

The background is a medieval manuscript illustration. On the left, a figure with a long white beard and a green robe stands before a large, stylized flame. On the right, a group of four men in medieval attire are shown; one is kneeling in prayer while the others stand behind him. The top of the image features a decorative border with blue and gold arches. The central text is overlaid on a yellowish-gold background.

INEKAS 4th Summer School | 2024

Islamic & Biblical Traditions

Sacred Texts, Contexts & Intertexts

August | September
29, 30 | 5, 6, 12, 13



Coordinators

The 2024 Inekas International Summer School has been made possible through the enthusiasm and dedication of all the speakers and hosts who graciously accepted our invitation.

We extend our gratitude to our colleagues from **Inekas** and **the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter (UK)** for their collaborative efforts in coordinating this event.

(Names sorted alphabetically)



University
of Exeter

Fatemeh Bakhtiari

Ghasem Darzi

Mohammad Sajjad Entezari

Mohsen Feyzbakhsh

Mohammadhassan Firouzbeh

Mohammad Ghandehari

Farhad Ghoddoussi

Sajedah Goudarzi

Mohsen Haddadi

MohammadReza Moini

Mohammadhossein Naraghi

Razieh Sharifzadeh

**Institute of Arab and Islamic
Studies**

Sajjad Rizvi
Board of Directors

ABOUT THE SUMMER SCHOOL

In collaboration with the **Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter** (UK), **Inekas** will host a summer school on “Islamic and Biblical Traditions: Sacred Texts, Contexts, and Intertexts”.

Taking place on 29, 30 August and 5, 6, 12, 13 September, the summer school will run in six days from 11:30 to 18:00 BST (6:30 to 13:00 EDT).

The summer school is designed to offer students with a keen interest in Islamic studies an insightful exploration of contemporary scholarship concerning the intricate relationship between the Quran and the Bible, their respective traditions, and the intertextual studies that bridge them.

There will be presentations in both English (14 presentations) and Persian (5 presentations). Hence, students interested in Islamic or Biblical studies who intend to improve their Persian for academic purposes can also use the summer school as a training course.



Educational Approach

International Event

This program, conducted in partnership with the University of Exeter, featured distinguished presenters from six countries who have previously showcased their scholarly work on the Islamic and Biblical traditions, texts, intertexts, and contexts in esteemed international publications and conferences.

Innovative and Interdisciplinary

This school adopts innovative and interdisciplinary approaches in exploring the intersections of Islamic and Biblical traditions, texts, and contexts. These methodologies encompass textual and intertextual analysis, historical approach, and cultural studies.

Familiarity with Specialized Language

Participating in specialized presentations in the historical studies of Islam and the Qur'an, along with reviewing related articles, can provide a basis for those students and those interested in Islamic studies who want to strengthen their specialized Persian in this field.

Networking and Communication

In this course, all participants can join the course's Whatsapp/Telegram group, engage in discussion and networking with other researchers, and, in addition to creating new connections, use the course's exclusive supplemental content.

Schedule of Inekas Forth Summer School | 2024

August 29th



Ahmad Pakatchi IHCS

Opening Speech



Mohammad Haghani Fazl Paderborn University

The Quran's interaction with Biblical intertexts: The Quranic reception of the story of Moses' birth



Ida Glaser CMCS Houston

Biblical commentary in Islamic context: methodological reflections on commentaries on Genesis 1-11 and Galatians.



Shari Lowin Stonehill College

The Jews Say the Hand of God is Chained": Q. 5:64 as a response to a midrash in a piyyut by R. El'azar ha-Kallir

August 30th



Ehsan Rouhi Independent Scholar

Jewish and Christian sources of influence for the traditional Biography of the Prophet: An analogy between the massacre of the Jews of Banū Qurayza and the Christians of Najran



Andrew O'Connor St. Norbert College

The Prophetic Vocation in the Qur'an



Gabriel Reynolds University of Notre Dame

Biblical Turns of Phrase in the Qur'an



September 5th



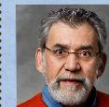
Ana Davitashvili Independent Scholar

The Qur'an and Syriac Christianity: Context, Continuities, and Caveats



Roy Mc Coy Independent Scholar

Interpreting the Qur'an with the Bible



David Penchansky University of St. Thomas

Solomon and the Ant: The Qur'an in conversation with the Bible

September 6th



Guillaume Dye Free University of Brussels

The Qur'anic Mary and the Chronology of the Qur'an



Ryan Craig Georgetown University

"You crucified him and you killed him; except that God raised him": Creedal Patterns and the Qur'ānic Crucifixion



John Reeves University of North Carolina at Charlotte

With What Kind of Bible does Qur'an Presume Familiarity

September 12th



Nicolai Sinai University of Oxford

Towards a Descriptive Theology of the Qur'an: God, Moral Common Sense, and Human Freedom



