-Munʿim as Wahb's great-great-grandson! This error is represented in the Arabic original of Dūrī's monograph (*Baḥth fī nashʾat ʿilm al-taʾrīkh ʿinda al-ʿarab*, p. 114) as well as in the English translation (*Historical writing*, p. 134).

[66] Al-Mizzī and Ibn Ḥajar recognize Idrīs as Abū Ilyās as well, but the *kunyā* is not mentioned by al-Dhahabī. Horovitz knows Abū Ilyās to be the *kunyā* of Idrīs,

the *isnād* in the Heidelberg papyrus is simply wrong, though Khoury's reading of the papyrus appears to be correct.[67] This seems to be corroborated by the fact that Bukhārī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and Ibn Ḥibbān all state in their *tarājim* on Idrīs that he transmitted directly from Wahb (Ibn Ḥibbān actually says *ʿan jaddihi Wahb*); further, in his *tarjama* of ʿAbd al-Munʿim, Ibn Abī Ḥātim says that he transmitted *ʿan* his father *ʿan* his (i.e. Idrīs') grandfather Wahb. Given that all three of these early *rijāl* experts seem to recognize Idrīs as transmitting directly from Wahb and that two of them recognize Abū Ilyās as his *kunyā*, it is reasonable to conclude that the *isnād* in the Heidelberg manuscript is in error.

It is noteworthy that ʿAbd al-Munʿim was notorious among *ḥadīth* scholars. In his *tarjama* of ʿAbd al-Munʿim in *al-Taʾrīkh al-kabīr,* Bukhārī (d. 256/869) describes him as *dhāhib al-ḥadīth*, an unreliable transmitter.[68] Al-ʿUqaylī (d. 322/934), an important early authority on *matrūk* or untrustworthy transmitters, quotes a report cited by ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal on the authority of his father claiming that ʿAbd al-Munʿim was only five or six when his father died, implying that he was unable to transmit *ḥadīth* from Idrīs legitimately. Al-ʿUqaylī then quotes a second report from ʿAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, on the authority of Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn, attesting that ʿAbd al-Munʿim was seen purchasing books of *ḥadīth* when he was seventy years old; this implies that this is how he had learned his *ḥadīth*, or else perhaps that he had forgotten his *ḥadīth* and was forced to check them against books for verification.[69]

Immediately after noting that ʿAbd al-Munʿim transmitted *ʿan abīhi ʿan jaddihi Wahb,* Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938) quotes a report similar to that of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal regarding ʿAbd al-Munʿim's youth when his father Idrīs died. Notably, this report, transmitted by one Salama b. Shabīb, purports to be the firsthand testimony of Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Karīm (Wahb's grand-nephew) about the death of Idrīs (Wahb's grandson, Ismāʿīl's second cousin) in the Yemen when ʿAbd al-Munʿim was a mere infant (*raḍīʿ*), again implying that the latter had no right to his father's *ḥadīth.*[70] Both Salama and Ismāʿīl transmitted material

but concludes solely on the basis of the *isnād* in the Heidelberg papyrus that the intermediary who transmitted to him from Wahb must have been *another* person with the very same *kunyā* (p. 38, n. 195)!

[67] See the facsimile of folio PB1 in *Wahb b. Munabbih*, volume 2. In his discussion of the relevant evidence, Khoury acknowledges Ibn Ḥajar's testimony that the *kunyā* refers to Idrīs himself, and admits that the name might not represent some otherwise unknown intermediary. This being the case, he states, one should take the *ʿan* that occurs before the *kunyā* in the *isnād* as a simple error, a *lapsus calami* (*Wahb b. Munabbih*, vol. 1, p. 185).

[68] *Al-Taʾrīkh al-kabīr*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 138, and quoted repeatedly in later *rijāl* works.

[69] Al-ʿUqaylī, *Kitāb al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, vol. 3, p. 112, no. 1084.

[70] *Al-Jarḥ wa-'l-taʿdīl*, vol. 6, p. 67, no. 353. Incidentally, if the tradition about the

from Wahb themselves, and one suspects that this tradition may reflect the natural rivalry that emerged between different traditionists who laid claim to Wahb b. Munabbih's legacy. Among the early *rijāl* experts, Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965) is the most explicit in condemning ʿAbd al-Munʿim: he fabricated *ḥadīth* that he transmitted in his father's name; his traditions are of no use in legal argumentation; and one should avoid transmitting from him altogether.[71]

Nevertheless, ʿAbd al-Munʿim's importance in disseminating Wahb's work — or at least material of the sort that would come to be widely associated with Wahb — a hundred years after his illustrious ancestor cannot be doubted; both the testimony of Ibn al-Nadīm about his *Kitāb al-mubtada'* and his role in transmitting the material preserved for posterity in the Heidelberg papyrus suggest this. Unfortunately, a complication involving the Heidelberg papyrus arises in regard to the *isnād* attached to the other major section of the text, the so-called *Ḥadīth Dāwūd,* for it is *not* explicitly attributed to Wahb himself as the first section on *maghāzī* is. Rather, its transmission is traced from Abū Ṭalḥa back to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with the following *isnād*: Abū Ayyūb — Isḥāq b. Bishr — Saʿīd b. Bashīr — Qatāda. Despite this, Khoury argues that this is genuinely Wahb's material, since Isḥāq b. Bishr (d. 206/821), generally known as an authority on *mubtada'* or pre-Islamic history, in fact frequently cites Wahb's *ḥadīth*, transmitted through Abū Ilyās.[72] Abbott further refines Khoury's speculations regarding this *isnād* (in particular identifying "Abū Ayyūb" as the *mawlā* of the daughter of the famous early Meccan traditionist Shuraḥbīl b. Saʿd) and the *Ḥadīth Dāwūd*'s authentic connection to Wahb.[73] However, it must be admitted that if Khoury and Abbott are wrong about the *isnād*, then one of our most critical pieces of evidence for an ancient association of biblical or quasi-biblical material with the name of Wahb perishes. If we take the *isnād* of this section of the Heidelberg Papyrus at face value, we have no basis at all for attributing the part of the work that specifically deals with material of this sort to Wahb.[74]

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death of Idrīs is true, this establishes Idrīs' *floruit* as being from about 90/710 or earlier (since he transmitted from both Mujāhid and the Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir) to around 130/750. Wahb having died in 110/728, Idrīs could realistically have been either his son or his grandson.

[71] *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, vol. 2, p. 157. See also the comprehensive treatments of al-Dhahabī (*Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*, vol. 4, p. 419, no. 5275 [5370]) and Ibn Ḥajar (*Lisān al-mizān*, vol. 5, p. 77, no. 5396). Unsurprisingly, both emphasize Ibn Ḥanbal's assertion of ʿAbd al-Munʿim's unreliability. Overall, both are far more strident in their condemnation of ʿAbd al-Munʿim's purported falsification of *ḥadīth*.

[72] Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih*, pp. 185–8.

[73] Abbott, "Wahb b. Munabbih," pp. 103–5.

