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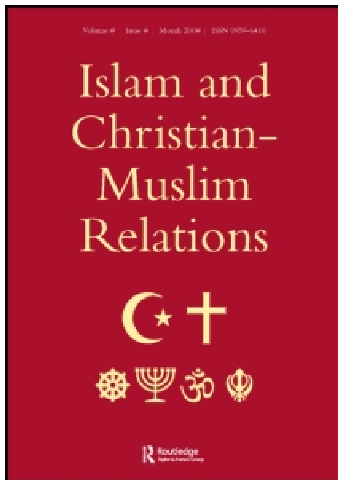

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The biblical narrative in the *Annales* of Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq and the question of medieval Byzantine-Orthodox identity

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The biblical narrative in the *Annales* of Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq and the question of medieval Byzantine-Orthodox identity

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This article pursues a close examination of the biblical narrative in Saʿīd Ibn Baṭrīq's (Eutychius of Alexandria, d. 940) historiographic work, the *Annales*, to reveal a wide range of sources that were available either to the patriarch himself or to an intermediate source on which he relied. These include not only a rich Judaeo-Christian lore but also a rather significant segment of Muslim materials, most notably tales of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*). The Muslim trappings of some of the Judaeo-Christian apocrypha found in Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative suggest that we are dealing with a Christian writer who made use of Judaeo-Christian motifs that had undergone a process of Muslim literary adaptation. A comparison of his narrative with that of Christian works of the same period will show that he occupied a unique position among his contemporaries. Yet perhaps more importantly, once we acknowledge the role of the biblical narrative in enhancing the work's credibility in the eyes of its readers, we gain a better sense of the cultural world of that potential Christian readership. By focusing on the biblical narrative of Ibn Baṭrīq's treatise, the article bypasses the question of its apologetic agenda and addresses instead the writer's methodology and, through this, the cultural world of his readership.

Keywords: Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq; Eutychius of Alexandria; *Annales*; Melkites; apocrypha; Eastern Christian histography; Islamic histography

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Introduction

Little can be established with certainty about the life and career of the tenth-century Melkite patriarch and writer Saʿīd ibn Baṭrīq, also known as Eutychius of Alexandria. Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī (d. c. 1066), the eleventh-century Melkite historian, reports that by 938 Ibn Baṭrīq had finished writing his historiographic treatise and that he died in 940 (Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī 1924, 705).[1] Additional biographical data, purportedly provided by Ibn Baṭrīq himself, is found in a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century manuscript containing the historical treatise (see below on the Antiochene Recension); it suggests that he was born in 877 and was appointed patriarch by the Abbasid caliph al-Qāhir (r. 932–34) in 932, whereupon he was named Eutychius (Cheikho, Carra de Vaux and Zayyat 1906–9, 69–70, 86–7). But it is more than likely that al-Anṭākī is the source of this biographical information, as it derives from a later manuscript of Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographic treatise which, as we shall see, was highly prone to literary adaptations by al-Anṭākī. Data provided by al-Anṭākī appears also to inform substantial parts of Ibn Baṭrīq's biography in the thirteenth-century biographic dictionary of physicians, compiled by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 1270). The language of al-Anṭākī's treatise and that of Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa's text is almost identical. Thus we learn from both sources that Ibn Baṭrīq was originally from Fusṭāṭ and gained his initial reputation for his career as a physician, or person of medical knowledge (*mutaṭabbib*). Ibn Baṭrīq's tenure as patriarch was dominated, according to al-Anṭākī, by an ongoing dispute with members of his community who opposed his leadership. The biographical

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entry in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa's compilation concludes with a list of works composed by Ibn Baṭrīq (Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī 1924, 713–14; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa 1884, pt 2, 86–7). According to Breydy, Ibn Baṭrīq 'n'avait pas reçu la formation habituelle du clergé melchite de son pays, ni l'instruction intellectuelle et théologique qui convenait à ses semblables' [had not received the conventional training of the Melkite clergy of his country, nor the same intellectual and theological instruction as his peers] (Breydy 1983, 1).[2] At the same time Breydy notes that Ibn Baṭrīq's place of birth, Fusṭāṭ, was known as an active centre of Muslim traditionalists, *muḥaddithūn*, during the seventh to ninth centuries.

Despite the list of works attributed to Ibn Baṭrīq by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, only one can be ascribed to him with confidence and that is his historiographic treatise, the *Annales*,[3] which, as we shall see, further attests to the patriarch's cultural ties to his Muslim contemporaries. Nothing in Ibn Baṭrīq's biography, however, helps to explain the importance of his work – why it has been copied so many times, from the time of the author to as late as the seventeenth century, and why it has been successful in eliciting the apologetical endeavours of prominent figures such as the Coptic author Sawīrus ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. after 987), and the Muslim scholar Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328).[4] Indeed, the numerous copies and recensions notwithstanding, it has been suggested that it was the apologetical purpose of the work that sustained its relevance over the centuries (Griffith 2004, 73).[5]

Whatever its cause, the centrality of this work and its widespread acknowledgment has rendered its transmission highly susceptible to interpolations. It is now acknowledged that the *Sinaiticus Arabicus* 582 of St Catherine's Monastery is not only the earliest manuscript of Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographic work but also represents what Breydy has appropriately termed the 'Alexandrian Recension'.[6] Breydy was able to establish the manuscript's early date based on its orthography, textual features and sources. He went as far as arguing that *Sinaiticus Arabicus* 582 is in fact Ibn Baṭrīq's autograph copy of the work (Breydy 1980, 148; 1985, 471/44: v). Yet perhaps the most significant part of Breydy's analysis, which also seems the safest to accept, is his claim that *Sinaiticus Arabicus* 582 is the earliest copy of the work. Breydy's view of later copies of the work as secondarily reliable also seems reasonable, as they appear to contain numerous literary modifications and additions. These later manuscripts were therefore classified within what has been termed the Antiochene Recension, reflecting the augmented versions that were copied in Antioch.[7] Breydy has argued convincingly that the copies of the Antiochene Recension were most likely manipulated and recast to the point of being unrecognizable to the work's original author. He therefore concluded that it would be hazardous to draw conclusions about the author and his work based on later manuscripts of the Antiochene Recension (Breydy 1983, vi). Seemingly anticipating Breydy's textual criticism, al-Anṭākī clarifies in the opening of his work that, at the time, there were already quite a few copies of Ibn Baṭrīq's work, of which some were close to the original and others had already been supplemented with various notes (Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī 1924, 709).

The *Annales* as found in *Sinaiticus Arabicus* is significantly shorter than its later versions, lacking both the beginning and ending of the original work. Whereas the narrative of the Antiochene Recension begins with the story of Creation and ends in the Abbasid period, the Alexandrian narrative begins with the story of Moses and Pharaoh's daughter and ends with the start of the Muslim conquest, along with a short excerpt of one folio dealing with the years 820–30.