Martin Whittingham University of Oxford

A History of Muslim Views of the Bible



Holger Zellentin University of Tübingen

The Qur'an and Judaism in Current Research

September 13th



Abdullah Galadari Khalifa University

Qur'anic Understandings of the Divine Name Yhwh



Hadi Alitaghavi Independent Scholar

Moses and Muhammad in Dialogue: A Quranic Reading of Deuteronomy 33:2–4



Saqib Hussain Loyola Marymount University

Adam and the Names





Ahmad Pakatchi

IHCS

Ahmad Pakatchi (b. 1963, Tehran) is a prominent Iranian scholar specializing in Quranic studies and Hadith. He serves as the director of the Quranic section of the Islamic Encyclopedia and is a member of the Supreme Scientific Council of the Great Islamic Encyclopedia Center. Pakatchi's career encompasses academic, diplomatic, and cultural roles, including a former ambassadorship to UNESCO and current directorship of the Art Semiotics Group at the Academy of Arts of the Islamic Republic of Iran. His work bridges traditional Islamic scholarship with contemporary cultural and artistic studies.

The Quran's Interaction with Biblical Intertexts:

The Quranic Reception of the Story of Moses' Birth

Religious traditions have long relied on characters and their associated stories as vital tools for illustrating and transmitting their worldviews. The narrative of Moses' birth is a notable example of this practice. In Jewish tradition, this story has been evocative of the coming of a savior and the liberation of the Israelites, often serving as a symbol of the Exodus. In Christian tradition, the birth of Moses, like other aspects of his life, is seen as a foreshadowing of the coming of Christ. The Quran, following in these religious traditions, also recounts the story of Moses' birth to convey its message, as seen in Surah Al-Qasas [28:7-13] and Surah Ta-Ha [20:38-40].

Continued



**Mohammad
Haghani Fazl**

University of Paderborn

Mohammad Haghani Fazl holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Religious Studies. He has spent several years as a researcher in the Department of Religions at the University of Religions and Denominations. For the past four years, he has been engaged as a postdoctoral researcher with the Quranic Studies group at the University of Paderborn. His scholarly interests encompass Quranic and Biblical studies, the interpretation of sacred texts, literary criticism, and related areas.

His forthcoming book, *The Bridge of Interpretation over the Gap of Dialogue*, will be published by the University of Religions and Denominations Press. This work, rooted in his doctoral dissertation, investigates the influence of interfaith dialogue on the interpretation of sacred texts. The presentation today is part of his ongoing collaboration with the Proto-logy project at the University of Paderborn. A central theme of this project has been exploring the connections between the prophetic narratives in the Quran and the Jewish and Christian traditions of late antiquity, with a particular focus on the Syriac tradition.

The Quran's Interaction with Biblical Intertexts:

The Quranic Reception of the Story of Moses' Birth

To understand how the Quran interprets this story, I will compare the Quranic narrative with those found in Jewish and Christian traditions. In the Quranic account, Moses' mother is given a central role, with such emphasis that the narrative in Surah Al-Qasas can be viewed as being as much about her as it is about Moses. A comparison with post-biblical Jewish narratives reveals that this emphasis on Moses' mother does not stem from Jewish readings, indicating a deliberate departure from Jewish tradition by the Quran.

Conversely, when comparing the Quranic narrative with Christian tradition, I will demonstrate that several elements of the Quranic account align with the Syriac tradition. By analyzing Jacob of Serugh's homily on the birth of Moses, published only recently, I will argue that this homily significantly enhances our understanding of these Quranic passages.

In the concluding section, I will show that although the Quran adopts elements related to Moses' mother from the Syriac tradition, it reinterprets these elements, integrating them into its own discourse. The Quran not only highlights the role of Moses' mother but also portrays her as a proto-logical figure. While the Quran does not explicitly designate her as a prophet, it uses descriptions that position her as a prophetological character. Finally, I will argue that the Quran employs this characterization to reinforce an essential element of prophetologic in the Meccan period: the virtue of patience.

**Mohammad
Haghani Fazl**

University of Paderborn

Biblical Commentary in Islamic Context:

Methodological Reflections on Commentaries on Genesis 1-11 and Galatians

The 'Reading the Bible in the Context of Islam' project of the Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies in Oxford is providing some of the research basis for a new series on Bible commentaries from Muslim contexts. The commentary series is Christian-authored; but the project has also resulted in a Muslim-authored commentary on Galatians (Shabbir Akhtar, *The New Testament in Muslim Eyes: Paul's letter to the Galatians*, Routledge, 2018). This paper will reflect on the lessons about methodology that I learnt from co-authoring the first in the commentary series (Anwarul Azad and Ida Glaser, *Genesis 1-11: bud of theology, grandmother of the sciences, seedbed of the Holy Books*, Langham, 2022) and from working with Shabbir Akhtar during his writing of the Galatians commentary. In particular, it will compare the role of the Qur'an in shaping the hermeneutics and the content of the two commentaries.