[74] Note also that Khoury reconstructed parts of the *Ḥadīth Dāwūd* portion of the Heidelberg papyrus on the basis of the extant *qiṣaṣ* work of ʿUmāra b. Wathīma

In any event, the transmission of texts and traditions attributed to Wahb was hardly confined to the single family lineage of Wahb — Idrīs — ʿAbd al-Munʿim. The second major strand of tradition associated with Wahb, closely related to the first, is reflected in the *Kitāb al-tījān fī mulūk Ḥimyar* of Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), a redaction of an earlier work ascribed to Wahb. Ibn Hishām received this earlier work from Asad b. Mūsā, who had it from the aforementioned Idrīs b. Sinān. We might think of this strand as an offshoot of the one just discussed, Idrīs presumably transmitting some of his grandfather's material to his son ʿAbd al-Munʿim and other material to his pupil Asad.[75] Hypothetically, as eventually handed down to Abū Ṭalḥa by ʿAbd al-Munʿim, Wahb's material on the campaigns of Muḥammad and on David was redacted into the Heidelberg papyrus; meanwhile, as eventually handed down to Ibn Hishām by Asad, Wahb's material on biblical antiquity and the Yemen became Ibn Hishām's *Kitāb al-tījān.* In short, both strands yielded roughly contemporary textualizations or recensions of material handed down from Wahb. ʿAbd al-Munʿim and Ibn Hishām died within ten to fifteen years of one another.

A third strand of tradition, seemingly unrelated to the first two, is that which produced the tradition on the Fall presented by al-Ṭabarī and others. It was handed down to posterity in the name of Wahb not by his grandson Idrīs, but by another figure, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib (about whom little is known). He is significant primarily as the conduit through whom Wahb's material was transmitted to the great Yemenite scholar ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 211/827). It is ʿAbd al-Razzāq's transmission from Wahb that produced the tradition on the Fall attributed to him by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim. Although al-Ṭabarī has material attributed to Wahb from multiple sources, the tradition on the Fall transmitted from Wahb to ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib to ʿAbd al-Razzāq was transmitted by him to al-Ṭabarī's teacher Ibn Abī 'l-Rabīʿ (al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā), who transmitted it to both al-Ṭabarī

al-Fārisī (d. 289/902); unfortunately, as extant, this text lacks all of the material corresponding to Genesis. On the other hand, the *qiṣaṣ* work of the above-mentioned Isḥāq b. Bishr is also extant in manuscript, and, according to Tottoli, it contains a significant amount of narrative material on Genesis; comparison of this material with the Wahb traditions examined here would surely be illuminating. On both Isḥāq b. Bishr and ʿUmāra b. Wathīma, see Tottoli, *Biblical prophets*, pp. 141–6.

[75] This assumes, of course, that Asad really was Idrīs' pupil. Al-Mizzī attests that among the authorities who transmitted from Abū Ilyās Idrīs b. Sinān is one Yūsuf b. Zayd, whom he calls the *shaykh* of Asad b. Mūsā (*Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, vol. 2, pp. 298–9, no. 291). This may indicate *tadlīs* in Ibn Hishām's *isnād*, and suggests that Asad b. Mūsā in fact had received the Wahb material that he in turn transmitted to Ibn Hishām through Ibn Zayd, and not directly from Idrīs. On the transmission history of the *Tījān*, see Krenkow, "Two oldest books on Arabic folklore," especially p. 231.

and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.

The *tafsīr*s of al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim seem to corroborate independently the transmission from Ibn Abī 'l-Rabīʿ; further, the genuine association of this tradition with ʿAbd al-Razzāq seems to be verified by the transmission of his *Tafsīr* through multiple students, including not only Ibn Abī 'l-Rabīʿ but also Isḥāq b. al-Ḥajjāf and Salama b. Shabīb. It is the latter in whom we are most interested, for it is through Salama's transmission of the *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq* to his pupil al-Khashanī that it survives today.[76] Assuming that the two extant manuscripts of the *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq* do not reflect later attempts to harmonize it with the ʿAbd al-Razzāq traditions found in al-Ṭabarī and so forth, this work verifies that he in fact did hand down the highly biblicized version of the Fall attributed to Wahb.

Further, the version of the Genesis narrative attributed to Wahb by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) is surely significant in this connection. He was a late contemporary of ʿAbd al-Munʿim, and his Wahb traditions might thus be considered a fourth strand of Wahb material in circulation in the mid-3rd/9th century. The problem is that Ibn Qutayba does not provide any *isnād* to account for his reception of Wahb's material. At the beginning of the *Kitāb al-maʿārif*, Ibn Qutayba acknowledges having used a work he calls *Mubtadaʾ al-khalq wa-qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*.[77] If we consider the fact that he often cites Wahb on matters relating to the pre-Islamic prophets and biblical antiquity in particular, and also that he

[76] Intriguingly, this Salama b. Shabīb is the same individual who transmitted the comment of Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Karīm quoted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim concerning Idrīs' early death, implying that ʿAbd al-Munʿim did not have his *ḥadīth* legitimately (see above). The published edition of the *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq* was edited by Maḥmūd Muḥammad ʿAbduh from two manuscripts; his main witness, the manuscript from the Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, reflects the Spanish transmission of the text. After receiving the text from Salama, al-Khashanī himself transmitted it to his students, and at this point three distinct *riwāyāt* emerged; all three were still circulating in al-Andalus in the 6th/12th century, for the famous bibliographer Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī (d. 575/1179) had *isnād*s for all three *riwāyāt* going back to al-Khashanī. On the students of ʿAbd al-Razzāq who transmitted his *tafsīr*, see *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq*, vol. 1, pp. 58–60; on the manuscripts, vol. 1, pp. 221–7; and on al-Khashanī and the Spanish transmission of the text, vol. 1, pp. 229–34. Motzki relies heavily on Ibn Khayr's attestation of multiple *isnād*s for ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* in his argument for the authenticity of this early *ḥadīth* compilation; see his "The author and his work," especially pp. 176–83.

Khoury's objections aside, the explicit attribution of the Wahb material in the manuscript of the *Ḥadīth Dāwūd* to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī through Qatāda is curious, considering that a considerable amount of the material in the *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq* is based on an earlier work of Maʿmar b. Rāshid (d. 154/770) that is in turn supposedly based on the *tafsīr* of Qatāda.

[77] *Al-Maʿārif*, p. 3. See Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba*, pp. 75–83 on Ibn Qutayba's "maîtres au second degré" whose material he knew only in written form; Wahb is his first entry under "les <<historiens>>," p. 77.

specifically refers to ʿAbd al-Munʿim in the *Maʿārif,* we might conclude that this *Mubtada'* is the very same work ascribed to ʿAbd al-Munʿim by Ibn al-Nadīm, which ʿAbd al-Munʿim is supposed to have transmitted in the name of Wahb. If this is so, considering that ʿAbd al-Munʿim is supposed to have received Wahb's work from his father Idrīs, who *also* supposedly transmitted the material from Wahb that ended up in Ibn Hishām's *Kitāb al-tījān,* the basic dissimilarity between the Genesis accounts in the works of Ibn Hishām and Ibn Qutayba is significant.

In any event, the aggregate data on the multiple attestations of Wahb material we have cited here encourage us to make some tentative conclusions regarding the nature of the texts and traditions attributed to him that were transmitted and collected in the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries. Some might construe these multiple attestations as positive evidence for Wahb's activity as a purveyor of scriptural and quasi-scriptural material in the first century AH; after all, his wide influence and the various texts connected with him seem to confirm his representation in the biographical tradition as the major source of material on the Bible and the lore of the *ahl al-kitāb* in the generation of the Successors. However, a more skeptical observer might note that the various textual remains that have come down to us in connection with the name of Wahb do not actually date from the first century AH; rather, the individuals directly responsible for the dissemination of this material — ʿAbd al-Razzāq, Ibn Hishām, ʿAbd al-Munʿim, and Ibn Qutayba — were all active in early ʿAbbāsī times. What the pattern of transmission of material connected with Wahb might suggest instead is the deliberate promotion of a particular image of Wahb as a purveyor of biblical and *kitābī* lore in the mid-3rd/9th century. Wahb's role as a kind of pseudepigraphic figurehead whose name attracted a variety of scriptural and quasi-scriptural materials of varying provenance appears to be confirmed by the diversity of "biblical" traditions on the Fall and other matters extant in the texts we have considered here.