Structurally, the narrative of the *Annales* resembles compositions of the world chronicle genre. Commencing with biblical history, it then moves on to chronicle central historical periods such as ancient Persia, the era of Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic kings, the Roman Empire, early Christianity, the late Roman and Sasanian empires, and, finally, the early Muslim period. Ibn Baṭrīq's Byzantine-Orthodox affiliation is clearly reflected in his treatment of Christological disputes and his digressive assaults on rival groups such as the

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Manichaeans, the East Syrians (Nestorians), the Syrian Orthodox and the Maronites. Browsing through the chronicle, one easily notes Ibn Baṭrīq's heavy reliance on a wide variety of legendary, canonical, and documentary evidence. His own remarks and commentary are mostly, if not always, intended as brief clarifications and linking phrases. For the most part, however, he either transcribes his various sources verbatim or closely paraphrases them, remaining loyal to their sequence and content.[8]

The Treatise: its agenda, genre and Muslim context

One rather difficult question concerns the nature of Ibn Baṭrīq's agenda, which in all likelihood influenced the work's structure and content. Griffith suggests viewing Ibn Baṭrīq's work in the context of a general rise in Christian-Arabic literature in response to what he describes as a 'Muslim active concern to promote conversion to Islam' (Griffith 1982, 160). And indeed, Ibn Baṭrīq's period witnessed a dramatic proliferation of a Christian-Arabic literature of varying quality (cf. Nasrallah 1988, vol. 2; Samir 1990, 446–60, 545–6; Griffith 2008). The tenth-century Melkite patriarch was active less than two centuries after John of Damascus (d. 749) and shortly after the time of the renowned theologian Theodore Abū Qurra (d. between 820 and 825). Like his Melkite contemporaries, he appears to have been preoccupied with matters pertaining to his denominational affiliation, as can be discerned from parts of his work that refer to rival Christian groups. His interest in the history of Christianity, the late Roman Empire and ecclesiastical history in general is, of course, also telling in this respect (Rosenthal 1952, 138). But at the same time, just like John and Theodore, Ibn Baṭrīq was firmly embedded within a Muslim cultural milieu (Griffith 2001, 22, 38–9). Thus the confusion regarding his objectives increases as we note his resort to Muslim sources, including direct quotations towards the end of his work.

Another challenge facing the contemporary reader of this composition is that of determining its literary genre, or historiographic pattern: are we dealing with a world chronicle or rather with an apologetic text in disguise? (Griffith 2004, 69). In either case, the historiographic value of the work is not in doubt, nor is the fact that it shares certain features with late antique and early medieval historiographic compositions throughout the Near East and the Mediterranean. It should be noted, however, that Ibn Baṭrīq, like his Muslim contemporaries, did not compose an historical work in the scientific sense but rather offered a compilation of traditions of historical value. For the modern observer, however, these traditions cannot serve as direct informants of past events. Instead, they are best understood as indicators of literary traditions circulating in his milieu at the time, while their arrangement and selection may shed light on some of his assumptions regarding his potential readers.

Questions, methodology, limitations

The following discussion focuses on the biblical narrative of the chronicle through an analysis of its sources, its structure (emplotment), and its comparison with contemporary Byzantine, Syriac, and Muslim narratives. Ibn Baṭrīq's biblical narrative reflects an extensive reworking of apocryphal sources that were available either to the patriarch himself or to an intermediate source on which he relied. As the analysis will show, this narrative was inspired not only by a rich Judaeo-Christian lore but also by Muslim materials, most notably tales of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*). My basic presupposition is that Ibn Baṭrīq expected his target audience to be familiar both with the biblical themes he selected and with the particular manner in which he chose to relate them.

Following a few expository remarks about the historiographic traditions that were prevalent in the Near East from the time of Julius Africanus (d. 240) to that of Ibn Baṭrīq, this article now

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outlines some of the approaches of modern scholarship to the use of biblical narratives for recounting the history of Near Eastern confessional groups in the early Muslim period. The heart of the analysis will then focus on a close reading of the biblical narrative of Ibn Baṭrīq's work as it is presented in *Sinaiticus Arabicus* 582. A comparison of this part of the treatise with canonical traditions such as the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, and the Peshitta will reveal that Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative contains numerous extra-canonical biblical insertions. A selection of these cases will be analysed in conjunction with their possible origins in various canonical traditions, apocrypha, and Muslim lore, as well as with their parallels in contemporary historiographic works of Melkite, Byzantine, Syriac, and Muslim backgrounds. The aim is to parse some of the traditions that informed Ibn Baṭrīq's work and put forward tentative suggestions about his own cultural milieu and that of his potential readers, keeping in mind the inherent limitations of a plan to reconstruct the source material of a writer who, like his contemporaries, relied largely on texts that have not survived. Thus, while the tenth-century work of Ibn Baṭrīq may betray a close affinity with an apocryphal source of the first century AD, it is likely that the latter was available to the Melkite patriarch through more than one intermediate source, literary or oral; and as these linking sources often did not survive, our ability to draw conclusions regarding Ibn Baṭrīq's methodology and choices is considerably restricted (cf. Adler 1989, 7).

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Historiographic traditions

Ibn Baṭrīq's work is first and foremost an historiographic treatise: it purports to inform its readers about past events since Creation. The work's structure and wording are similar to those of other historiographic works composed in the Near East from as early as the first Christian chronicles to the late Middle Ages – although the narrative of the *Annales*, its themes and motifs drawn from diverse backgrounds, nonetheless displays an unmistakably distinctive character. Situating the work within the vast field of historiography is a more delicate matter. While a chronicle is typically a historiographic text that follows a chronological rationale, and a history is typically governed by the flow of narrative in relation to the 'facts' and their interdependence, it is rare to find historiographic works that conform neatly to either one of these categories (Witakowski 1987, 59–60). In his discussion of the concept and evolution of chronological writing, James W. Johnson defines chronology, in contrast to history, as being concerned with 'a cosmic order of events', ignoring causation, and displaying a preoccupation with 'reconciling dates and establishing temporal sequence' (Johnson 1962, 125–6). These features dominated not only the writings of Semitic ancient historians such as the Babylonian Berosus (c. 290 BC), but also those of Hellenistic authors. With the advent of Christianity and the attendant need of Church Fathers to validate their religion by aligning it with the Scriptures, special effort was made to match the dates that figure in their narratives with biblical events, most notably Creation and the Flood. Thus, perhaps more than its chronological adaptations, early Christian historiography signalled the utility of the past for dialectical and theological ends.[9] By the fourth century it was left to Eusebius of Caesarea (d. c. 337–40) to establish, through his *Chronicle*, a more refined historiographic pattern, the foundations for which had been laid by prominent authors such as Julius Africanus, Clement of Alexandria (d. 215), and Hippolytus of Rome (d. 236). It was, as Arnaldo Momigliano defined it, 'a literary genre which was meant to remind the reader of the events rather than to tell them afresh' (Momigliano 1963, 87). But Eusebius, of course, did far more than merely refine Christian historiography, going on to become the central figure in the structuring of Eastern Christian chronography, blending it with a theological tradition of early Christian thought (Croke 1983, 116; Chestnut 1986, 2, 6; Witakowski 1987, 71; Adler 1989, 74).