Ida Glaser

CMCS Houston

Ida Glaser is a scholar specializing in Muslim-Christian relations and Biblical studies in Islamic contexts. She holds degrees in Theoretical Physics (B.Sc., M.Phil. from Imperial College London) and Theology (Ph.D. from Durham University). Dr. Glaser leads the 'Reading the Bible in the Context of Islam' research project and oversees international partnerships for the Solomon Academic Trust. Her work includes teaching at the University of Edinburgh and Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. With experience in both academic and mission settings, Dr. Glaser's research focuses on comparative scripture studies, particularly examining the Bible in relation to the Qur'an. She has taught and conducted outreach in various international contexts, bringing a unique perspective to interfaith dialogue and religious studies.

"The Jews Say the Hand of God is Chained":

Q. 5:64 as a Response to a Midrash in Piyyut by R. El'azar ha-Kallir

In Q. 5:64, the Qur'an accuses the Jews of describing God as a deity with a chained (maghlūla) hand, a charge the Qur'an understands as indicating divine miserliness. However, a foray into Jewish teachings reveals that no such statement of God's niggardliness can be found in the Jewish tradition. While scholars have suggested Psalms 72:11 and Lamentations 2:3 as possible sources, in both the image is of a deity withdrawing His military might, not His financial bounty. Insistence on these as the inspiration behind the Qur'an's words ignores the substance of the Qur'an's claim. This article argues instead that Q. 5:64 is reacting to a midrashic motif embedded in a liturgical poem (piyyut) recited on the Ninth of Av, the day commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples. Here God chains His own hand in empathy with the exiled and traumatised captives, a move also understood as guaranteeing Israel's eventual redemption. Additionally, I argue that the Qur'anic transmutation of this image into one that concerns finances is intentional.



Shari Lowin

Stonehill College

Shari L. Lowin is Associate Professor in the Religious Studies Department at Stonehill College, teaching Islamic and Jewish Studies. Her research focuses on early Islamic intellectual thought, and its interplay with midrashic and rabbinic materials.

Her research centers on the interplay between Judaism and Islam in the early and early medieval Islamic periods, c. 800-1200 CE, focusing mainly on the development of Jewish and Muslim exegetical narratives.

Jewish and Christian Sources of Influence for the Traditional Biography of the Prophet:

An Analogy Between the Massacre of the Jews of Banū Qurayṣa and the Christians of Najran

The influence of Jewish and Christian literature (encompassing both canonical and extracanonical texts) upon the traditional biography of the Prophet has long been a focal point of the *sīra* studies. This research seeks to expand upon this body of work by proposing a novel source of borrowing/inspiration for the *sīra* stories, more particularly saying, for the account of the Banū Qurayṣa expedition. Widely attested in the Muslim literary sources, the massacre of the Qurayṣa tribe is a much-debated event of Muḥammad's life. The form-critical analysis would unveil numerous and flagrant points of resemblance between the Arabic narratives of Banu Qurayṣa's liquidation and the Syriac/Greek reports of the massacre of the Christians of Najran. These similarities foreclose the treatment of the traditional Qurayṣa narratives as bona fide records of a historical happening.



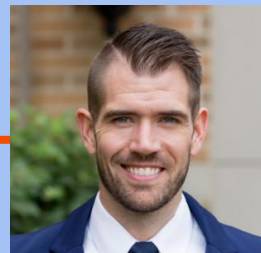
Ehsan Roohi

Independent Scholar

Ehsan Roohi is an Independent scholar of Islamic origins and Arab-Byzantine relations. His publications include a monograph (in Persian) on *ḏū al-Qarnayn*, and several articles (in English) including "The Murder of the Jewish Chieftain *Лфәи б. al-Ashraf*: A Re-examination," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (2020); "Between History and Ancestral Lore: A Literary Approach to the *Sīra*'s Narratives of Political Assassinations," *Der Islam* (2021); "Muḥammad's disruptive measures against the Meccan trade: A historiographical reassessment", forthcoming in *Der Islam* (2023/1); "The Form-Critical Analysis of the *al-Rajī' and Bi'r Ma'ūna* Stories: Tribal, ideological and legal incentives behind the transmission of the Prophet's biography", forthcoming in the *Journal of Middle East Medievalist* (*Al-'Usur al-Wusta*); "Caesar Bardas and the accusation of an illicit affair," *Byzantinoslavica* (2019), "An Ignored Arabic Account of a Byzantine Royal Woman," *Al-Masāq Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* (2020); and "Caesar Bardas and the Earthquake of Constantinople: The Rival Depictions of the Event in the Arabic and Byzantine Sources," *Al-Masāq Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* (2022).

The Prophetic Vocation in the Qur'an

This presentation examines the Qur'an's presentation of the function and authority of prophets; that is, its construction of doctrines of prophethood, which I refer to as its prophethology. The dissertation's core thesis is that the Qur'an does not have just one vision of prophethology—rather it evinces two primary paradigms of the prophetic vocation. I refer to these as the Qur'an's “kerygmatic” (focused on the act of preaching and proclaiming) and “theonomic” (focused on governing a community under divine law) paradigms of prophethood. First, I situate the Qur'an's broader presentation of prophethood within the history of prophetic activity as a whole and demonstrate its connection to developments within the context of Late Antiquity. Second, I outline the contours of these two prophetological models. I argue that its sequential recollection of earlier prophetic figures (what I call “messenger-reports”)—the building blocks of much of the kerygmatic paradigm—suggest a typological reading of prophets as preachers of an eschatological message, but also demonstrate a certain adaptability in its understanding of prophethood. The kerygmatic paradigm itself is also constructed through a set of recurrent motifs that limit the role of prophets to proclaiming this eschatological message. The theonomic vision, however, emphasizes the authority of a prophet over his community, delineating communal and legal norms, directing his community in armed struggles, and emphasizing the centrality of his person and status.



