

al-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) and addressed by Mohammad Azadpur (*Reason Unbound: On Spiritual Practice in Islamic Peripatetic Philosophy* [Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 2011]), the Islamic philosophical traditions—like their Greek, Syrian, and Alexandrian antecedents—had their own share of quotidian, spiritual practices, often ignored by contemporary scholars. This makes it more difficult to draw a discerning line between “rational” philosophy and “ritual” Sufism.

None of this is to detract from the importance of Knysh’s larger objective, which is to describe the state of the study of Sufism as paying insufficient attention to the occult sciences and performative practices. The lacunae he notices cannot be denied. Moreover, he is certainly right that, just as Sufism was imagined to suit the needs of its premodern Muslim advocates, it became reimagined by Western scholars who required neat boundaries to have an object of study. His presentation of Sufism has echoes of Russell T. McCutcheon’s observation that, while scholars of religion might describe an insider/outsider dichotomy, in fact, “the world is full of insiders, all proclaiming their territorial rights over truth and justice,” for “all we seem to have are competing insiders” (“The Ideology of Closure and the Problem with the Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion,” *Studies in Religion* 32.3 [2003]: 337–52, at 340). It is likely that this challenge to the ways in which we identify Sufism will render *Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism* grounds for discussion and scholarly self-reflection in Islamic studies.

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*The Qurʾān and the Bible: Text and Commentary.* By GABRIEL SAID REYNOLDS. New Haven: YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018. Pp. xviii + 1008. \$40.

This is not your parents’ Quran. Previous English translations of the Islamic sacred text have usually been arranged in a standard fashion—the text of the Quran is presented in an unbroken format on most of the page, with brief notes at the bottom of some pages that provide explanations of potentially confusing words or phrases and cross references to other passages. A recent exception to this arrangement is *The Study Quran* (HarperOne, 2015), translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and his colleagues, which contains extensive notes summarizing Muslim scholarship that sometimes take up more of the page than the text of the Quran. The notes allow the reader to eavesdrop on some fascinating debates among scholars about what the Quran is and what it means.

*The Qurʾān and the Bible* extends that approach by bringing new voices to the conversation that open up equally fascinating debates about the nature of the Quran. Gabriel Said Reynolds’s name is on the book’s spine, and deservedly so because he is the one who tracked down those voices and introduced them to their quranic conversation partners. But the person responsible for this conversation’s setting is not Reynolds but Ali Quli Qarai, an Indian-born writer whose translation of the Quran is used throughout. His translation is presented in a somewhat different format here because Reynolds frequently puts the Quran on pause so he can let one of its conversation partners have its say before yielding the floor back. And what a wide and varied group of interlocutors they are. Other reviewers have noted that the book’s title does not capture the scope of Reynolds’ project because, while the great majority of the comments and references relate to the Bible, a significant number cite nonbiblical Jewish and Christian writings as well as other ancient sources. This review will focus almost exclusively on Reynolds’s use of the biblical material, which is noteworthy for its breadth and depth. There are more than seven hundred citations of passages from thirty-two Old Testament books (including Tobit and Wisdom of Solomon, which are among the apocryphal works in some Bibles), and over 450 references from twenty-two New Testament writings. The most frequently cited biblical books are Exodus (142 times) and Genesis (131) in the Old Testament and Matthew (132) and Luke (89) in the New Testament. This makes for one crowded conversation, and as in any group of that size some voices are worth listening to more than others.

The Bible and the Quran have a long and complicated relationship that traces its roots back to the seventh century CE when the Islamic sacred text first appeared, and the contours of that relationship have been understood in various ways throughout history. Reynolds's work is representative of some recent trends in the study of the Quran that challenge long-held assumptions and methods of both Muslims and non-Muslims. Muslim scholarship on the Quran has typically drawn upon information available in other sources, notably the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (*sīra*), the body of traditions identifying the specific contexts that particular Quran passages originally addressed (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and earlier commentaries and studies on the text (*tafsīr*). These works have been consulted by Muslim scholars over the centuries to inform their understanding of the Quran. When discussing material in the Quran that is related to the biblical literature, Muslims have tended to view the Islamic text as the more reliable account. For their part, non-Muslim scholars have sometimes seen the Quran as dependent on earlier Christian and, especially, Jewish sources. Abraham Geiger's *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen*, published in 1833 and available in English as *Judaism and Islam*, was the first systematic attempt to argue for the Quran's dependence on the Bible and other Jewish literature.

Reynolds's work is based on a different method and set of assumptions. Adopting an approach that he labels "Qur'ānist," he rejects all other Muslim sources as late and therefore irrelevant because they took shape long after the Quran's formation. He does not believe passages in the Quran can accurately be assigned to particular moments in Muḥammad's life, and he considers the authorship of the text to be an open question. Reynolds sees no reason to accept the traditional Muslim understanding of the Quran's origin. "If we are no longer restricted to thinking about the Qur'ān as a transcript of Muḥammad's proclamations between AD 610 and 632, then we might consider the possibility that it includes multiple sources and a complicated history of redaction and editing" (p. 5). Reynolds maintains that the Quran is an original work in literary and religious terms, but it depends on its readers' familiarity with the biblical traditions that it absorbed and then presented in its own way.