For example, the *Ḥadīth Dāwūd,* the section of the Heidelberg papyrus that contains material of an obviously "biblical" ambience, appears to contain a combination of relatively faithful retellings of stories from the Hebrew Bible and miscellaneous apocryphal flourishes.[78] Khoury claims that this text represents Idrīs b. Sinān's transmission from Wahb, as does Ibn Hishām's *Kitāb al-tījān.* But as we have noted, the material on the Fall contained in the latter is not truly "biblical" at all, for

[78]See Abbott, "Wahb b. Munabbih," p. 105 for a concise overview of the biblical parallels to the content of the *Ḥadīth Dāwūd.* Comparison of this material and the pertinent passages from 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles to determine the likelihood of direct quotation of the biblical sources in this work requires a separate study.

it consists of apocryphal traditions on the episode that seem to reflect only the vaguest awareness of the original Genesis narrative. This contrasts sharply with the tradition on the Fall attributed to Wahb by ʿAbd al-Razzāq, for this tradition shows conspicuous signs of derivation from Genesis 3; it includes some secondary allusions to apocryphal images and themes as well, but these do not coincide much with those seen in the narrative in Ibn Hishām.

Nor do the narratives of either ʿAbd al-Razzāq or Ibn Hishām seem similar to Ibn Qutayba's material on Genesis, for Ibn Qutayba specifically cites Wahb in this context to demonstrate his deviation from the literal text of scripture, and, as we have seen, although he says nothing about the episode of the Fall *per se*, his Wahb material is specifically derived from the *Cave of Treasures,* a widely disseminated Syriac apocryphon.[79] Insofar as we can tell from the subject matter, and certainly judging by the source material and exegetical style employed in each, the Wahb material circulated by each of our 3rd/9th century authorities is substantially different, though much or all of it could plausibly be characterized as "biblical," or at least vaguely scriptural or *kitābī*, in origin.[80]

Therefore, while there might be some factual basis for the claim of his interest in and engagement with biblical and prophetic material, Wahb's extreme elusiveness as an historical personage must be acknowledged. The early authorities of the Islamic tradition are all elusive to some degree, but Wahb seems particularly so due to his association with the processes of cultural assimilation, adaptation, and legitimation described here. With the emergence of a mature, articulate, self-conscious Muslim community, it became imperative for these processes to be cloaked and

[79] In this connection, Abbott's observation that the circulation of the Arabic version of the *Cave of Treasures* seems to have begun in the time of the senior al-Kalbī (d. 146/763) is intriguing, especially since Wahb died around 112/730 (*Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri I*, pp. 47 ff.) It is highly questionable whether our available evidence really allows us to date the circulation of such works with precision, however.

[80] Admittedly, the apparent inconsistency between the materials each of these authors attributes to Wahb is not irrefutable proof that any or all of it could not have genuinely come from Wahb himself. A somewhat more convincing test would be to look at traditions relating to several scriptural episodes in all of these sources in order to see if the material each attributes to Wahb is internally consistent (i.e., does Ibn Qutayba repeatedly cite material from the *Cave of Treasures* in the name of Wahb that appears under another ascription — or not at all — in al-Ṭabarī, for example?) Likewise, rather than focusing on an episode like the Fall that is not represented in one of our putative major sources for Wahb material (since the "biblical" portion of the Heidelberg papyrus deals only with David), a more compelling argument might be made about the diversity of scriptural material circulating under Wahb's name if we examined one of the episodes in the *Ḥadīth Dāwūd* that also occurs in the *Kitāb al-maʿārif*, the *Kitāb al-tījān*, and the various witnesses to the *Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq*. I hope to pursue this line of inquiry in a future article.

disguised, if not actually effaced, in the historical record, through the device of the *isnād* and the development of complementary biographical narratives.

Al-Ṭabarī on the Fall, II: Ibn ʿAbbās and "intratextual" exegesis

Contemplating Wahb's status as a kind of symbolic figurehead in early Islamic literature provides us with a fitting transition to the second tradition on the Fall presented by al-Ṭabarī, which we will briefly examine here.[81] It is attributed to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās (d. 68/687), the so-called *tarjumān al-Qur'ān* or, in Goldziher's phrase, *der Vater des Koranauslegung.*[82] Scholars have long recognized that Ibn ʿAbbās' name was often appropriated by later tradition to justify a variety of interpretations, doctrines, and partisan positions. In the extensive discussion of Ibn ʿAbbās in his survey of the history of Qur'ānic exegesis, Goldziher implies that much of what was handed down in the name of Ibn ʿAbbās was fabricated, though he does seem open to the possibility that the more plausible interpretations may be separated from the more tendentious claims made on Ibn ʿAbbās' authority. More recently, however, Rippin has demonstrated the futility of trying to sort out the putatively original Ibn ʿAbbās material from later accretions and forgeries.[83]

We will not pursue this issue at length here, except to emphasize that the explicit invocation of the name of Ibn ʿAbbās in exegetical debates and the frequent citation of *isnād*s leading back to him generally reflect the ongoing attempt by later generations of interpreters to bestow his considerable — though not entirely unimpeachable — authority upon

[81] He of course provides numerous others, but we have focused on the first two traditions in particular because they are especially illustrative of al-Ṭabarī's approach to and representation of biblical or quasi-biblical material.

[82] Besides the discussions of Goldziher and Rippin cited in the next note, see Vecchia Valigheri, "Ibn ʿAbbās," *EI*^{2}, s.v.; Gilliot, "Portrait <<Mythique>> d'Ibn ʿAbbās"; and Berg, *Development of exegesis*, especially pp. 129–37.

[83] For Goldziher's evaluation of the situation, see *Richtungen*, pp. 65–81. Rippin's work on the so-called *Tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbās* emphasizes that the exegetical methods employed by the historical Ibn ʿAbbās would most plausibly have resembled the "paraphrastic" and "aggadic" techniques seen in early commentaries. However, in fact, in *Tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbās* one finds diverse methodologies and teachings attributed to him, including philological conjectures of some sophistication. The apparent anachronism of much of this material, as well as its sheer variety and inconsistency, suggests that any attempt to recover the "authentic" teachings of Ibn ʿAbbās is doomed to failure. See Rippin, "*Tafsīr Ibn ʿAbbās*," *passim.*

traditions of much later provenance.[84] It will be recalled that this is very similar to the mechanism by which Wahb b. Munabbih's reputation, particularly his association with biblical and *kitābī* lore, was established and reinforced.