**Andrew
O'Connor**

St. Norbert College

Andrew O'Connor brings a unique focus to his role as an assistant professor of theology and religious studies at St. Norbert College. O'Connor's chief academic interest is the Qur'an and its relationship to Jewish and Christian traditions in Late Antiquity. He has led a group of students to both Rome, Italy, and Amman, Jordan, for a global seminar on interfaith relations. O'Connor presents frequently at conferences across the United States. He has also presented at Oxford in the U.K., Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine, Jordan and Sicily. Most notably, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Amman, Jordan, for the 2017-18 academic year.

Biblical Turns of Phrase in the Qur'ān

In this talk I will address the theoretical issue of the Qur'an's relationship to the Bible by investigating its use of Biblical turns of phrase. For example, the Qur'an speaks of "uncircumcised hearts" (Q 2:88; 4:153; cf. Deu 10:6; 30:6; Jer 4:4, 9:24-25; 44:6-7, 9; Act 7:51-53; Rom: 2:28-29; Phi 3:3; Col 2:11) and a camel passing through the eye of the needle (Q 7:40; cf. Mat 19:23-24; Mar 10:25; Luk 18:25); it uses the example of a mustard seed to refer to something very small (Q 21:47; 31:16; cf. Mat 13:31-32; Mar 4:30-32; Luk 13:18-19); it describes God as the "first and the last" (Q 57:3; cf. Isa 44:6; cf. Isa 48:12; Rev 1:17; 22:13) and it has the heavens "rolled up like scrolls" (Q 21:104; 39:67; cf. Isa 34:4; Rev 6:14).

An analysis of this material will lead to two observations. First, Biblical turns of phrase in the Qur'an, including turns of phrase from the New Testament, are spread throughout the Qur'an, including Suras traditionally identified as "Meccan" and those traditionally identified as "Medinan." Second, the Qur'an regularly uses Biblical turns of phrase in an original manner. For example, whereas the maxim regarding the camel and the eye of the needle in the New Testament is used for a teaching regarding the danger of riches, it is used in the Qur'an for a teaching regarding the danger of unbelief. Finally, I will ask whether these "turns of phrase" reflect common "Semitic" ways of speaking or rather point to a historical context in which Biblical language was commonly used.



**Gabriel
Reynolds**

**University of Notre
Dame**

Gabriel Said Reynolds did his doctoral work at Yale University in Islamic Studies. Currently he is Professor of Islamic Studies and Theology at Notre Dame, researching the Qur'an and Muslim/Christian relations. He authored *The Qur'an and Its Biblical Subtext* (Routledge 2010) and *The Emergence of Islam* (Fortress, 2012), translated 'Abd al-Jabbar's *Critique of Christian Origins* (BYU 2008), and edited *The Qur'an in Its Historical Context* (Routledge 2008) and *New Perspectives on the Qur'an* (Routledge 2011). In 2012-13, he co-directed "The Qur'an Seminar," resulting in *The Qur'an Seminar Commentary* (De Gruyter, 2016). Recent works include *The Qur'an and the Bible* (Yale, 2018) and *Allah: God in the Qur'an* (Yale, 2020). At Notre Dame, he teaches courses on theology, Muslim/Christian Relations, and Islamic Origins. He runs a YouTube channel, "Exploring the Qur'an and the Bible," featuring conversations with leading scholars.

The Qur'an and Syriac Christianity:

Context, Continuities, and Caveats

The study of the Qur'an in light of pre-Islamic Syrian Christian texts has a long tradition among Western scholars. Indeed, the profound significance of Syriac for a better understanding of the Qur'an has been a recurring theme in academic exchanges. Over the last twenty years, a large number of articles and books have been written analyzing various aspects of the Qur'an's relationship with pre-Islamic Syriac Christianity (e.g., Reynolds, 2010, 2018; Witztum, 2011; El-Badawi, 2013; Zellentin, 2013; Sinai, 2017; Ghaffar, 2020). Also, all recently published historical-critical commentaries on the Qur'an Mellon Fellow and dictionaries, such as Angelika Neuwirth's reflections on early and middle Meccan surahs (2011, 2017, 2021) and the ongoing project Corpus Coranicum, *Le Coran des historiens* edited by Guillaume Dye and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi (2019) as well as *Key Terms of the Qur'an* written by Nicolai Sinai (2023) have paid attention to similarities of Syriac traditions with the Qur'an. One may still wonder: why is the comparison of Syriac texts and Qur'anic passages significant for a better understanding of the Qur'an? What do we know about the Syrian Christian presence on the Arabian Peninsula prior to the rise of Islam? In this paper, I begin by restating the significance of Syriac for the study of the Qur'an and presenting textual witnesses to the presence of Syrian Christians on the Arabian Peninsula. I seek to offer a historical background of the Syrian Christians' potential contacts with the Arabs of Mecca and Medina. I then review existing scholarship and give some examples of continuities between the Qur'an and pre-Islamic Syriac texts. Finally, the paper analyzes a case study: I investigate the nature of clothing (*libās* in Q 7:27) in the Qur'anic and Syriac narratives of the first humans, Adam and his spouse. I argue that while there is a continuity regarding the occurrence of primordial clothing, the nature of clothing differs from each other. I thus caution against the reading of the Qur'an only in light of Syriac texts and opt for a more nuanced reading.