Later on, the theological aspect of Eusebian chronography was significantly augmented. With Christianity gradually evolving and formally establishing itself as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire, its historiography took on a crucial role as a source for marking identity. The past was solicited for consolidating communal identities and demarcating communal boundaries; a unique past was shared by those within the community and expropriated from those outside of it (cf. Cameron 1991, 49; 1992, 94; van Ginkel 1998, 352–3; Witakowski 1999–2000, 21; Sizgorich 2007, 997–8). Those who shared this sort of historiographic rhetoric may have inherited a common literary culture, yet by the time of the Muslim conquest they had split up into competing denominational and confessional camps. Thus, while early Christians were particularly interested in cementing the links between ancient history and Jesus, the first Muslims were preoccupied with the period of the Prophet, his Companions and successors (Robinson 2003, 11; cf. Qureshi 1966).[10] For both groups, however, the objective of historiography remained that set by Eusebius, namely to teach and guide present generations through the example of the past (Croke and Emmett 1983, 2, 6; Wheeldon 1989, 38; Palmer and Brock 1993, xxix; Donner 1998, 126; 2002–3, 12; Lieu 2004, 7; van Ginkel 2007, 206–8).

It is in the context of historiography as an identity marker that we should consider the emergence of the historiographic genre of world chronicles. World chronicles first came into being as a means of unifying a growing and increasingly divided Christian world and, during the first Christian centuries, absorbing new members into it. By the tenth century, however, world chronicles had become a fixture in the literary enterprises of distinct denominations and confessions – specifically the Byzantines (i.e. Chalcedonians outside the abode of Islam), the Melkites, the West Syrians, the East Syrians, the Armenians, and the Muslims. 'The eastern chronicler's purpose was to set the present in the context of the whole human history in a different way' (Croke and Emmett 1983, 7; cf. Witakowski 1987, 77; Mango 1980, 193; Hoyland 1997, 389). Thus an inclusive historiographical approach, meant to establish for its audience the broadest possible historical basis, was used to cultivate the socio-religious foundations of Near Eastern communities. Late antique and early medieval Near Eastern writers displayed a common interest in presenting their communities' past through this genre. What set them apart from one another was the way in which each used his sources to construct a story-line that would enhance a sense of community through the notion of a common past (Donner 1998, 129).

In addition to the historiographic model, later generations of Near Eastern historians also inherited from their late antique predecessors the impulse to anchor their narratives in an ancient past. This past was to imbue their communities with a 'respectable antiquity' (Croke 1983, 100), and it is here that biblical themes and motifs, both canonical and apocryphal, were of the utmost importance (Momigliano 1963, 81–3; Jeffreys 1979, 222; Witakowski 1987, 65; Adler 1989, 2–4; Tottoli 2002, 132; Morony 2004, 1). These were used as a means of consolidating group identities within a sectarian framework – that is, for the purpose not just of delineating communal boundaries but also of enabling inter-confessional and inter-denominational polemics (Wansbrough 1978, 40; Griffith 2008, 20). Thus the literary works of early and medieval writers, consisting of biblical narratives and motifs, have been the focus of numerous studies devoted to elucidating the explicit and implicit messages of literary endeavours that use the Bible for polemical purposes.[11] With the rise of Islam and its growing influence, both political and spiritual, the biblical text was manipulated by writers of different confessional backgrounds to undermine the theological argumentation of rival religions or denominations and enhance the superiority of their own. To that end, writers resorted to a variety of literary techniques that are best classified, to borrow John Wansbrough's terms in his analysis of the *Sīra*, as 'exegetical' and 'parabolic'. In the former we see how 'extracts from scripture provided the framework for extended narration', while in the latter 'the narration was itself the framework for frequent if not continuous allusion to scripture' (Wansbrough 1978, 2).

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Still, the exact function of the biblical narrative in chronological writing is worth further reflection. Superficially, its main role appears to be one of sequencing: providing the reader with the notion of a continuous flow of history and of God's omnipresence. Certainly, any attempt to uncover hidden messages or decode the biblical narrative in its historiographic context would seem forced. Instead, the biblical section in world chronicles should be regarded as an attempt to endow the general narrative with one particular quality or a combination of qualities. In some cases the biblical narrative was incorporated into historiographic treatises in order to confer on them a stamp of validity owing to the work's shared structure with similar literary enterprises. In other instances the biblical section was indeed designed chiefly to present a comprehensive sequence of events (cf. Yaʿqūbī 2000, vi; Griffith 2004, 81). And finally, not unlike works of the apocalyptic genre in this period, when historiography assumed a polemical role, biblical narratives in historiographic treatises were meant to establish the reliability of the work as a whole.[12]

So rather than attempting to decipher covert meaning in the texts, it seems safer to focus on the manner in which a given chronicler used biblical themes – how he selected, emplotted, and paraphrased them. One way of going about this is by considering historiographic narratives as products of an ongoing layering. We know, for example, that certain historiographic traditions reveal a process in which older historiographic narratives were copied and thus constituted the foundations for later reports. Older narratives were abridged, paraphrased, or quoted verbatim (Jeffreys 1979, 200–1; Brunt 1980, 477; Witakowski 1987, 28–9; Conrad 1990; Donner 1998, 137–8; van Ginkel 1998, 351–2; Hoyland 1997, 400–3). It is in this context that we should seek to understand the decisions of the author, insofar as a process of this nature lends itself to reconstruction.

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Ibn Baṭrīq's biblical and apocryphal sources

The surviving part of the biblical narrative of the Alexandrian Recension occupies the first 32 folios of the treatise. Rather than presenting a comprehensive account, the narrative consists of a selection of biblical stories. It begins with the life of Moses, moves through the stories of the Exodus, the conquest of Palestine, the Israelite kingdoms and their downfall at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians, and concludes with the return of the Babylonian captives. This limited number of biblical tales testifies to a process of selection and editing on the part of the author, although, given the evidence regarding the incorporation of or reliance on earlier accounts, we should tread carefully in attributing the final result to Ibn Baṭrīq. The narrative also reflects an extensive reworking of the biblical story. According to Breydy, Ibn Baṭrīq transcribed parts from an Arabic version of the Bible, which he then blended with the *Cave of Treasures* and the Targum (Breydy 1983, 13–14).

While Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative is indicative of the author's familiarity with the biblical canon, the analysis below will show that the substance of this canon played a relatively minor role in the biblical narrative of the *Annales*.[13] Moreover, even where Ibn Baṭrīq appears to rely on the Scriptures, it is difficult to determine the exact canonical tradition of the Bible to which he had recourse, whether he relied on more than one such tradition, and even the nature of the canonical traditions of intermediate sources on which he may have relied.

Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative not only deviates from the canonical tradition in both form and substance, but also includes apocryphal stories of Judaeo-Christian origin. An emblematic example of the problem of *quellenforschung* in Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative is his treatment of the story of the Martyrdom of Isaiah, one of the better known pseudoepigraphic tales to have survived in medieval historiographic works.[14] The story goes back as early as the composition times of the *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah* (second century BC–first century AD) and *The*

Lives of the Prophets (first century AD). Yet shortly afterwards it had already made its way into additional compositions of both Jewish and Christian backgrounds, such as the *Cave of Treasures* (Ri 1987, 486/207: 306–7 [Syriac], 487/208: 118–19 [French]), and the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds.[15]

Referring to the transgressive conduct of King Menasseh's early rule, Ibn Baṭrīq inserts the apocryphal tale: 'In the third year of his [Menasseh's] reign he worshiped the idols and led the people of Israel to worship them. Isaiah the prophet forbade him (*nahāhu*) this and he killed him and cut him into two halves and burned him in fire (*aḥraqahu bi-al-nār*)' (Breydy 1985, 471/44: 24 [Arabic]; 472/45: 21–2 [German]). Whereas Isaiah's warning to Menasseh and the latter's killing and bisecting of the prophet correspond to the ancient versions of the tale in the *Cave of Treasures*, *The Lives of the Prophets*, and *The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, the final act of burning Isaiah does not. Moreover, none of the Melkite, Syriac, and Muslim traditions that relate the story mentions the burning.[16]

In accordance with the apocryphal narrative of *The Lives of the Prophets*, Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative next turns to relate the miracle of Silwan:

> It is told that Isaiah the prophet, before he was killed, was thirsty and his lord called out and a water source opened, whereupon he drank from it; this is the blessed spring of Silwan and the meaning of Silwan is the source of consolation. It is told that the nations, when they resided in Jerusalem, the water sources dried up and when the people of Israel resided [there], the water flowed in it. (Breydy 1983, 471/44: 24 [Arabic], 472/45: 22–3 [German])

At first Ibn Baṭrīq appears to stray significantly from the ancient narrative, whose author interpreted differently the meaning of the name of the spring: 'He prayed for water to drink, and immediately it was sent to him from it; therefore it is called Siloam, which means "sent"' (Hare 1985, 385–6). This same interpretation was later adopted in Michael the Syrian's chronicle, while the whole event appears to be absent from other contemporary historiographic traditions (Chabot 1899–1910, 1: 87). But the discrepancy between Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative and that of *The Lives of the Prophets* is probably attributable to a mere scribal error. It is easy to see how the term مبعوثة (*mabʿūtha* – 'sent') was mistakenly copied as مغوثة (*maghūtha*, which can be rendered as 'consolation', 'comfort', and 'relief'). Thus, for the most part, this passage from Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative suggests broad conformity with both the apocrypha and contemporary historiographic traditions.

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Ibn Baṭrīq's biblical narrative: Moses in the desert

It is through such subtle differences in narrative that we should find revealed at least part of the answer to what stood behind the editing, paraphrasing, and selection of passages of the Melkite historian. Consider the relating in the *Annales* of the incident from Exodus 2, in which Moses sees an Egyptian beating one of the Israelites:

> When Moses grew up and became a man he saw a man from the Israelites fighting (*yuqātil*) a man of the Egyptians, whereupon Moses struck the Egyptian, killed him, and buried him in the sand. After a few days, two men of the Israelites were fighting (*taqātalā*) and Moses stepped in between them, whereupon they said to him: 'Perhaps you shall kill one of us as you killed yesterday the Egyptian.' Then [Moses] feared for himself and fled to the land [of Midyan], where he settled in the town of Midyan and married a woman by the name Zipporah, daughter of Jethro, whom the Arabs call Shuʿayb, a descendant of Ishmaʿel son of Abraham. (Breydy 1985, 471/44: 1 [Arabic], 472/45: 1 [German])

The story told in the *Annales* provides two details that do not appear in any of the canonical biblical versions: first, when Moses encounters the Egyptian and the Israelite, he sees the two men fighting rather than the former beating the latter, as the Bible tells us. Second, Ibn Baṭrīq adds his

own commentary towards the end of the passage, drawing attention to the fact that the biblical Jethro is the one whom the Arabs call Shuʿayb, that is the Muslim prophet Shuʿayb. The extra-canonical version of Moses witnessing a confrontation between the Egyptian and Israelite rather than a one-sided beating can be found already in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius; in chapter 28 of Book 9 of the *Praeparatio* we read: 'Then the first day I saw two men at strife, Egyptian one, and one of Hebrew race. And when I saw that we were quite alone, none else in sight, I to the rescue came, avenged my kinsman, and the Egyptian slew, ...' (Gifford 1903, 3/1: 468). Eusebius in turn points to the second-century BC Jewish poet from Alexandria, Ezekiel the Tragedian, as the source of his version of the biblical incident (cf. Robertson 1985, 803–7). The story was later adopted by Muslim historiographic works, which are most likely based on the qur'anic story in Q 28.15, where we read: 'One day he entered the town unnoticed by the people and found two men fighting, the one of his own race, the other an enemy...' (Dawood 1959, 75).[17]

As others have noted, Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative has much in common with al-Yaʿqūbī's (d. 897) *Ta'rīkh al-anbiyā'*, and al-Masʿūdī's (d. 956) *Murūj al-dhahab* and *Kitāb al-tanbīh wa-al-ishrāf*.[18] The reference to the Muslim prophet Shuʿayb in the *Annales* illustrates this resemblance clearly, in light of such passages as the following, from al- Masʿūdī's *Murūj*:

> In that time Shuʿayb was the prophet, and he is Shuʿayb son of Nuwīl son of Reuel son of Murr son of ʿĪfā son of Midyan son of Ibrāhīm. His language was Arabic and he was sent to the people of Midyan; when Moses set out, fleeing Pharaoh, he passed by Shuʿayb the prophet and was under his patronage and he married his daughter to him.... (Masʿūdī 1966, 1: 54)

Shuʿayb's lineage, traced back to Abraham, is similarly presented by al-Yaʿqūbī: 'He set out on his own until he came to Midyan where he served Shuʿayb the prophet son of Nuwayb son of ʿAyā son of Midyan sons of Ibrāhīm...' (Yaʿqūbī 2000, 37).[19]