The means by which those traditions were transmitted is another point on which Reynolds diverges from much of prior scholarship. Jewish sources have been the focus of attention for many scholars, but Reynolds believes Syriac Christian literature and traditions were actually more influential on the development of the Quran. Reynolds acknowledges that this idea is not original with himself, and perhaps his most well-known predecessor in this regard is the pseudonymous author Christoph Luxenberg in his *The Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran: A Contribution to the Decoding of the Language of the Koran*, a 2007 translation of the original German work of 2000.

There is little doubt that the Quran assumes its readers are familiar with some of the biblical traditions. Approximately thirty individuals are mentioned by name in both texts and many others are referred to without being named in the Quran, like the mother of Moses and the disciples of Jesus. When the Islamic text relates stories about these people that have parallels in the Bible, the accounts tend to be less detailed than their biblical counterparts. Sometimes the gaps are so significant that the quranic version would be extremely difficult to understand without prior knowledge of the biblical story. In addition, the Quran frequently urges its readers to recall and remember particular biblical figures, suggesting that the readers were already familiar with the stories and events of their lives. A critical question concerns how these Bible-related traditions were communicated to the Quran's original audience. There is no evidence for the Bible being translated into Arabic until the eighth century CE, a century or so after the most widely accepted chronology places the emergence of the Quran, so early Muslims would not have had access to a copy of the Bible written in their own language. This has led scholars like Reynolds to look for other ways by which biblical traditions and other material might have been introduced to seventh-century Arabia, and he believes the Syriac Christian literature was one of the primary means of such transmission.

The Bible is not quoted verbatim anywhere in the Quran, but it contains some terms and turns of phrase that might be described as "Bible-like." Among these are "uncircumcised hearts" (Q 4:155), "eye of the needle" (Q 7:40), "mustard seed" (Q 31:16), and "twinkling of an eye" (Q 16:77). The presence of such language suggests to Reynolds that the Quran took shape in an environment in which biblical expressions were "in the air" (p. 3). Beyond these references that might have a connection with the biblical literature, some longer Quran passages contain intriguing parallels to the Bible and

Bible-related literature that suggest more than just brief expressions were circulating in that air. There is an echo of Jesus's teaching in Matthew 6:26 about God providing for the birds of the sky (Q 16:29). Certain elements of the Quran's account of Jesus's conception and birth are not in the New Testament, but are found in noncanonical Christian texts like the *Proto-Gospel of James* and the *Infancy Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*. A lengthy section of the Quran's eighteenth chapter has much in common with a legendary Christian story known as The Sleepers of Ephesus (Q 18:9–26). In addition, the Quran's many passages that have counterparts in the Bible, mostly from the Hebrew Bible, support Reynolds's claim that biblical traditions were an important part of the context in which early Islam took shape.

Reynolds does a fine job of identifying and discussing the connections between hundreds of Quran passages and material found in the Bible and elsewhere. His bibliography lists eighty-five non-Islamic primary sources written in Aramaic, Ethiopic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Slavonic, and Syriac. Given his aforementioned skepticism about the usefulness of postquranic Islamic sources for his project, it is not surprising that such works do not play much of a role in his analysis and discussions. Nonetheless, he does on occasion refer to Muslim commentary on the Quran, and *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (fifteenth or sixteenth centuries CE) is the most frequently cited work in this genre. Because the focus is limited to the Quran's relationship with the Bible and biblically affiliated literature, the commentary is not meant to be comprehensive. In addition, Reynolds points out that he has tried to avoid reading biblical allusions and connections into passages where they are not clearly present. "I often do not discuss Qur'anic passages which have a Biblical flavor but which are general enough that there is no reason to think that the Qur'ān is expressly responding to anything in particular in Biblical tradition" (p. 7). This is a critical methodological principle that can help Reynolds to not misinterpret the evidence and not overstate its importance, but unfortunately he fails to apply it consistently and this results in some proposed connections between the Quran and the Bible that are difficult to accept.

That Reynolds is aware of the tenuous quality of some of the parallels he attempts to draw can be seen in how he sometimes qualifies the claims he makes. A significant number of Quran passages are described as "somehow connected to," "may be reflecting," "might be related to," "reminiscent of," "owing something to," or "might be following" a particular biblical passage. Such nuance avoids creating the impression that the Quran has simply borrowed directly from the Bible, and this is an important point to stress because even when a biblical tradition is related in the Quran, a unique interpretation is always offered. But the frequent use of such qualifying language, combined with the questionable nature of some of the proposed Bible–Quran connections Reynolds puts forward, creates the impression that he has not always followed his principle to refrain from commenting on passages that have a biblical flavor but are not responses to the biblical tradition. This can be seen in the treatment of the Quran's brief opening chapter (*al-fātiḥa*), which Reynolds states has some similarities to the "Our Father" prayer of Christianity. He quotes the Christian prayer (the version of the Bible Reynolds cites throughout the book is The Jerusalem Bible), but he does not identify the alleged similarities between the two passages, and their lack of shared terminology beyond the word "name" will likely leave the reader puzzled as to their connection. Reynolds further confuses things after claiming that the texts are related by adding a parenthetical statement that calls attention to a key difference between them, since Islamic tradition teaches that this chapter, like the rest of the Quran, is the word of God. How, then, are the two texts similar?