When we began our discussion of the interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses on the Fall, we mentioned that there are two methods that the would-be exegete could utilize in commenting on the episode. The tradition attributed to Wahb that we have already examined at length employs what we might call a "biblicizing" technique of interpretation, expanding, clarifying, and restructuring the relatively austere accounts found in the Qur'ān through extensive allusion to and even quotation of Genesis 3. However, several major aspects of Wahb's tradition do not seem to be derived directly from the biblical account, for example the motif of Iblīs entering the Garden inside the body of the snake or the claim that the fruit of the prohibited tree was in fact the food of the angels that bestowed immortality upon them. While the biblically-derived elements have a certain primacy in the Wahb tradition, these other, apparently novel, elements are significant as well because their ultimate origins are far less obvious. One might speculate that they stem from later Jewish or Christian exegesis of the biblical story, or else that they were generated by Muslim exegetes in commenting on the relevant Qur'ānic verses. It might even be argued that this distinction is rather tenuous, for positing a sharp dichotomy between 'foreign' and 'native' traditions is problematic.

The question of origins aside, it certainly stands to reason that the conspicuously 'apocryphal,' non-biblical elements found in the retelling of the episode of the Fall attributed to Wahb could reflect 'traditional' aspects of the interpretation of the episode circulating before the construction of this heavily biblicized version. It is also reasonable to surmise that these elements have survived here alongside the more authentically biblical ones. These conjectures seems to be corroborated by the next tradition cited by al-Ṭabarī on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, for in it similar or even identical 'traditional' (that is, non-biblical) elements come to the fore. Moreover, not only does this version highlight these 'traditional' elements; it also seems to employ the other major exegetical approach mentioned above, that is, "intratextual" reference to other relevant Qur'ānic passages.

At the end of the tradition attributed to Wahb, al-Ṭabarī segues to the next one in his commentary on Qur'ān 2:36 by concluding, "A similar story to this one has been related from Ibn ʿAbbās..." But the

[84] For a classic discussion of this phenomenon, see Firestone, "Abraham's son as the intended sacrifice," especially pp. 126–8.

tradition in question is not attributed only to Ibn ʿAbbās; in fact, it is given an unusually broad pedigree that was most likely intended to emphasize both its wide circulation and its authority, coming as it does from multiple Companions of the Prophet.

> Mūsā b. Hārūn transmitted to me, from ʿAmr, from Asbāṭ, from al-Suddī, who related this report from Abū Mālik and Abū Ṣāliḥ in the name of Ibn ʿAbbās, and from Murra from Ibn Masʿūd, and from a number of people from among the Companions of the Prophet:
>
> When God said to Adam, *Dwell in the Garden, you and your mate; you two may eat freely of whatever you wish, but do not approach this tree, for then you will become wrongdoers* (2:35), Iblīs wanted to enter the Garden, but the gatekeepers prevented him. So he went to the snake, which was a quadruped like the Bactrian camel, the finest of riding-beasts, and he told it to hold him in its mouth so that it could take him to Adam. So it tucked him in the side of its mouth and then it passed by the gatekeepers and entered the garden. The gatekeepers were unaware of this, since God had intended it to be so.
>
> Then he spoke to him [i.e. Adam] from inside its mouth, but he paid no attention to what he said. So he jumped out at him and said, O Adam, *shall I show you the Tree of Immortality and a dominion without end?* (20:120). In other words, he said: Shall I show you a tree that, if you eat from it, you shall become a monarch like God, almighty and glorified, or else the two of you will join the ranks of the immortals, so that you will never die? And he swore to them by God: *Truly, I am a sincere counselor to you!* (7:21)
>
> But he really intended by this means to make apparent to them what had formerly been concealed from them, namely their private parts, by removing what was covering them. He had known that they had such private parts since he had read some of the books of the angels, but Adam himself had not known about this, since the two of them were covered all over with *ẓufr*. But Adam refused to eat from it, so Eve went forward and she ate, and then she said, O Adam, eat, for I have eaten and not been harmed. And when Adam ate, *their private parts became apparent to them, and immediately they sewed for themselves garments made of the leaves of the Garden...* (20:121)[85]

[85] *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, no. 743. Suyūṭī's version of this tradition is attributed to "Ibn

Although this version follows the same basic outline of narrative development as the Wahb tradition, it is different in its details and its exegetical style. The same conspicuously apocryphal elements found in the narrative attributed to Wahb are featured here as well, only more prominently. The serpent of Genesis has been split into two distinct personalities, Iblīs and the snake; the former exploits the latter by entering its body and thereby gains access to Adam and Eve in the Garden; and, although angels are not explicitly mentioned here, the fruit of the forbidden tree is acknowledged as bestowing immortality upon those who eat it, as is made clear both through the citation of Sūra 20, which calls the tree the *shajarat al-khuld*, and through Iblīs' claim that if Adam and his wife eat the fruit they will "join the ranks of the immortals" and never die (that is, become like angels).

However, this version adduces further "apocryphal" details *not* found in Wahb's version. For example, the whole reason for Iblīs' subterfuge in entering the Garden, only implicit in Wahb's version, is made explicit here: the *khazana* or "gatekeepers" (literally "treasurers") of Paradise. According to various traditions — including one cited by al-Ṭabarī himself in a previous section of his commentary[86] — Iblīs himself had formerly been the angelic custodian of the lower heaven and the earth as well as the *khāzin* of Paradise, but after he transgressed God's commandment and fell out of divine favor, he was forced to abandon his post and leave the Garden, thus necessitating that he resort to this stratagem in gaining access to Adam and his wife within.

Another such detail is the allusion to the *ẓufr*, the substance in which Adam and his wife were originally clad, a subject that receives particular emphasis in this version of the episode. The elaboration of this detail undoubtedly derives from the need to interpret the somewhat puzzling statement in Sūra 7 that *Satan whispered to them, so that their private parts, which had been concealed from them, became apparent to them... and when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them* (7:20, 22; the latter phrase also appears at Qur'ān 20:121). It is noteworthy that there is no reference to the concealment of Adam and Eve's private parts or their becoming apparent in Sūra 2 at all; this version of the story lacks any explanation of how Satan caused Adam and his wife to sin. Anyone familiar with the original biblical story will recognize that these statements reflect the comment in Genesis 3 that, after Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, *their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked* (3:7). Somewhat harder to understand is

Mas'ūd and other people from among the Ṣaḥāba" through al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim (*al-Durr al-manthūr*, vol. 1, pp. 130–1).

[86] *Jāmi' al-bayān*, vol. 1, p. 503, no. 689 ad Qur'ān 2:34. Cf. the somewhat different tradition on the same subject given in the *Ta'rīkh* (*Annales*, Series I, vol. 1, pp. 82–3).

the statement that follows soon after the previously mentioned verses in Sūra 7: after obliquely advising the children of Adam to take note of the "clothing of righteousness" (*libās al-taqwā*) that conceals shame, the text then states that Satan caused Adam and his wife to be cast out of Paradise by *divesting them of their clothing to make them see their private parts* (7:26–27). The verse explicitly refers to clothing or raiment (*libās*) and thus begs the question what exactly Adam and Eve were wearing when they went astray.[87]

The tradition from Ibn ʿAbbās thus seems to focus upon how Adam and Eve's private parts should or could have been completely concealed from them, of what their original "clothing" or "raiment" (*libās*) consisted, and how Satan could have caused them to be deprived of it. Notably, these are all issues that derive from textual allusions outside the primary scriptural context purportedly being investigated here. This tradition occurs in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* in the context of discussing the passage from Sūra 2, and begins by specifically commenting on Qur'ān 2:35 (*do not approach this tree* etc.); yet not only does it continue by citing verses from the other two Qur'ānic passages dealing with the same episode, it pays considerable attention to explicating details relating to exegetical issues outside of the main passage under investigation.