The Israelite sojourn in Egypt

After recounting God's revelation to Moses and in preparation for the telling of the Exodus, Ibn Baṭrīq briefly digresses from the biblical sequence to address the question of the duration of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt. He comments as follows:

> The number of the people of Israel at the time of their entrance to Egypt was 70. They resided in Egypt for 217 years, while enslaved by the Pharaohs. He who says that it is written in the Torah that the sons of Abraham were subjugated for 400 years, we say to him: you do not know from which point to work out the conclusion of 400 years; know that it is written in the first book of the Torah that God said to Abraham: 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them. ... So shall your descendants be.' ... and the LORD ... said to him, 'I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess' [Genesis 15.5–7]. Then the LORD said to Abraham, 'Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for 400 years; but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterwards they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your ancestors in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age' [Genesis 15.13–15) [From that time which] God said to Abraham 'your offspring [shall be oppressed for 400 years]' you should calculate the time in which the Israelites departed [from Egypt; thus you should comprehend]. (Breydy 1985, 471/44: 2 [Arabic], 472/45: 1–2 [German])

While according to the Bible the total number of Jacob's household was 70 and the number of the Israelites upon their entrance to Egypt was 66, according to Ibn Baṭrīq 70 was the number of the Israelites upon their entrance to Egypt. He also contradicts Genesis 15 by arguing that the Israelites remained in Egypt for 217 years, and not 400. To account for this discrepancy, he offers an exegetical explanation based on the claim that the mention of 400 years in the Bible refers to the time that elapsed from God's promise to Abraham until the Exodus. With

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slight revisions, Ibn Baṭrīq's comment resonates with that of Josephus (d. c. 100) in the second book of *Antiquities*:

> They left Egypt in the month Xanthicus, on the fifteenth according to the day of the lunar reckoning; 430 years after our forefather Habramos came into Chananaia, Iakobos' departure to Egypt having occurred 215 years later. (Mason 2000, 3: 224)

Like Josephus, Ibn Baṭrīq mentions the ages of Moses and Aaron on the eve of the Exodus but he does so prior to the calculation of Israel's sojourn in Egypt rather than after it. Still, it seems that both were drawing from a similar tradition, transmitted through the first-century BC Greek scholar Alexander Polyhistor, who in turn drew from the third-century BC Alexandrian chronicler Demetrius the Chronographer (Hanson 1985, 843). Regarding the time period in question, the latter writes as follows: 'and from the time when Abraham was chosen from among the gentiles and came from Haran into Canaan until Jacob and his family came into Egypt there were 215 years' (ibid., 852). The comment was later quoted via Alexander Polyhistor, in the ninth book of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, and it would be reasonable to assume that it was above all the Eusebian tradition that inspired the Melkite treatise, directly or indirectly.[20]

So the figure of 200-and-some years appears to be shared by most sources; yet while Ibn Baṭrīq counted 217 years, his ancient predecessors tallied 215. Unlike Ibn Baṭrīq, the ninth-century Byzantine George Synkellus (d. after 810) and the twelfth-century Syrian Orthodox historian Michael the Syrian (d. 1199) adopted the figure of 215 (Adler and Tuffin 2002, 167–70; Chabot 1899–1910, 1: 39). But, with him, they argue that the enumeration of 400 years begins with the Divine Promise. Interestingly, we find Ibn Baṭrīq's contemporary, the Muslim historian and geographer al-Masʿūdī, concurring with the Melkite patriarch on the figure of 217 (Masʿūdī 1965, 199). Here it should be noted that, following his sojourn in Fusṭāṭ, Masʿūdī was familiar with Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographic work in its complete form (ibid., 153).

As in other cases, here too it is evident that Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative reflects a reworking of earlier ones, most likely through the intermediacy of sources that have not survived. According to Breydy, the second-person form employed in the *Annales* to urge the reader to adopt the proper calculation of the time that elapsed from God's promise to Abraham until the Exodus is indicative of Ibn Baṭrīq's writing (Breydy 1985, 44: 2, n. 12). In addition, though he demonstrates an intimate familiarity with the canonical narrative, Ibn Baṭrīq takes the liberty of altering it. Thus the figure 70, which in the Bible refers to the size of Jacob's household, here refers to the number of the Israelites upon their entrance to Egypt. At the same time, however, this particular passage should be read in the context of an ancient chronographic pattern that was highly concerned with working out historical dates in general and biblical ones in particular.[21] It is a pattern later adopted by Christian historians, most prominently of the so-called Eusebian historiographic tradition, which in turn was carried over into later Byzantine works (Adler and Tuffin 2002, xxx–lxi).[22] Although it cannot be said with certainty that al-Masʿūdī relied on Ibn Baṭrīq's work, the fact that he alone, of a long list of Christian and Muslim historians, takes 217 years as the period of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt is telling. Whether al-Masʿūdī borrowed the figure from the *Annales* or from another source, there seems to be good reason to believe that we are dealing here not with a scribal error but rather with an independent historiographic version (cf. Shboul 1979, 99, 232).[23]

The Phinehas–Elijah–al-Khiḍr triangle

Another Muslim prophet to whom Ibn Baṭrīq refers is the enigmatic figure of al-Khiḍr.[24] In a passage that Breydy describes as a mere transition from the Book of Joshua to the Book of Judges, Ibn Baṭrīq briefly mentions the biblical priest Phinehas ben Eleazar, noting that it was

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he who, following Joshua's death, assumed the role of leadership for a period of 25 years. We then come across a rather instructive remark: 'The Jews say that Phinehas is Elijah, whom the Arabs call al-Khiḍr' (Breydy 1985, 471/44: 5 [Arabic], 472/45: 4 [German]). And, indeed, the association of Phinehas with Elijah can be traced back to the Jewish work of the first-century AD, *Pseudo-Philo*, which retells the biblical story up until the time of David (cf. Harrington 1985, 297–302). Although the work does not explicitly equate the two figures, it has been suggested that in 1 Kings 17.1–4, when Phinehas nears his death, he is 'described in terms reminiscent of Elijah' (ibid., 362, n. 48). This literary link between the two biblical figures may have been the source of *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* of Exodus 6.18: 'and the life of Konath the pious was 133 years. He lived until he saw Phinehas, he is Elijah the high priest who is to be sent to the exiles of Israel at the end of days' (Maher 1994, 83). It is hard to say which is the Jewish source to which Ibn Baṭrīq was referring – the *Pseudo Philo*, the Targum, or another early rabbinic Jewish account, such as those found in the eighth-century midrash *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer* or the exegetical compilation of the *circa* twelfth-century *ba-Midbar Rabbah* (Ginzburg 1909–38, 4: 11).[25] It may even be the case that Ibn Baṭrīq knew of the Jewish origins of the equation between Phinehas and Eljah through Origen's commentary on the Gospel of John:

> I do not know how the Hebrews came to tell about Phinehas, son of Eleazar ... to tell about him what I now mention. They say that he was Elijah, because he had been promised immortality [cf. Numbers 25.12], on account of the covenant of peace granted to him because he was jealous with a divine jealousy, ... No wonder, then, if those who conceived Phinehas and Elijah to be the same person, whether they judged soundly in this or not, for that is not now the question, considered John and Jesus also to be the same. (Roberts 1906, 9: 357)

There is, finally, no way of tracing the source of Ibn Baṭrīq's comment.