Ana
Davitashvili

University of
Tübingen

Ana Davitashvili (PhD, University of Bamberg, 2021) is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Tübingen. Her research focuses on literary aspects of the Qur'an, methodological approaches to the study of Muslim traditions, and the comparative study of pre-Islamic Syriac Christianity, the Qur'an, early hadith and *Isrā'īliyyāt*. Her monograph, *Von den Huris zu den gläubigen Frauen im Paradies: Ein Beitrag zur Untersuchung des frühislamischen Frau enbildes* (Brill/Schöningh, 2024), based on her doctoral dissertation, explores the depictions of the *hūr 'in* in the Qur'an, pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, and early Islamic exegesis. Other recent publications include "The Inner-Qur'anic Development of the Images of Women in Paradise: From the *hūr 'in* to Believing Women," *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association* 7 (2022). Ana is currently working on a book project that unearths the affinities of the Qur'an with pre-Islamic West and East Syrian Christian traditions.

Interpreting the Qur'ān with the Bible

As the field of quranic studies continues to flourish, biblical and para-biblical voices in the Quran resonate across Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions. Naturally, scholars immersed in the world of the Quran contend with the place of the Bible both in its recollective, or evocative, form and from the perspective of a received text in the Quran's tafsir tradition. The following presentation will explore the reception of biblical, quranic and hadith texts in tafsir literature. The focus will be on two scholars of the Quran and the Bible: the *mu'tabir*, ^{**}Abū al-Ḥakam 'Abd al-Salām b. al-Ishbīlī (d. 536/1141), known as Ibn Barrajān, and the *qārī* *al-qurrā'*, Ibrāhīm b. 'Umar b. Ḥasan al-Biqā'ī (d. 885/1480). Given the separation of three centuries and the development of Islamic thought across the Mediterranean, the relationship between each author's exegesis of the Quran with the Bible raises specific questions about biblical interpretation within tafsir studies: What similarities exist between the authors' methodological approach to the Quran and the Bible? Where are they located in the broader landscape of the Muslim exegetical tradition on the Bible? And how is biblical material used in their reading of the Quran?

Continued



Roy McCoy

Independent Scholar

R. Michael McCoy III holds a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) from the University of Oxford. He previously served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Notre Dame. Dr. McCoy's academic expertise lies in Religious Studies, with a particular focus on Theological Exegesis and Manuscript Studies. His research interests include the Arabic Bible and Tafsīr (Islamic exegesis), reflecting his commitment to understanding sacred texts across different religious traditions.

When examining the use of the Bible in the tafsirs of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī, there are two environments to bear in mind. The first is the quranic context for a given passage. Each author quotes biblical material to explain and amplify certain passages in the Quran. This means that something in the quranic context prompted the authors to quote the Bible. Often this relates to a biblical figure, concept or narrative the Quran evokes for its audience. The second and most important environment to consider is the tafsir context. How Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī bring together their biblical quotations with their quranic exegesis is central for understanding how the Bible functions in their commentaries. An analysis of the **tafsir **context elucidates the connection between the biblical material and its inclusion with certain quranic verses.

The general outline followed for this presentation will be adapted from *Interpreting the Qur'ān with the Bible (Tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Kitāb): Reading the Arabic Bible in the Tafsīrs of Ibn Barraġān and al-Biqā'ī*: (1) a brief introduction to each scholar; (2) a selection of examples for the use of the Bible within Muslim tradition; (3) an analysis of each scholar's scriptural hermeneutics; (4) case study i: "The Garden Narrative" (Genesis 1-3 in the context of Q7: 18-25 and Q2:31-35); (5) case study ii: "The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard" (Matthew 19-20 in the context of Q4:85-87, Q7:157 and Q57:26-29).

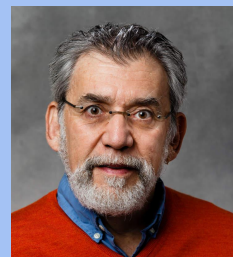
Roy Mc Coy

Independent Scholar

Solomon and the Ant: The Qur'an in Conversation with the Bible

Solomon matches wits with an ant, a bird, and the queen of Sheba. Magical creatures, the jinn, are driven out of heaven by fiery meteors. Moses, on a quest, meets a mysterious stranger. The Bible offers parallels and connections. Genesis, Exodus, Isaiah, Matthew, and other biblical books, contrast with the qur'anic text, comment on the qur'anic story, and supplement it. Separated by space and time, the Bible and the Qur'an faced similar issues. Both the Bible and the Qur'an adapted material from their surrounding culture while at the same time distinguishing themselves from that culture. Rather than addressing this cultural confrontation with rigid certainty, the Bible and the Qur'an are ambiguous and multivocal. The Bible and the Qur'an are layered, containing stories within stories, fragments, and structural abnormalities. These features contribute to meaning. Penchansky's analysis of these stories makes the Qur'an accessible and compelling to nonspecialists and students.