In any event, the specific narrative detail of the *ẓufr* is very likely another element that developed in the aforementioned context of question-and-answer, reflecting the early elaboration of "aggadic" expansions of the text intended to address puzzling questions raised by such verses. In the Qur'ān, the word *ẓufr* occurs as a *hapax legomenon* at 6:146, where it refers to an animal's claw or nail, or possibly to the uncloven hoof, since this verse speaks of animals that were forbidden to the Jews by God.[88] In later Arabic the word simply means "fingernail." The meaning of *ẓufr* in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition may be clarified with reference to two passages in al-Thaʿlabī's *ʿArā'is al-majālis*; these passages explain that when Adam was created he was completely covered with *ẓufr*, but when he sinned the *ẓufr* was exchanged for the normal skin that people have now (*jild*), with just a small amount of *ẓufr* remaining on his finger-

[87] It is totally unclear what this *libās* is thought to consist of in the Qur'ānic narrative. It could presuppose any element attested in aggadic parallels — light, feathers, royal raiment, animal skin, and so on. On the other hand, it could also reflect some vague awareness of traditions saying that Adam and Eve were both originally covered in some way, without indicating any option in particular (in which case, the best interpretation of *libās* is probably "covering" rather than "clothing" *per se*). On the diversity of opinions regarding Adam and Eve's original clothing, see Ricks, "Garment of Adam" (which unfortunately glosses over the question of the *ẓufr*).

[88] For a discussion of this passage and its implications for the Muslim understanding of Jewish dietary law, see Maghen, *After hardship cometh ease*, pp. 146–51.

tips, "to remind him of his original state."[89] Our narrative thus seems to take for granted the idea that Adam and Eve were originally clad in some tough, filmy, opaque substance that covered them so completely that they were unaware of critical aspects of their own bodies, as fur or feathers might obscure aspects of an animal's anatomy. Thus, in plotting against them and causing them to sin, Satan deliberately deprived them of it and thereby exposed their underlying nakedness.[90]

The theme of the actual physical transformation of Adam and Eve after the Fall, obviously mirroring that of the snake and of Satan, is manifest in various ways in the literature on Adam and Eve in Islam, as it is in Judaism and Christianity. For example, in the *qiṣaṣ* work of al-Kisā'ī, Adam and Eve are portrayed as originally bedecked in royal finery, wearing crowns and seated upon grandiose thrones in the Garden as if they were monarchs presiding over a kingdom — an even more literal understanding of the reference to their "clothing" in Qur'ān 7:27.[91] Further, unlike the description of the snake's original appearance as camel-like and the splitting of Adam and Eve's protagonist into two distinct characters — themes only attested in rabbinic sources like *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* that are roughly contemporary with the Islamic traditions we are considering here — the idea of the *ẓufr* in which Adam and Eve were originally clad appears to have an authentically ancient Jewish precursor: *Genesis Rabbah* 20:12 states that the pair was originally clad in garments that were "smooth as a fingernail and pretty as pearl" (*ḥălāqîm ke-ṣîppôren we-nā'îm ke-margālît*).[92]

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[89] Al-Tha'labī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, pp. 43, 49.

[90] In his translation of this passage, Cooper rather implausibly renders the phrase in question as, "Their garments were [made of] horn." See al-Ṭabarī, *Commentary on the Qur'ān*, p. 252.

[91] Al-Kisā'ī, *Vita prophetarum*, pp. 34–5. Many aspects of the tradition on the original glorious state of Adam in Muslim sources coincide with details found in aggadic lore, for example the theme of Adam's titanic size at the time of his creation.

[92] *Bereschit Rabba*, vol. 1, p. 196. The tradition is employed as a gloss on the statement in Genesis that after their transgression, God made Adam and Eve "garments of skin" (*kâtenôt ʿôr*) with which he clothed them. The midrash appears to transpose this verse to the time before the Fall and applies it to their previous condition, first changing the key phrase to *kâtenôt* '***ôr***, "garments of *light,*" and saying that the original clothing of Adam shone like a torch. This provides the cue for the next tradition, which likens the original covering to *ṣîppôren.* Note that al-Yaʿqūbī knew the tradition about the garments being made of light; Lazarus-Yafeh characterizes the tradition as "mystical" (rather than "merely" exegetical?) and concludes that it "could have been transmitted and translated only orally by a Jew" (*Intertwined worlds*, p. 114). Cf. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* ad Gen. 3:7: "*Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked*, for they had been stripped of their garb of nail (*lābûš ṭuprâ*) (2.3). Cf. also *Pirke de-Rabbi Elieser,* 143: "What was the garb of Adam? Skin of nail (*ʿôr šel ṣîppôren*)..." For a concise overview of this tradition, see Lambden, "From Fig Leaves to Fingernails."

In contrast to the Wahb tradition, very few specific details in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition seem to derive directly from the Genesis narrative. It is true that some elements, such as the strange notion of Adam and Eve's original "skin" (*ẓufr*), may ultimately derive not from commentary upon the Qur'ānic passages, but rather from interpretation of the biblical text; these elements would then likely have been transmitted orally, possibly as folklore, through now-untraceable channels. Nevertheless, the inclusion of such distantly "biblical" material is quite different from the exegetical procedure pursued in the Wahb tradition, which hews rather closely to the original text of Genesis 3. Likewise, although two other prominent aspects of this version of the narrative — Satan's causing Adam and Eve to sin by exposing their nakedness and the specific rationale behind God's forbidding them to eat the fruit — certainly have proximate origins in the biblical text, these elements are also found in the Qur'ānic versions of the episode that parallel the account in Sūra 2 that this tradition is intended to gloss. Eve as the agent of Adam's downfall is the one theme in the Ibn ʿAbbās version which cannot be derived from the Qur'ān and thus must reflect the impact of the biblical version (whether direct or indirect). Here, as in Genesis, it is Eve who first succumbs to temptation and causes her mate to follow. However, while this single "biblicizing" gesture might suggest some vague conformity with the Genesis account, at the same time, this text readily demonstrates numerous deviations from the Genesis account as well.[93]

In considering the differences between the Ibn ʿAbbās and Wahb traditions, then, the most salient point to be made here is that the various apocryphal details adduced in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition *are* "apocryphal," whether they have clear Jewish precursors and parallels or not. The dominant exegetical procedure here is clearly "midrashic": while the Wahb tradition does include some aggadic details (Iblīs entered the body of the snake), it only hints at others (this was necessary because of the angelic gatekeepers), and even omits some of them outright (Adam and Eve lost their covering of *ẓufr*). The Ibn ʿAbbās tradition, on the other hand, serves as a repository of such elements. But the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition is "midrashic" in an even more profound way: not only does it depend upon the imaginative elaboration of fantastic details, but the

[93] Among the several versions of the narrative cited by al-Ṭabarī, at least half of them appear similar to the biblical account in redirecting the blame for Adam's sin to Eve. This is true not only of the "biblicized" versions such as those attributed to Wahb or Muḥammad b. Qays (*Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, vol. 1, pp. 530–31, no. 752; see note 35 above) but also holds true for others that seem to have no conspicuously biblical features at all, other than that of emphasizing Eve's responsibility for Adam's downfall (e.g., nos. 745 and 748). On this trend in the *tafsīr* tradition, see Spellberg, "Writing the unwritten life of the Islamic Eve."

bare bones of the narrative are also developed through adducing other verses from the canonical scripture: Qur'ān 2:35 is glossed through the serial citation of 20:120, 7:21, and 20:121. This is qualitatively different from the approach taken in the version attributed to Wahb; in comparison, the lack of overt "biblicizing" in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition becomes conspicuous. Although they share many points in common, when their most characteristic traits are considered, the "biblicizing" version of Wahb and the "midrashic" version of Ibn ʿAbbās could not seem more different.