To further complicate matters, we also find the equation between Phinehas and Elijah in Ibn Wathīma's (d. 902) compilation of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Fārisī 1978, 63), a work considered as summing up the literary heritage of early Islam (ibid., 6; Adang 1996, 12). It therefore seems reasonable that by the tenth and eleventh centuries Muslim historians continued to adopt the Phinehas–Elijah equation, adding a third figure – the Muslim biblical prophet al-Khiḍr. Thus, for example, we read in al-Masʿūdī's *Kitāb al-tanbīh*: 'After [Joshua] Phinehas son of Eleazar son of Harūn assumed leadership; and being a priest, the Israelites mention that he is the prophet whom the Muslims name al-Khiḍr.'[26] Early Muslim narratives reflect the widespread adoption of Judaeo-Christian apocryphal motifs with special emphasis on the biblical prophets, through a process of 'Islamizing the biblical material' (Griffith 2006, 31), or 'biblicizing ... presentations of Qur'anic figures' (Griffith 2008, 18; Tottoli 2002, 83–4; cf. Obermann 1946, 59; Rosenthal 1968, 41; Donner 1998, 155). Such motifs, found mostly in *qiṣaṣ* literature, were often of Midrashic origin, and later found their way into the works of early Christian authors (Schwarzbaum 1982, 12; Adler 1989, 80; Wasserstrom 1995, 174). It is this pattern that seems best to describe the evolutionary process of the Phinehas–Elijah–al-Khiḍr equation (Goldziher 1906, 63; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992, 112, 114; Friedlaender 1913, 255–6; Geiger 1898, 151).

Solomon as prophet

Despite Solomon's evident centrality in Jewish and Christian traditions, it is in the Muslim tradition that the king's wisdom transcends the boundaries of human nature (Tottoli 2002, 37. cf. Thaʿlabī 2002, 491–8; Ṭabarī 1991, 3: 152). First in the Qur'an and subsequently in Muslim literature, Solomon is presented as a prophet – a fact that did not escape Ibn Baṭrīq's attention (cf. Q 6.84–9).[27] In keeping with the canonical sequence, the section in the *Annales* dealing with King Solomon directly follows that of King David's death (Breydy 1985, 471/44: 16 [Arabic], 472/45: 13 [German]). Thus, when David grows old, just as chapter 2 of 1

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Kings tells us, he calls for his son and appoints him king. The description of this scene in the *Annales* includes reference to the jewellery that David passed on to Solomon, a detail that is found already in the writings of the second-century BC Jewish historian Eupolemus and later recurs in the work of Jewish and Christian writers alike (Fallon 1985, 867). Another interesting detail traceable to Eupolemus is the age – 12 – at which Solomon was enthroned. Following this brief introduction, Ibn Baṭrīq moves on to relate Solomon's reign, paying special attention to the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, to Solomon's famous judgment about the disputed child, and to Solomon's wives. The prominence of the Solomon saga in Muslim and Christian historiographic works circulating at the time of Ibn Baṭrīq is well attested.[28] Yet while Christian authors such as the Byzantine George Synkellus, the Syrian Orthodox Michael the Syrian, and the Melkite Agapius of Hierapolis settle for no more than a brief mention of the beginning of Solomon's rule and a note about the Temple and about his foreign wives, a long list of Muslim treatises devote a rather elaborate narrative to the king-prophet (cf. Khoury 1972, 235).

It is here, perhaps, that we should revisit the link between Ibn Baṭrīq's narrative and the Muslim historiographic tradition. It is also in this context that we should consider Ibn Baṭrīq's comment, which he manages to insert almost *en passant*, that King Solomon was stripped of his status as prophet for supporting his foreign wives' worship of idols. Taking 1 Kings 11, as the basis for his narrative, Ibn Baṭrīq provides us with an abridged and paraphrased version of the affair:

> Solomon had 700 free women and 300 concubines. Solomon married the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt, whose name is Sisak [*sic*], and brought her to Jerusalem. Solomon married from among the women of the Philistines, the Amonites, the Moabites and others and loved them greatly. Thus owing to his great love for them they entreated him to build them a temple, where he placed the idols for them to worship and make offerings; and it is for this reason that Solomon was cast off the position of prophecy (*dīwān al-nubuwwa*). (Breydy 1985, 471/44: 18 [Arabic], 472/45: 18 [German])

Rather than adopting the canonical version of the harsh consequences of Solomon's offence, namely the partition of the kingdom, Ibn Baṭrīq suggests that Solomon had once been considered a prophet but was later demoted from this elevated position. This idea echoes the pseudoepigraphic narrative of the *Testament of Solomon*, a Greek text of anonymous authorship dated roughly between the first to the third centuries CE (Duling 1985, 940–3), according to which the spirit of God departed from King Solomon in response to his own idolatry and that of his wives (ibid., 986–7). The claim that Solomon lost his privileged position as prophet is unique to the *Annales* and stands in stark contrast to the attribution of prophecy to Solomon in numerous other Muslim narratives. A passage from Ibn Wathīma's monograph alludes to the possible polemical background of Ibn Baṭrīq's comment; it mentions the scornful response of the Jews of Medina to the ideas propagated by Muhammad: '[A]re you not amazed by Muhammad . . ., who claims that Solomon was a prophet; by God, he was nothing but a magician. . .' (Fārisī 1978, 175). The matter is further elaborated in the tenth-century historical treatise *Kitāb bad' al-khalq*, a work of Khurasani origin attributed to Abū Naṣr al-Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. 966):

> [T]here is among the Jews a sect which argues that Solomon was a magician . . . who deluded the people and who by magical means dominated the genies and the people . . . But God refuted their opinion . . . the appearance of magic in the time of king Solomon's loss of his empire [was] invented by the demons . . . [who] attributed it to Solomon, the king prophet. (Maqdisī 1899–1919, 3: 106–7 [Arabic], 109–10 [French])

While the precise motive behind Ibn Baṭrīq's brief comment remains difficult to determine, both the unusual statement itself and its polemical context appear to be significant and should not be dismissed. The *Testament of Solomon* is thought to represent a popular Hellenistic Jewish–Christian view of King Solomon as a magician, a depiction that was later adopted by

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early Christian writers. This account was in turn developed in Muslim traditions that sought to attribute to Solomon the elevated status of a messenger of Allah, a prototype of Muhammad (Duling 1985, 945, 951). Admittedly, a critical attitude towards the Qur'an's depiction of King Solomon is also articulated in the ninth-century Byzantine work of Nicetas of Byzantium (d. 912) (Newman 1993, ix–x; cf. Nicetas Byzantius 1862, 717–18; Eichner 1936, 206); but it is also plausible to view both the elaborate treatment of Solomon in the *Annales* and the comment about his deposition from prophethood in the context of a Muslim–Christian literary dialogue simultaneously characterized by mutual influence and debate.