Solomon and the Ant, using the Bible as a dialogue partner, examines stories from the Qur'an, their drama, characters, and meaning. Although some qur'anic stories have close biblical parallels, here Penchansky examines stories without biblical precursors. Qur'anic narratives in dialogue with biblical texts enhance understanding. Penchansky chooses biblical stories that address similar questions about the nature of God and God's interaction with people.



**David
Penchansky**

**University of St.
Thomas**

David Penchansky, Professor Emeritus of Theology, is renowned for his expertise in Hebrew Bible studies, Wisdom Literature, and biblical criticism. With degrees from Vanderbilt University, The Assemblies of God Graduate School, and Queens College, his academic journey spans decades. Penchansky's research explores the intricate connections between biblical and Qur'anic narratives, promoting interfaith understanding. His recent book, "Solomon and the Ant: Qur'an and Bible in Dialogue" (2021), showcases his commitment to bridging these sacred texts, further cementing his role as a key figure in comparative religious studies.

The Qur'anic Mary and the Chronology of the Qur'an

This paper will the figure of the Qur'anic Mary, particularly as she is described in surah 19. It will discuss the redactional history of this surah and argue for a Palestinian setting of this text.



**Guillaume
Dye**

**Free University of
Brussels**

Guillaume Dye is a French scholar specializing in Islamic studies and Oriental studies. As a professor at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), he brings expertise in religious history and linguistics to his work. Dye earned his master's degree in linguistics from the prestigious École pratique des hautes études (EPHE) in 2007. His academic pursuits are further enriched by his involvement with the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Religions and Secularism (CIERL) and the Medieval History Research Group, where he contributes to advancing understanding in these fields.

“You crucified him and you killed him; except that God raised him”:

Creedal Patterns and the Qur’ānic Crucifixion

When the Qur’an’s crucifixion account (Q 4:157–158) speaks of Jesus as killed, crucified, with an appearance, and a raising, this reverberated with Eastern Christian articulations of “crucified, died, buried, raised, and appeared” found in Biblical creedal patterns. This paper provides an examination of Biblical and conciliar creedal patterns in Syriac, in order to better understand how Christians heard the Qur’anic crucifixion account in light of their internal disputes over how to express the person of Christ. The evidence suggests that Q 4:157–158 sounded more similar to pre-Islamic creedal patterns found in the Bible and later the church councils than previously thought. Additionally, the Eastern Christian communities shifted how they articulated their creedal formulas in their responses to Muslims, providing a window into an underexplored understanding of the Qur’anic crucifixion account as it reflected and reacted to the Syriac Christianity present in its milieu.



Ryann Craig

Georgetown University

Ryann Craig is a multifaceted academic professional at Georgetown University, serving as the Special Assistant to the Vice President for Mission & Ministry and Director of Academic Initiatives for OMM. Her roles extend to being a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Social Justice and an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. With a Ph.D. from Catholic University of America, Dr. Craig's expertise lies in medieval Christian Arabic and Syriac authors' use of Quranic texts. Her professional experience includes directing student programs at the Berkley Center and managing academic support at Catholic University. Dr. Craig has contributed significantly to religious minority cultural heritage preservation and co-edited "A Contested Coexistence: Insights in Arabic Christianity from Theology to Migration." Her work at Georgetown involves overseeing various academic programs and fostering interfaith dialogue and understanding.

With What Kind of Bible does Qur'an Presume Familiarity?

Qur'ān and Bible demonstrably share a number of characters, stories, and homiletic themes. This suggests that Qur'ān participates as an active interlocutor within the wider 'scriptural' universe of discourse in late antiquity. Or, to put it another way, Qur'ān seems to presume a certain level of familiarity with Bible on the part of its intended audience. But *which* or *whose* Bible was it? In this presentation, we will explore the ramifications of what this might mean for our historical understanding of the social and cultural background amidst which Qur'ān arose and flourished.



John Reeves

UNC Charlotte

John C. Reeves (Ph.D., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion) is Blumenthal Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of Religious Studies at the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. A native North Carolinian, he came to Charlotte in 1996 after serving as Assistant and then Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Winthrop University. Much of his work probes the margins of conventionally conceived categories, exploring the overlaps and commonalities discernible among a host of Near Eastern fringe groups and texts which inhabit the twilight realms of cosmic arcana, apocalyptic fervor, and religious dualism in late antiquity and the medieval era. He maintains this site as a resource for his students, professional colleagues, and other interested parties.