In a very basic way, a demonstrable lack of fidelity to, interest in, or knowledge of the original biblical text is seen in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition, especially relative to the Wahb tradition. At the same time, it seems far more closely aligned to the longer versions of the story given in the Qur'ān itself, that is, Qur'ān 7:19–25 and 20:120–123, than the Wahb version. That is, critical thematic "signposts" are provided here by elements derived from Sūra 7 and 20: Iblīs' overtures to Adam and his wife; his claim that the fruit would bestow immortality on them; and, above all, their downfall being effected by the revelation of their private parts. Though we have already termed the approach of the Wahb tradition "biblicizing" and that of the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition as "midrashic," the predominant exegetical technique of the latter may be more properly characterized as intratextual.

These rubrics should not be understood to be absolutely determinative or mutually exclusive: the Wahb tradition does display some implicit awareness or indirect acknowledgement of narrative details found in the multiple Qur'ānic accounts, and the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition does contain one particular narrative detail that seems to have been derived from the Genesis account (e.g. Eve as the instrument of Adam's downfall), however remotely. Rather, these terms help us point to the most conspicuous tendencies in each version: the impact of the biblical account seems overwhelming in the case of the Wahb tradition, while the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition appears almost insistently intratextual. Not only does the latter freely combine themes and details taken from the accounts of Sūra 2, 7, and 20, but actual verses from each of these accounts are deliberately juxtaposed in order to construct a single synoptic account that provides the fullest Qur'ānically-sanctioned version of events possible.[94]

[94] This version begins with God's prohibition on the fruit from Qur'ān 2:35 (echoed in 7:19, but not mentioned at all in Sūra 20); it then proceeds to Iblīs' words about God's real reasons for prohibiting the fruit of the tree to Adam and his wife as given in 20:120 (7:20 would have done as well); this is followed by Iblīs' statement about being a "sincere counselor" to Adam and his wife from 7:21 (a unique statement not found in either of the other Sūras); finally, 20:121 is cited on their realization of their nakedness, their attempt to cover themselves with garments of leaves and so forth

It was Wansbrough who first observed the tendency towards intratextual glossing as a signal feature of early Muslim exegesis of the Qur'ān, citing in particular the *Tafsīr* of Muqātil b. Sulāymān (d. 150/767) as a prime example of this method. The other predominant hermeneutical tendency of early *tafsīr* that Wansbrough emphasized is the "aggadic," the filling of narrative lacunae and resolution of apparent discontinuities through adducing new details, especially personal names (like Ḥawwā'), toponyms, and the like, and this tendency is epitomized by the *Tafsīr Muqātil* as well. Thus, considering both the inclusion of copious apocryphal details and the reliance on intratextual method in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition, if one accepts Wansbrough's typology of the dominant traits of early Muslim hermeneutics, then these qualities appear to demonstrate its probable origins in "traditional" Muslim exegesis of the early decades AH. This in turn might suggest to some that Ibn ʿAbbās gains some credibility as its putative historical source.

However, one important caveat is in order. When we examine the passages from *Tafsīr Muqātil* commenting on Qur'ān 2:35–39, 7:19–25 and 20:120–123, we do not find any particularly striking incidence of intratextual glossing connected with this episode. For example, unlike what we have seen in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition, Muqātil does not seem to refer in any direct way to the more extensive Qur'ānic versions of the episode in Sūra 7 or 20 when commenting on Qur'ān 2:35–36:

> ... *And do not approach this tree* (v. 35) — that is, the grain (*sanbala*), which is wheat (*ḥinṭa*) — *for then you will become those who do wrong* — to yourselves.
>
> *Then Satan made them go astray regarding it* (v. 36)... that is, regarding obedience to God; and this is Iblīs — *and caused them to be driven out from where they were previously...* that is, from the state of beneficence they enjoyed in the Garden. *Then We said, Get thee down...* from it [i.e. the Garden]. He means Adam and Eve and Iblīs here; and He revealed the command to them. Then Adam went down to India, and Eve to Jeddah. Iblīs went to Baṣra, to the region of

(7:22 would have done as well). In short, selections from Sūra 2, 7, and 20 are woven together here as complementary prooftexts supplying the narrative backbone of the episode, which is then subsequently fleshed out with various apocryphal flourishes.

In the chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr, originally independent versions of the episode are combined into a single continuous narrative: here, "traditional" elements such as the garments of *ẓufr* and Iblīs' "whispering" to Adam and Eve appear alongside "biblicized" elements such as the curses placed upon Eve, the earth, and the snake. Ibn al-Athīr seems to have taken the latter verbatim from al-Ṭabarī's version of the Wahb tradition (*al-Kāmil*, vol. 1, pp. 33–5).

> al-Ubulla.[95] Adam went down to a wādī called Nūdh, among a people called Sarandīb.[96] Then Adam and Eve came back together again at Muzdalifa, which is therefore called Jam' on account of their coming together (*ijtimā'ihimā*) there.[97]
>
> Then He said: ... *And each be the enemy of the other*... (ibid.) Iblīs as an enemy to the two of them, and the two of them as enemies to Iblīs. Then He said: ... *you will find an abode and sustenance on the earth for a time*... that is, that which is sufficient for you until the end of the time allotted to you, that is, [until] death.[98]

There is no reference here at all to the means by which Satan caused Adam and his wife to sin, which could have been readily supplied from the accounts in Sūra 7 and 20. There is no mention of their original nakedness, or of their original "clothing," or of the direct consequences of their partaking of the fruit of the tree, except for the general acknowledgment of their removal from the Garden. If anything, there is some slight indication here of resistance to the reading of the story provided by Sūra 7 and 20, since the most common understanding of the objective referent in the phrase *Satan made them go astray regarding it* (v. 36) would be the tree (*shajara*) mentioned in the previous verse; but Muqātil has glossed *'anhā* ("regarding it") as *'an al-ṭā'a* ("regarding obedience," to God, or perhaps to the command not to eat of the fruit of the tree). Likewise, we do not even have the basic identification of the tree as the *shajarat al-khuld* here as is explicit in Qur'ān 20:120 and implicit in 7:20; this is especially surprising considering the exegete's interest in specifying the tree's species. Further, Muqātil's comments on the parallel passages in Sūra 7 and 20 do not seem to have been informed by data from the other accounts either, although in each of these cases it becomes more difficult to detect such intratextual glossing due to the similarity of the accounts in Sūra 7 and 20 to each other.[99]

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[95] A major port on the Tigris between Baṣra and the Persian Gulf. Muqātil's text reads "al-Ayla," which according to Yāqūt is a town or region on the frontier between the Ḥijāz and Syria. Al-Ubulla therefore makes much better sense. I owe this suggestion to one of the anonymous reviewers of this article.

[96] I.e., Ceylon or Sri Lanka.

[97] The plain of Muzdalifa is an important station on the itinerary of the *ḥajj*; pilgrims gather here for a night vigil that precedes the celebration of the Feast of Sacrifice.

[98] *Tafsīr Muqātil*, vol. 1, p. 99.