Conclusions

The immediate literary context of Ibn Baṭrīq's historiographic work is vital to its understanding. His work displays an intimate affinity with the general historiographic pattern of early Christian works and with contemporary traditions of diverse confessional backgrounds. Regardless of their authors' disparate objectives, these compositions share a number of features, among which is an elaborate biblical narrative. Yet whereas some of the works employed the biblical story as part of a broader scheme of salvation history, for Ibn Baṭrīq its function seems to have been a more technical one, serving as a mere prologue to a series of events, or at most as a means of enhancing the work's reliability by reiterating a well-known and often narrated story. Like his Muslim and Christian counterparts, Ibn Baṭrīq had access both to a copy of the Bible of some canonical tradition and to a rich lore of apocryphal stories, which he used to various ends. Sometimes, these extra-canonical stories amounted to no more than a single line of narrative and served as convenient links connecting one passage to another (cf. Lecomte 1958, 350); in other instances, assuming that Ibn Baṭrīq might have lacked the full biblical text or even relied on its oral transmission, the stories may have been inserted within the biblical narrative to fill in unknown or forgotten details (Robinson 2003, 11; Heinemann 1974, 31; Brunt 1980, 479). It stands to reason, however, that some of the stories selected for inclusion carried an added value of some sort, either as conduits for particular ideas and concepts, or simply as highly entertaining anecdotes (Leder 1998, 36–8; Khalidi 1975, 14).

Parts of the biblical narrative are indicative of Ibn Baṭrīq's own writing and attest to significant tampering with the canonical text. A comparison between the canonical story and that told in the *Annales* highlights a number of features characteristic of Ibn Baṭrīq's biblical narrative. Essentially, it is an abridged and paraphrased version of the passages in the Bible, slightly revised and supplemented with detail. While the list of biblical tales Ibn Baṭrīq chose to incorporate in his narrative is far from exceptional, certain elements in the narrative indicate Ibn Baṭrīq's awareness of if not immersion in a Muslim cultural environment. The loose but detailed presentation of the biblical canonical text; the description of an Israelite fighting with an Egyptian rather than taking a beating at his hands; the reference to the prophets Shuʿayb and al-Khiḍr; the link to Muslim authors such as al-Masʿūdī and al-Yaʿqūbī; and finally the relatively extensive treatment of the figure of Solomon – all these support the notion of a cultural world shared by the Melkite patriarch and his Muslim contemporaries.

We are still far from decoding the principles guiding the content and form of the *Annales*; a full account of this will be more likely once the crucial gap of literary transmission is filled. While Breydy has convincingly demonstrated the affinity of the later parts of the *Annales* with the work of the ninth-century Muslim historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, enabling him to argue for a connection between Ibn Baṭrīq and the local circle of Muslim traditionalists in Fusṭāṭ, it now appears that additional parts of the *Annales* support this conclusion (cf. Breydy

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1977–78). Yet the significance of an analysis of Ibn Baṭrīq's biblical narrative may be broader even than this. Modern scholars studying the role of Syriac apocalyptic texts from the early Muslim period have taught us that these works sought to convey theological ideas through a depiction of the future as an object of dread. The credibility of this apocalyptic vision, scholars argue, was enhanced by invoking a common perception of a remote past shared by the apocalyptic author and his readers. While Ibn Baṭrīq's *Annales* is anything but apocalyptic, it may nonetheless be instructive to consider the text's treatment of the Bible along similar lines. We know, for example, that later parts of the work were designed to undermine the position of competing Christian groups; it therefore seems likely that while the apologetical digressions were a source of controversy, the biblical section was more a matter of consensus, reflecting what was in agreement not only between the Melkites and other groups but also, and perhaps more importantly, between the patriarch and his readers. Thus, I would argue that the biblical narrative in the *Annales* reflects not only the shared cultural milieu of Ibn Baṭrīq and his Muslim contemporaries but also that of his Christian readers and their Muslim neighbours.

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Notes

1. The work first appeared in Cheikho, Carra de Vaux and Zayyat (1906–9).
2. Breydy also cites Cabrol, Leclercq and Marrou (1907–53, 1: 1205) in support of the view that Ibn Baṭrīq knew little about the history of Alexandria, as the Arab patriarch seems to have ignored his Greek predecessors because of his lack of knowledge of Greek (Breydy 1983, 1, n. 1).
3. The *Annales* was the title given by Edward Pococke in his edition and Latin translation of the work (Pococke 1658–59).
4. For a survey of some 30 manuscripts, see Breydy (1983, 29–72; see also Chébli 1909; Michel 1984; Troupeau, 1985, 1978).
5. The work's purpose will be considered below, but it is worth noting that it may have had significance for other reasons too. An anonymous fragment of an Arabic catena of the Pentateuch from 1528 includes the exegetical works of a long list of authorities from as early as Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373) till Dionysius bar Salibi (d. 1171), among which one also finds reference to Ibn Baṭrīq (de Lagarde 1867; Achelis 1897, 116–19).
6. On *Sinaiticus Arabicus* 582, see Breydy (1983, 29–41; 1985, 471/44: xxiii–vii).
7. For a modern edition of the so-called Antiochian Recension, see Cheikho, Carra de Vaux and Zayyat (1906–9); for its translation into Italian, see Pirone (1987).
8. Among Ibn Baṭrīq 's sources one finds the Bible itself, the *Cave of Treasures*, the *Alexander Romance*, ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's history of the Sasanian kings, Cyril of Scythopolis' *Lives* of St Saba and St Euthymius, the legend of the *Seven Sleepers*, and the traditions of Muslim transmitters of ninth-century Fusṭāṭ, later also incorporated in the historical work of the Muslim writer Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* (cf. Breydy 1977–78; 1985, 471/44: xxiv–vii; 1983, 12–28).
9. On the fixation of early Christian and late Roman historians with chronological dating and the use of their works for uncovering the principle of providential economy in human history, see various publications (see, for example Momigliano 1963; Beaucamp et al. 1979; Croke 1983; Chestnut 1986, 2, 4, 6; Adler 1989, 2–4, 19; Cameron 1991, 116; Adler and Tuffin 2002, xxxi–ii; Thomson 2004, 36).
10. The list of ancient Near Eastern rulers in al-Birūnī's (d. 1048) *Al-āthār* can be seen as an explicit testimony to the adoption of the Eusebian chronicle-writing pattern and dating in Muslim circles (cf. Cook 1983, 69).