Towards a Descriptive Theology of the Qur'an:

God, Moral Common Sense, and Human Freedom

This lecture will attempt to pull together some of the fundamental theological positions of the Qur'an, which are mostly consistent across the entire corpus and often inform and shape the way in which the Qur'an engages with Biblical traditions. Topics covered will include: the Qur'anic understanding of monotheism and of the way in which God is unlike any other being (Q 42:11); God's interpersonal relatability; the question whether there are at least some normative propositions that are objective and accessible to humans independently of revelation; and the relationship between human freedom and divine foreknowledge.



Nicolai Sinai

**University of
Oxford**

Nicolai Sinai is a Professor of Islamic Studies and Fellow of Pembroke College at the University of Oxford. His research focuses on the Qur'an, particularly its literary aspects, engagement with Jewish and Christian traditions, and relationship to ancient Arabic poetry. Dr. Sinai also studies late antique Arabia, Muhammad's life, Islamic exegesis, and the history of philosophical and theological thought in the Islamic world. He teaches a variety of courses on Islamic religion, Arabic texts, and Qur'anic studies. A prolific author, his recent publications include "Key Terms of the Qur'an: A Critical Dictionary" (2023) and "The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction" (2017), reflecting his expertise in Qur'anic studies and Islamic intellectual history.

A History of Muslim Views of the Bible

Muslim views of the Bible form an important aspect of interreligious relations in the modern day. As a result it is important to deepen understanding of the history of these views. This enables us to understand what in these views has changed over time, what has stayed the same, and how far back in time particular views or approaches reach. In the early centuries Muslim views are complex and varied, characterised by both criticism and use of the previous scriptures. The Qur'an and hadith literature, both Sunnī and Shī'ī, form the basis of this complexity and variety, while many Muslim writers also discussed the Bible in the kalām tradition, and in historical and other genres. But a turning point was reached during the 5 th /11 th century with the writings of 'Abd al-Jabbār and Ibn Ḥazm, in Iran and Spain respectively. These decisively shift the focus towards severe criticism of the Biblical text, a trend which came to dominate Muslim discourse in the following centuries. This lecture will discuss developments up to the time of Ibn Ḥazm, and also give examples from later writers, up to and including 19 th century India.



**Martin
Whittingham**

**University of
Oxford**

Martin Whittingham is the Director of the Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies Oxford and a scholar specializing in Muslim-Christian relations. With a background in English literature, theology, and history, he focuses on interpreting religious texts and understanding Muslim views of Christianity. His research primarily explores the history of Muslim perspectives on the Bible and Christian faith. Currently, Dr. Whittingham is working on a major two-part book project, "A History of Muslim Views of the Bible," with the first part published in 2020. He also serves as a tutor and supervisor at Oxford University, contributing to both independent research and academic education in the study of religions. His interdisciplinary approach provides valuable insights into interfaith dynamics and Islamic thought in relation to Christianity.

The Qur'an and Judaism in Current Research

Already before and especially after the Hijrah, the Qur'an reflects its community's interaction with Hejazi Jews. Research has correctly identified these Jews as "rabbanized," i.e. as intimately familiar with the legal practices (*halakha*) and the narrative traditions (*aggadah*) of the rabbis of Roman Palestine and Sassanian Mesopotamia. This talk summarizes recent scholarly developments that pinpoint the cultural affiliation of such Jews with the rabbinic centres of Palestine more so than with those of Mesopotamia. It also attempts to reconstruct the halakhic and aggadic materials circulating among them: most likely the Mishna and a set of post-Talmudic Midrashim as well as a set of anti-Christian polemical literature such as religious poetry (*Piyyut*) and stories about Jesus (*Toledot Yeshu*). It will also address the question how better knowledge of the Qur'an's Jews helps us better understand its continuity with and its criticism of this community.



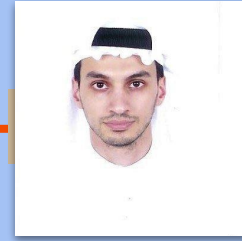
**Holger
Zellentin**

**University of
Tübingen**

Holger Zellentin is a historian of religion of late antiquity, with a particular interest in Talmudic and Quranic studies. His approach combines literary criticism with historical and legal methods to define similarities and differences between Jewish, Christian and early Islamic cultural traditions. He has received several awards and prizes for his research in this area. The European Research Council, the British Academy and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK) are among the supporters of his work. In 2014 he was awarded the Philip Leverhulme Prize, and in 2020-2025 he will serve as PI of an ERC Consolidator Grant, The Quran as a Source for Late Antiquity. He is Chairman of the Board of the International Association for Quranic Studies (IQSA), and was a Board Member of the British Association for Jewish Studies (BAJS) for five years. In 2019 he was appointed to the University of Tübingen.