Reynolds sometimes maintains that a particular Quran passage echoes or can ultimately be traced back to a specific biblical text when the proposed connection is based solely on a single word or a general theme that the two passages share. Such questionable associations are made repeatedly, including "gate" in Q 2:58 and Jeremiah 7:2; "an offering consumed by fire" in Q 3:183 and 1 Kings 18; "burden" in Q 4:28 and Matthew 11:28–30; "my Lord and your Lord" in Q 5:117 and John 20:17; "veil" in Q 17:46 and 2 Corinthians 3:14; "beast from the earth" in Q 27:82 and Revelation 13:11; and "ignorance" in Q 48:26 and Acts 17:30. Elsewhere the proposed connections are particularly forced: a reference to God reviving the dead in Q 2:243 is related to the description of the bones being brought back to life in Ezekiel 37; a mention of God turning some people into swine in Q 5:60 is associated with the exorcism story in which Jesus sends demons into a herd of pigs in Luke 8; a threat in Q 26:116 from Noah's people that they will stone him is a development of Jesus's lament in Matthew 23:37 that

Jerusalem is a place where prophets are stoned; God's ability to create by speaking in Q 36:82 may be based on the creation story in Genesis 1; and a reference to "people of the ditch" in Q 85:4 might allude to the three men cast into the furnace in Daniel 3. These proposed parallels, and many others like them, are untenable because the presence of a shared word or theme is insufficient evidence upon which to make a case for the Quran's familiarity with the Bible. Reynolds sometimes takes things a step further by maintaining that the Quran is somehow responding to particular biblical texts, and this is often done in relation to the New Testament. A verse that says Jesus would not object to being God's servant (Q 4:172) is presented as a reply to the hymn of Philippians 2:3–9 that describes him as God's son. A reference to God having the keys to heaven and earth (Q 39:63) is a response to Matthew 16:19, where Jesus says he will give Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven. As noted above, there is no doubt that the Quran offers its own interpretations of many stories in the Bible, but Reynolds sees this same interpretive process at work in places where it is not readily apparent.

These shortcomings do not diminish the immense value and usefulness of this book. The previous two paragraphs identify some of the less persuasive voices in the crowded conversation Reynolds has so ably facilitated between the Bible and the Quran. But those voices do not drown out others that are more convincing, and their coexistence is an important reminder of the complex nature of the relationship between the two texts. Those who read attentively as they work their way through it will learn the two things about the Quran that Reynolds closes his book on that likely went unnoticed by their parents and others who read earlier editions of Islam's sacred text—it is of immense interest in its own right and it shows us something of how the Bible was understood in the late antique Near East.

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*Mamluk Cairo, a Crossroads for Embassies: Studies on Diplomacy and Diplomatics*. Edited by FRÉDÉRIC BAUDEN and MALIKA DEKKICHE. *Islamic History and Civilization*, vol. 161. Leiden: BRILL, 2019. Pp. xxvii + 881. \$179, €149 (cloth); \$162, €135 (ebook).

Edited volumes are notoriously difficult to review, all the more so when there are twenty-eight articles by twenty-five separate authors. This volume, however, is worth the effort. It highlights the role of diplomacy and diplomatic exchange between the Mamluks and the rest of their world, and no scholar of Mamluk history and politics can afford to forego this important contribution to the field. Its added value is that it goes beyond the chronicles and chancery texts to letters and decrees in archives in Europe and the Middle East. As the coeditor Frédéric Bauden notes, many previous scholars working with documents published as long as a century and a half ago approached these with an "indiscriminate confidence" that "generated misunderstandings" on the study of Mamluk diplomatics (p. 3). The articles here—originally presented at a conference at the Université de Liège in 2012—demonstrate the importance of applying new tools of analysis and looking beyond the diplomatic actions of heads of states to the "greater plurality of actors involved in diplomacy" (p. 159).

A major theoretical concern of the volume is rethinking the notion of "diplomacy" in the Mamluk era without a Eurocentric bias. Rather than emphasizing diplomacy between formal states, the authors situate their analyses through the spatial and ideological frontiers that supposedly divided them. "Far from assuming the actual existence of such a concept during the premodern period, we use it as an analytical frame to address several issues pertaining to state formation and legitimation, elite communication and circulation," state the editors regarding the idea of diplomacy at a critical stage in Islamic history (p. xii). Diplomatics thus becomes more than the exchange of ambassadors and formal treaties, becoming in a sense the ways in which the Mamluks and their contacts imagined the world around them.

Following two introductory chapters by the editors on the present state of research, in which a list of documents relating to Mamluk diplomatic relations in archives (pp. 66–85) and an extensive list of