[99] Notably, in glossing Qur'ān 7:22, Muqātil *does* use the specific phrase *shajarat al-khuld*, which is only found at 20:120: "*And he swore to them* — that is, he swore an oath by God to them — *that 'I am a sincere counselor to you'* — [and] that it is a Tree of Immortality, and he who eats of it will not die..." (*Tafsīr*, vol. 2, p. 32). On the other hand, there is no "exportation" of the theme of Satan's oath that he is a

At least regarding this narrative, the *Tafsīr Muqātil* cannot be seen as demonstrating the ubiquity of intratextual glossing in early Qur'ānic commentary, as Wansbrough would have claimed. It can, however, be cited as an example of the equally significant emphasis in early *tafsīr* on "*narratio*" (that is, aggadic development), supplementing and amending the Qur'ānic text through adducing helpful details in the service of narrative consistency and integrity. But some caution is also in order here. Some details supplied in this passage in Muqātil are reflected in exegetical *ḥadīth* preserved in al-Ṭabarī's commentary; for example, there are several traditions there on the debate over what species of tree the *shajarat al-khuld* was — whether it was wheat, the grapevine or another plant. Moreover, while much of Muqātil's material is not included in the survey of traditions pertinent to Qur'ān 2:36 in *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, if one examines the corresponding section in al-Ṭabarī's *Taʾrīkh*,[100] one finds numerous additional traditions that do supply details similar to those preserved by Muqātil, for instance the locations to which Adam, Eve, and Satan descended when they were cast out of the Garden.[101]

But other important details in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition — the snake's involvement, Satan's evasion of the gatekeepers of Paradise, the *ẓufr* as Adam and Eve's original "clothing," and so forth — are nowhere to be found in the *Tafsīr Muqātil*. For example, as regards Satan's exposure of Adam and Eve's nakedness, the phrase *their private parts became apparent to them* (*badat lahumā saw'ātuhumā*) in Qur'ān 7:22 and 20:121 is in both instances simply glossed with a precisely equivalent phrase (*ẓaharat lahumā ʿawrātuhumā*). Further, glossing Qur'ān 7:26–27, Muqātil renders *libās al-taqwā* (the clothing of righteousness) allegorically as *al-ʿamal al-ṣālih* (upright deeds), as one would expect, but then the next reference to the *libās* (in the phrase that speaks of Satan's *divesting them of their clothing to make them see their private parts*) is rendered literally as *thiyābuhumā* (their apparel). Thus, Muqātil seems not to take the bait, so to speak, when presented with perfect opportunities to adduce colorful aggadic details for his interpretation of the episode such as those we saw in both of our traditions from al-Ṭabarī, but especially that attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās.[102]

"sincere counselor" to them (a unique reference at Qur'ān 7:21) to the interpretation of the passages found in Sūra 2 or 20.

[100] *Annales*, Series I, vol. 1, p. 103 ff.

[101] Cf. *Annales*, Series I, vol. 1, pp. 119–21 for a brief catalogue of traditions claiming that Adam descended in India and Eve in Jeddah; several of these are attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās.

[102] Note that Muqātil's exegesis was supposed to have derived from the "school" of Ibn ʿAbbās, for example from authorities such as al-Ḍaḥḥāk and ʿAṭāʾ, as well as from Ibn ʿAbbās himself; these names sporadically occur throughout *Tafsīr Muqātil*, though the work is on the whole without *isnād*.

This particular fact should perhaps steer us away from an overly bold characterization of these specific apocryphal elements as "traditional," a term that we have used loosely to connote material that developed gradually, perhaps in the milieu of popular preaching, when we in fact have little positive basis for claiming that any of this holds true for the motifs in question. (The *Tafsīr* of Muqātil b. Sulaymān is in fact generally considered to be an authentic repository of such well-established, time-honored themes, methods, and interpretations from the early Islamic exegetical tradition.) However, our comparison of the pertinent passages from this text with the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition in al-Ṭabarī shows that the hypothesis of the antiquity of various features of the latter in fact founders if we maintain the *Tafsīr Muqātil* as a kind of standard or criterion for early *tafsīr* in both content and style. Either the *Tafsīr Muqātil*'s status as such a yardstick needs to be reevaluated, or else the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition should not be considered 'traditional' in the sense of indicating an indisputable origin in oral commentary on the Qur'ān in the first and early second centuries AH.

Another possibility is that this test is in the end hopelessly flawed methodologically. Just because details from the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition are absent from the *Tafsīr Muqātil* does not mean that they cannot be genuinely early. Further, although Wansbrough claimed that intratextual glossing was an early exegetical technique on the basis of *Tafsīr Muqātil*, the fact that we do not find it employed in this specific case in *Tafsīr Muqātil* but do find it in our Ibn ʿAbbās tradition might simply indicate that the criterion of exegetical style as a possible index of date and provenance needs to be refined. In any case, we may at least conclude that comparison with an indisputably early commentary such as Muqātil's cannot assist us in corroborating a similarly early date for this Ibn ʿAbbās tradition, though its approach to the text may justifiably be characterized as 'traditional' according to the criteria established by Wansbrough.[103]

What, then, might we gain by employing this label of 'traditional' at all? Scholars often invoke the term "orality" simply to explain the provenance of material that cannot be linked to any extant textual witness or known complex of traditions. We admit that we may seem to be using the term 'traditional' in exactly the same way — as a token

[103] The apocryphal elements in the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition are cited in a straightforward, even abbreviated fashion, which would tend to indicate that they were readily recognizable themes already in general circulation. This speaks in favor of our understanding these themes as 'traditional' in the sense of being well-established in early *tafsīr*, well before their incorporation into the version of the narrative presented by al-Ṭabarī. For another comparison of the exegeses of Muqātil and al-Ṭabarī, see Forster, "Methoden Arabischer Qur'ānexegese."

marker of agnosticism regarding the precise origin and provenance of this Ibn ʿAbbās narrative. But on the other hand, we have consistently used this term as a description of this version of the Fall attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās in contrast to our characterization of the version attributed to Wahb as 'biblical' or 'biblicizing.' We do not deny that exegetical material of genuinely biblical provenance may have developed gradually over time, circulated in the milieu of "popular preaching," and been transmitted orally over the course of generations just as "traditional" material might have been. But we have intended the juxtaposition of 'biblicizing' and 'traditional' exegetical modes and materials primarily to indicate a taxonomic distinction that (at least hypothetically) does not necessarily entail any judgment about origins or provenance at all. As our extended analysis of these two traditions from al-Ṭabarī has shown, as a purely taxonomic distinction, our sharp delineation of the 'biblical' or 'biblicized' versus the 'traditional' seems to be perfectly valid as regards the very different literary styles, exegetical procedures, and materials employed in each. If, in the final analysis, the term 'traditional' here means little more than '*non*-biblical,' then this is indicative mainly of the poverty of our standard descriptive terminology.

Conclusion

Despite our desire to put aside issues of origins and provenance, they impinge upon us nevertheless, because these traditions were disseminated on the basis of claims about origins and provenance that are decidedly not neutral. We have argued that Wahb b. Munabbih functions as a symbolic figurehead in early Islamic tradition, representing the process by which the Jewish "influence" on the formation of that tradition was assimilated and handed down to future generations. The prevailing image of Wahb and his activity is thus a trope, reflecting later Muslim attempts to explain and legitimate those aspects of the tradition that reflect a period when the boundaries between Muslim, Jew and Christian may have been uncomfortably vague or indeterminate.