Qur'anic Understandings of the Divine Name Yhwh

Although the Qur'an never explicitly mentions the name yhwh, this study demonstrates that it reveals cognizance not only of the divine name but also of the elaboration of its meaning by paralleling interpretations found in some of the earliest rabbinic traditions, evidently building on traditions that were circulating amongst Jewish communities of Late Antiquity. I propose that the absence of an explicit mention of yhwh in the Qur'an points to the Qur'an's oral rather than literary genesis. This study analyses Pharaoh's inquiries about who and what the Lord is (in Q 20.49– 55; 26.23–28). The Qur'an responds to these questions, whereas in the Exodus account, Pharaoh's questioning about yhwh remains unanswered. The Qur'an appears to interpret the meaning of yhwh as God's continuous generative action, the originating cause of every thing, and God's existence, transcendence and omnipresence, echoing some explanations of the divine name in the earliest rabbinic traditions. Thus, the Qur'an engages with some of its audience by referencing Jewish understandings of the divine name. By reframing and reinterpreting some biblical stories, the Qur'an provides exegetical contributions to these narratives, highlighting its unique and critical role in the broader religious discourse during Late Antiquity.



**Abdulla
Galadari**

Khalifa University

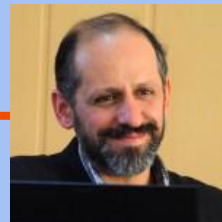
Abdulla Galadari is an Associate Professor of Islamic Studies at Khalifa University. His field is in Qur'ānic hermeneutics and the Qur'an's possible engagement with Near Eastern traditions in Late Antiquity. He uses a multidisciplinary approach towards the Qur'an, such as using cognitive science of religion and philology.

He is the author of “Qur'ānic Hermeneutics: Between Science, History, and the Bible” (2018), “Metaphors of Death and Resurrection in the Qur'an: An Intertextual Approach with Biblical and Rabbinic Literature” (2021), and “The Spiritual Meanings of the Ḥajj Rituals: A Philological Approach” (2021).

Moses and Muhammad in Dialogue:

A Qur'anic Reading of Deuteronomy 33:2–4

The study investigates the intriguing assertion within Q 48:29, where the Quran declares Muhammad and those with him to possess “their mathal in the Torah”. It examines the potential biblical subtext and context, proposing Deuteronomy 33:2–4 as the definitive intertext. Through this lens, Q 48:29 emerges as a prism, diffracting the Deuteronomic radiance of Paran onto Muhammad and his adherents, positioning them as the inheritors of Mosaic salvation history. The analysis unveils a sophisticated Quranic grasp of the nuances embedded within Hebrew and Aramaic terminology of the Deuteronomic passage. This engagement reflects a masterful Quranic exegesis, fostering a profound interfaith dialogue with the People of the Book. Furthermore, by juxtaposing Q 48:29 with its Torahic counterpart, the study sheds light on a hitherto unexplored facet of Islamic prayer rituals, rukūʿ and sujūd, connecting them to the biblical notion of “bowing before the Divine hand and feet”.



**Hadi
Taghavi**

Independant

Dr. Hadi Ali Taqavi is a prominent scholar in comparative studies of Abrahamic religions, renowned for his extensive research in this field. His proficiency in Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Arabic has positioned him as a leading expert in comparative analyses of the Quran, Hadith, and the Old and New Testaments. His notable contributions include "An Ignored Arabic Account of a Byzantine Royal Woman" and "The Twelve Imams in the Torah: A New Look at Abraham's Prophecy in the Book of Genesis." His research is characterized by meticulous analysis and a cross-cultural perspective, significantly advancing the understanding of shared heritage and distinctive features among Abrahamic faiths, while also fostering interfaith dialogue in contemporary society.

Adam and the Names

This study examines the naming episode within the story, in which God teaches Adam “the names, all of them” (v. 31), to counter the angels’ objection to the creation of the human creature on the basis that he will “spread corruption ... and will shed blood” (v. 30). I will try to show that the traditional understanding of this narrative in Western scholarship, which connects it ultimately to the Genesis episode in which Adam names all the creatures of the land and sky (Gen 2:19–20), fails to do justice to a close reading of the text itself, from both a narrative and grammatical perspective. Instead, I will argue for an alternative reading of the passage already suggested by early *mufasssirūn*, in which God teaching Adam the “names” in Q. 2 should not be taken to mean the names of all birds and land animals on the basis of Genesis 2, but rather refers to – or at the very least includes alongside the names of the other creatures – Adam being introduced to his future offspring. I will show that this not only fully accounts for otherwise puzzling elements of the story, but that this reading too has antecedent intertexts that are ultimately more relevant than the Genesis 2 naming incident.



**Saqib
Hussain**

**Loyola Marymount
University**

Saqib Hussain is an Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University's Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts in Los Angeles. He holds a DPhil in Oriental Studies and an MPhil in Islamic Studies and History from the University of Oxford. Dr. Hussain's research focuses on Qur'anic studies, particularly its relationship with biblical traditions and late antiquity. He has received several prestigious awards, including the Gladiator Trust Postgraduate Scholarship and the Andrew Rippin Best Paper Prize. His work has been published in notable journals such as the *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* and the *Journal of the International Qur'anic Studies Association*. Dr. Hussain is actively involved in various academic societies related to Islamic and Biblical studies, contributing to interfaith understanding and scholarly discourse in his field.