

## Chapter 4



### “TO EVERY PROPHET AN ADVERSARY”: JEWISH ENMITY IN ISLAM

*Likewise did we make for every prophet an adversary—evil ones among humans and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deceit.*

—QUR’AN 6:112<sup>1</sup>

CARAVANS ARE ALWAYS passing the cell of Bahira, the Christian monk of Syrian Busra. Lost in his book, he never pays attention. His absorption is understandable: the book is ancient, handed down from monk to monk, full of the learning of the Christians. But on this late-sixth-century day, discerning approaching dust on the distant horizon, Bahira is restless. Either his sleep or his waking (we are not told which) has been troubled by visions of an apostle coming shaded by cloud from the desert sun. Cloud and caravan are somehow conjoined in his consciousness. He busies himself, prepares a feast, and steps out to greet the riders as they pass by. “I have prepared food for you, O men of the Quraysh, and I should like you all to come, both great and small,

bond and free.” The riders, surprised by this unaccustomed solicitude, gladly dismount for the banquet, leaving the youngest boy to watch the baggage. Bahira hurries to and fro, serving his guests, but also scrutinizing, searching for and not finding the cloud or other marks of prophecy his books prescribe. Could his visions be wrong? “Do not let one of you remain behind and not come to my feast,” he urges. The riders remember the boy and call for him; Bahira stares, questions, tests. Then he summons Abu Talib, the boy’s uncle and guardian. He has only one bit of advice for him, but that bit is pressing: “Take your nephew back to his country and guard him carefully against the Jews, for by Allah! if they see him and know about him what I know, they will do him evil.”<sup>2</sup>

This story comes from one of the first biographies (Arabic *Sīra*) of the apostle Muhammad, written sometime before 768 CE—that is to say, roughly 150 years after the event from which Islam traditionally dates its birth: Muhammad’s flight or emigration (*hidjra*) from the Arabian town of Mecca to the more hospitable oasis of Yathrib, an event so momentous it earned Yathrib a new name (Arabic *Medina*, “the city”) and the year a place at the beginning of the Muslim calendar: year 1 of the Hidjra [AH], 622 CE by the Christian reckoning.<sup>3</sup>

The story comes, in other words, not from the Qur’an, but from the vast mass of material scholars of early Islam call “the Islamic tradition.” Later we will explore how this tradition is related to the Qur’an: a topic of central importance to the question of how Islam learned to think with and about Judaism. But first let’s just admire the narrative simplicity with which this anecdote reminds us of what believing Muslims and critical scholars alike too often forget. Like the adherents of early Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism, and many other “sectarian communities,” those of the early Islamic community lived surrounded by, and in dialogue with, many groups making competing claims to a partially shared realm of revelation. Like the monk Bahira, they made their claims—and rejected or appropriated those of others—by poring over old prophecies and relating them to new, constantly making sense of the revelations granted Muhammad with reference to those given earlier to Christian and Jew. To this task they brought not only some distinctive tools and

cognitive habits, but also many that they shared with or learned from the other religious communities around them, including ideas about the roles available for Jews and Judaism in the cosmos. In short, from its earliest beginnings Muhammad's community of Believers had already plunged into the mosh pit of Jewish questions that interests us.

I say "Believers" (*mu'minun*) rather than "Muslims" (*muslimun*, "those who submit") because that is the term preferred by the Qur'an itself, occurring more than a thousand times (as opposed to fewer than seventy-five instances of the word for Muslim). Fred Donner has recently built on the term to argue that for the community in which the Qur'an was revealed, the boundaries of belonging had not yet hardened into those that later Muslims took for granted. By the early ninth century the great systematizers of Islamic law would condemn the suggestion that there had ever been a Jewish or Christian member of Muhammad's original community (*umma*). But Muhammad's world—the world of the western Arabian Peninsula circa 620–700 CE—might have been in this sense more like Saint Paul's: capable of imagining that individuals could remain committed to many of the practices of the particular sectarian community into which they had been born, while still believing in the new revelation or, at least, joining the new community. In this world—if we accept the thesis—"Jewish Believer" would be no more a contradiction than "Jewish Christian" had been in early Christian Jerusalem, Galatia, or Corinth.<sup>4</sup>

However that may be, this was also a world in which the claims of new revelation had to be justified and differentiated from those of the old. Like the early Christian communities, the early Qur'anic ones appropriated and adapted the texts and reading practices of their "predecessors," but also stigmatized some of those reading habits and their practitioners as damning or death-dealing, and this especially in the case of the Jews, considered as guardians of the founding scriptures. My goal in this chapter is to describe this process of appropriation and stigmatization, both in the Qur'an and in the early Islamic tradition. But it is also, and much more controversially, to suggest that the roles assigned to figures of Judaism in this process were every bit as important in shap-

ing Islamic ideas about how both scripture and cosmos should be interpreted, as they had been for the early Christians, from whom in this respect early Islam borrowed a great deal.