Similarly, the reputation enjoyed by Ibn ʿAbbās as the *Vater der Koranauslegung* suggests that his true significance is also symbolic: the invocation of his name — especially in direct contrast to that of Wahb — may imply not only that the materials transmitted from him possess undeniable authority but also that they are unquestionably Islamic and decidedly not Jewish or Christian — that is, *Other*. It is thus perhaps no accident that the two traditions in al-Ṭabarī examined here, each of

which represents a conspicuously different exegetical style or approach, the 'biblicizing' and the 'traditional' or 'intratextual',[104] are attributed to the figure most representative of the legitimation of Jewish, biblical, and *kitābī* lore and the figure most representative of the native heritage of Arab Islam respectively.

Moreover, it will be recalled that the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition was not attributed solely to Ibn ʿAbbās, but rather, through the mediation of the well-known *muḥaddith* Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī, to ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd (another famous, influential, and authoritative Companion) as well, along with "a number of other people from among the *ṣaḥāba*." The *isnād* given here is in fact relatively common in both al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* and his chronicle. Al-Ṭabarī most often has traditions from Suddī through Mūsā b. Hārūn, with the pedigree cited here (i.e., ʿAmr–Asbāṭ–Suddī); more importantly, when the chain Mūsā–ʿAmr–Asbāṭ–Suddī occurs, it is most often traced back to the group of Companions cited here, e.g., Ibn ʿAbbās (always through Abū Ṣāliḥ and Abū Mālik together), Ibn Masʿūd (usually through Murra al-Hamdānī, the transmitter cited here), and then other, anonymous Companions.

It is evident in all of this that Suddī, or al-Ṭabarī's informant Mūsā, or perhaps al-Ṭabarī himself, meant to assert the undisputable veracity of the traditions to which this *isnād* was attached through invoking the authority of multiple Companions. Further, what is most noteworthy about the traditions with which this *isnād* is typically found is that they commonly feature material dealing with *isrā'īliyyāt*-type subject matter (that is, material on cosmology or prophetic history) that is *not* immediately identifiable as Jewish or "biblical" in derivation, but rather has a more ambiguous apocryphal or "traditional" feel to it, similar to the contents of the tradition on the Fall attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās. This is in striking contrast to the traditions generally attributed to Wahb, whose purported transmissions frequently reflect "arabicizations" of materials more readily recognized as being of biblical or Jewish derivation.

One might argue that the clear correspondence between these attributions and the exegetical styles or patterns delineated here simply corroborates the claim that Wahb and Ibn ʿAbbās (or perhaps their respective "schools") were in fact engaged in precisely the exegetical endeavors that classical Islamic sources ascribe to them, and that our emphasis here on the role of pseudepigraphy in the tradition simply obscures what might be a very simple matter. However, such a conclusion

[104] Despite our caveats above, we nevertheless feel justified, again simply for taxonomic purposes, in associating the 'intratextual' with the 'traditional'; after all, as Tottoli has shown, Ibn Kathīr advocated the method of *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-'l-Qur'ān* specifically in order to repudiate the authority of dubious traditions transmitted from "outsiders," primarily Jews.

requires that we ignore the acknowledged tendency for these personalities to function as symbolic figureheads in the tradition, representative above all of historical processes rather than verities. At least in the case of Ibn ʿAbbās, just as the lack of correspondence between the tradition associated with him and the interpretation of the episode of the Fall in Muqātil makes it problematic to refer to the former as truly 'traditional', it also argues against our accepting it as the likely product of the historical Ibn ʿAbbās or any of his immediate followers. If the historical Ibn ʿAbbās had really transmitted the story about the *ẓufr* in which Adam and Eve were originally clad or the story of how Satan jumped into the serpent's mouth to sneak into the Garden and tempt them to disobey God, how could Muqātil have ignored it?[105] Likewise, we have already seen the diverse materials and approaches that could be promoted as 'biblical' lore in the name of Wahb; while these materials might seem more genuinely biblical or *kitābī* than those transmitted under the name of Ibn ʿAbbās, this is hardly a criterion for evaluating the authenticity of the latter.

Al-Ṭabarī's Qur'ān commentary is a titanic repository of diverse exegetical traditions and particularly of different styles of interpretation. It would perhaps not be surprising if this work, written at the dawn of the fourth Islamic century, should be found to represent a constructed or mediated view of the exegesis of the sacred text in previous generations. Just as numerous biographical and historical accounts collected in sources of the classical tradition attest to the foundational roles played by such figures as Ibn ʿAbbās and Wahb b. Munabbih, so too different kinds of exegetical materials that had come into circulation later could have been readily assimilated to the images of these famous interpreters that were being promulgated.

Further, whether these 'biblicized,' 'traditional' or 'intratextual' materials really had been handed down for generations or rather were of more recent vintage, the fact remains that connecting the different exegetical modes to the image of a Wahb or an Ibn ʿAbbās served the

[105] That attributions are potentially fluid and ideologically charged seems to be increasingly accepted in the scholarship on early Muslim tradition. Cf. Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, pp. 30–5, on how a tradition attesting to the fact that Muhammad's prophethood was foretold in a certain verse in the Torah was first transferred from Kaʿb al-Aḥbār to Ibn Salām — the latter being generally recognized as more trustworthy — then acquired a corroborating Qur'ānic prooftext, and was then subsequently transferred again to the even more trustworthy Arab Companion Ibn ʿAmr. The specific theme in question here, the portrayal of Muhammad's characteristic reticence, initially emerged as pure scripturally-based apologetic, was then "domesticated" for Muslim consumption through Arabization and connection to a Qur'ānic prooftext, and then dissociated from the original apologetic context entirely and disseminated as a factual historical datum.

Muslim community's ideological needs at a critical juncture in the formation of the classical tradition, in the service of collective memory. The work of such redactor-collectors as al-Ṭabarī thus exploited reputations that had already been in the making for decades, if not centuries.

Wahb b. Munabbih
(d. 112/730)
ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhrib
Abū Ilyās
Idrīs b. Sinān, Ibn ibnat Wahb
(fl. c. 90-130/710-750)
Yūsuf b. Zayd?
?
Asad b. Mūsa
ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī
(d. 211/827)
Tafsīr ʿAbd al-Razzāq
Ibn Hishām
(d. 218/833)
Kitāb al-djāmi
ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Idrīs
(d. 228/846)
(Maghāzī)
Salama b. Shabīb
Al-Ḥasan b. Yaḥyā Ibn Abī ʾl-Rabīʿ
Al-Khashanī
3 riwāyāt
Al-Ṭabarī
(d. 310/923)
Jāmiʿ al-bayān
Ibn Abī Ḥātim
(d. 327/938)
Tafsīr
Ibn Qutayba
(d. 276/889)
Kitāb al-maʿārif
?
Kitāb al-muḥtadaʾ/ Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ
Abū Talha Muḥammad b. Baḥr
Heidelberg Papyrus
PSR Heid Arab 23
229 AH (844 CE)
Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī
Qatāda
Saʿīd b. Bashīr
Isḥāq b. Bishr
"Abū Ayyūb"
(mawlā Bint Shuraḥbīl b. Saʿd?)
(Ḥadīth Dāwūd)
Ibn Khayr al-Ishbīlī
(d. 575/1179)
Single-generation isnād
Multiple-generation isnād
Conjectured transmission (no isnād)
Extant witness to Wahb material

Figure 1

Bibliography

Abbreviations

EI^2 = *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition. Ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* 12 vols. 1960–2004.

GAS = Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums.* 10 vols. 1967–2000.

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