11. The role of biblical narratives and motifs in the articulation of theological ideas has been extensively discussed (cf. Wansbrough 1978, 40–1; Frye 1982, esp. chs 2 and 3; Lazarus-Yafeh 1992, 19; Rissanen 1993, 100–3; Samir 1994, 2001; Swanson 1994; 2003, 69–71; Morony 2004, 3; Harrak 2004, 47; Thomas 1996; 2003, 231–54; 2007; Keating 2003; van Dam 2003, 5–6; Griffith 2008, 61–94).
12. On this last point, see especially Alexander (1968, 997–1018).
13. The question of an extant Arabic translation of the Bible in this period is highly controversial and has stimulated an ongoing discussion (cf. Goldziher 1878; Cheikho 1910, 34–5; Baumstark 1931, 562; Vadja 1931, 66–70; Graf 1944, 1: 44–9, 68–108; Rosenthal 1968, 42; Nasrallah 1980, 206–7; Schwarzbaum 1982, 41; Shahid 1984, 435–42; Griffith 1985, 138; 2006, 29; 2008, 50–6; Adang 1996, 1–4, 18–21; Schoeler 2002, 26–9; Barsoum 2003, 62–3; Grypeou 2007, 113–15; Keating 2007, 257–9).
14. On the legend, its provenance and significance, see Knibb (1985); Hare (1985, 379–84); Satran (1995, esp. 1–6); Knight (1996, 12–17); on the later transmission of the legend in Muslim sources, see Hoenerbach (1950).
15. BT *Yebamot* 49b; PT *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 28c (see further in Ginzberg 1909, 6: 374–5).
16. Gibson 1901, 51; Chabot 1899–1910, 1: 87; 1965, 53: 35 [Syriac], 104: 28 [Latin]; Yaʿqūbī 2000, 85; Ṭabarī 1987, 4: 41; Thaʿlabī 2002, 553–7; Maqdisī 1899–1919, 3: 113–14 [Arabic], 117 [French]; Masʿūdī 1966, 1: 67.
17. Cf. Yaʿqūbī 2000, 37; Maqdisī 1899–1919, 3: 84 [Arabic], 86 [French]; Ṭarafī 2003, 134; it should be noted that this version of the story also appears in *The Book of the Bee* (see Budge 1886, ch. 29, 49: 'One day he saw Pethkôm the Egyptian, one of the servants of Pharaoh, quarrelling with an Israelite and reviling him').
18. On the relation between Ibn Baṭrīq and al-Yaʿqūbī, see Griffith (2003, 147–9); on the relation between Ibn Baṭrīq and al-Masʿūdī, see Shboul (1979, 99); on the stylistic features of the works of these Muslim authors, see Khalidi (1975, 7); Humphreys (1992, 72); specifically on al-Yaʿqūbī, see Lazarus-Yafeh (1992, 114); and on al-Masʿūdī, see Shboul (1979, 95).
19. Cf. also al-Ṭabarī (1991, 3: 30–31): 'His wife was Zipporah bint Jethro, who is Shuʿayb the prophet.' It should be noted that Ibn Baṭrīq's contemporary, the Melkite historian Maḥbūb ibn Qusṭanṭīn (d. 941–42), also known as Agapius of Hierapolis, similarly equates Jethro with Shuʿayb: وهرب الى بلاد مدين الى ارغوائيل الذي هو يترون وهو شعيب… (he fled to the land of Midian to Raguel, he is Jethro, who is Shuʿayb) (Manbijī 1929, 60).
20. 'Depuis qu'Abraham fut choisi d'entre les Gentiles et vint de Charran à Chanaan jusque'à l'arrivée du clan de Jacob en Égypte, 215 ans' (Schroeder and Des Places 1975, 253).
21. For more on why certain ancient authorities provided alternative interpretations for the duration of Israel's sojourn in Egypt, see Strack and Billerbeck (1924, 2: 668–71).
22. For a discussion of this motif in rabbinic sources, see Heinemann (1974, 66–70).
23. According to Shboul, al-Masʿūdī had in fact relied upon the work of Ibn Baṭrīq, but this conclusion seems rather difficult to establish with regard to the biblical narrative.
24. On the figure of al-Khiḍr in Islam and its pre-Islamic origins, see Friedlander (1913); Tottoli (2002, 35); Amir-Moezzi (2007, 467–71); Albera (2008, 48).
25. See also Wiener (1978, 73–5); Weiner cites the opinion that it was the Hasmonean princes who sought to legitimize their leadership through their line of descent from Phinehas-Elijah.
26. ودبر الأمر بعده فينخاس بن إلعازر بن هارون وما كان كاهناً الإسرائيليون يذكرون أنه النبي الذي تسميه المسلمون الخضر (after him, Phinehas son of Eleazar served as leader and although he was a priest, the Israelites mention that he is the prophet whom the Muslims name al-Khiḍr (Masʿūdī 1965, 200); cf. Masʿūdī 1966, 1: 53: وذكر بعض اهل الكتاب ان الخضر هو خضرون بن عمائيل بن اليفز بن العيص بن اسحاق بن ابراهيم وانه ارسل الى قومه (some of the People of the Book say that al-Khiḍr is Khiḍrūn son of ʿAmā'īl son of Alīfaz son of al-ʿĪṣ son of Isḥāq son of Ibrāhīm, who was sent to his people); (Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* 1955–69, 11: 508–10; Ṭarafī 2003, 127; Maqdisī 1899–1919, 3: 77–78 [Arabic], 80 [French.]; 99 [Arabic], 101–2 [French]).
27. A rather exceptional reference of pre-Islamic origin to Solomon's prophetic endowment is found in the second-century BC apocryphal Hebrew book of Sirach 47.17 (cf. van Peursen, 88–9). I wish to thank Dr van Peursen for bringing this to my attention. On the supernatural attributions to Solomon in pre-Islamic Arabian poetic discourse, see also Amir-Moezzi (2007, 786).
28. See, for example, Adler and Tuffin (2002, 264, 267); Masʿūdī (1966, 1: 63–5); Yaʿqūbī (2000, 74–7); Chabot (1899–1910, 1: 60–2); Manbijī (1929, 77–8); Jeffreys et al. (1986, 76); none of these works refers to the case of the disputed child, to which Ibn Baṭrīq devotes a relatively elaborate report.

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