### **Scriptural Community, Scriptural Conflict**

To understand this process, we need first to understand the scriptural sensibilities of the community among whom the Qur'an was first revealed or produced. This is not an easy task, both because virtually no documents (aside from the Qur'an itself) shed direct light on the first fifty years or so of that community, and because the Qur'an tells us so little about the temporality of its own revelation or redaction. Unlike the gospels, for example, it is not a narrative, unfolding within the temporal frame of the life of Jesus. Nor, like the epistles, does it attribute itself to an author situated in historical time. In fact the Qur'an is almost totally unconcerned with the context within which, or even the person to whom, it is revealed. Only rarely does the Qur'an explicitly situate its message within the context of the life of the prophet who receives it, and even then it does not name him. The name *Muhammad* occurs only four times in its text.<sup>5</sup>

The voice of the Qur'an is not that of a man in historical time, but that of God or a mediating angel handing down instructions to a nearly anonymous prophet. "Say . . ." begin many of its commandments. We as readers (and editors/translators) tend to add "O Muhammad," but in fact the Qur'an claims the voice of all prophets, and articulates its message through their stories. Noah, Abraham, Moses, Lot, Jonah, Joseph, Jesus, and various prophets of the Arabs (Hud, Salih, Shu'ayb): their names (and especially that of Moses) occur much more frequently in its pages than that of Muhammad. It is through the repetition of their messages, as well as through stories about the rejection they encountered ("Prophets have been persecuted before thee"), that the Qur'an issues its timeless warning calling men to God.<sup>6</sup>

The plethora of prophets in the Qur'an does not by itself tell us much about the religious diversity of the community that first received

it, just as the presence of Israelites, Egyptians, and Babylonians in the Book of Mormon need not necessarily correspond to the diversity of early-nineteenth-century Palmyra, New York. But if we listen carefully to the subtexts and intertexts of the Qur'an, we can find many traces of diversity, of dialogue, and of struggle. Consider just this one verse, focused on the initial moment of scriptural revelation:

*And remember We took your Covenant and We raised above you (the towering height) of Mount (Sinai); (saying): "Hold firmly to what we have given you, and hearken (to the Law)." They said: "we hear, and we disobey." And they had to drink into their hearts of the taint of the Calf because of their faithlessness. (Q 2:93)*

This verse (like many others, as we will see) is clearly reproaching the Jews, or as it often calls them, "the Children of Israel."<sup>7</sup> Were these "real" Jews, living neighbors or members of the community, or were they "figures of Judaism" produced from the entrails of scripture itself? The verse suggests that the answer is simultaneously both. Look, for example, at the way in which it names the mountain of Moses's revelation: Tur [Sinin], Mount Sinai. The Arabic for mountain is *jabal*. *Tur* is either Aramaic, the language of the rabbis of Muhammad's day and age, or Syriac, the language of the Christians. Strikingly, the Qur'an consistently refers (with one exception) to the site of revelation with this non-Arabic word, as in the opening of sura ("chapter") 52: "By the mount (*Tur*)! By a Decree inscribed in a Scroll unfolded!" It is as if memory of the origins of revelation remains lexically tied to the rabbis' (or the Christians') tongue.<sup>8</sup>

And what of this strange (but thrice repeated: cf. Q 2:60 and 4:153) image, "We raised above you Mount Sinai?" The line turns out not to be an error or corruption, but rather to reveal a deep knowledge of Judaism, although it is not found in the five books of Moses or the Hebrew Bible. It comes rather from an interplay with texts from other religious traditions (what I am calling "intertexts"), in this case, from Rabbinic Jewish stories about the handing down of the Torah, as in this commentary from the Babylonia Talmud, commenting on verse 19:17 of Exodus:

*“And they stood beneath the mount”: Rabbi Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be he, overturned the mountain upon them like an inverted cask, and said to them “If you take upon yourselves the Law, good. If not, here you will find your grave.” Rabbi Aha b. Jacob observed: “This furnishes a strong protest against the Law.”*<sup>9</sup>

Even the devastating line “we hear and we disobey” suggests a dialogue of sorts between “Jew” and “Believer” in the Qur’anic community. Recall the Israelites’ response to Moses in Exodus (24:7) and Deuteronomy (5:24): “we hear, and we obey” (in the Hebrew of Exodus, *n’aseh v-nishma’*; in that of Deuteronomy, *v-shama’nu v-’asinu*). The Qur’an transforms the phrase through a multilingual pun, playing on the homophony between Hebrew *shama’nu v-’asinu* (we hear and obey) and Arabic *sami’ina- wa-’asayna* (we hear and disobey). The Qur’an’s play on words reveals the shared linguistic, cultural, and scriptural space of the diverse community that receives it.<sup>10</sup>

But we must not fail to notice how the Qur’an shatters this shared space at the same time that it reveals it. The verse declares the new revelation’s continuity with Moses’s message, but it simultaneously accuses the Jewish communities that preserved that earlier message of disobedience, misreading, and even falsification. As sura 4:46 has it, “Of the Jews there are those who displace words from their right places, and say: ‘We hear and we disobey.’” Here our multilingual pun explicitly underwrites the Islamic doctrine of *tabrif*—the charge of Jewish (and Christian) alteration and falsification of previous scriptures. It is this doctrine that eventually allowed the Islamic community to develop its particular position regarding the scriptures of its predecessors. On the one hand they could honor the Torah (unlike, for example, the Marcionites and Gnostics in early Christianity, who had denied that the Hebrew Bible was a revelation of God). On the other, they could set it aside as unreliable because it was corrupted by its Jewish guardians, and therefore nonauthoritative (in contrast, for example, with orthodox Christianity’s canonization of the Old Testament).<sup>11</sup>

Thousands of the Qur'an's verses had similarly rich intertextual early lives. As modern scholarship begins to recover the memories of those lives, we are increasingly discovering within the Qur'an an intimate familiarity with many different Jewish and Christian texts and traditions. Indeed as we learn more about ancient Judaism and Christianity, Qur'anic passages that had previously seemed eccentric—such as the repeated account of the infant Jesus making birds out of clay, which then fly away—we can now recognize as coming from the early community's vast store of sacred lore from those traditions. The birds, for example, come from the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, later marginalized within Christianity as uncanonical.<sup>12</sup>

The Qur'an had room for the prophetic traditions of Rabbinic Jews, Samaritans, Christians of many different stripes (including perhaps "Ebionites" and other "Judaizing" Christians), as well as earlier Arab prophets.<sup>13</sup> "Of the People of the Book," the Qur'an tells us, using its distinctive title for the followers of the earlier scriptural traditions it presents itself as fulfilling, "are a portion that stand (for the right); they rehearse the signs of God all night long. . . . They believe in God and the Last Day. . . . They are in the ranks of the righteous" (Q 3:113–116). Of course as we have seen it do with the Jews, the Qur'an also marks its differences with those traditions at the same time that it honors them. The Qur'anic Jesus, for example, can work miracles, be born of a virgin, and even emerge unscathed from the Jews' plot to murder him. But since God is one, he cannot be God or the Son of God. It is on this point, the Qur'an insists, that Christians have misread and mishandled their scriptures: "They do blaspheme who say: 'God is one of three in a Trinity': for there is no God except One God" (Q 5:73).

### **"Be Not First to Disbelieve"**

The Qur'an's appropriation (and criticism) of the traditions of each of these communities deserves its own history, but we must focus on that of the Jews, not only because that is our subject, but also because its place in the Qur'an is unique, both in terms of scale and in terms of the

work to which it is put. That work, as we have already seen in sura 2:93, is double. Israel serves both as the foundation of God's communication with humanity and as the fundamental example of humanity's resistance to that communication. As we expand our reading within sura 2, the scope of that work expands as well. For within this sura—the Qur'an's longest, called "The Cow"—as within many others, the frustrating cosmological question of why the world so often seems not to conform to the divine will is explained through figures of Judaism.

"The Cow" begins by announcing itself as a revelation addressed to the god-fearing: "This is the Scripture wherein there is no doubt, a guidance unto those who ward off (evil)" (Q 2:2). Initially it has, however, less to say about God's friends than about his enemies, whom it divides into two classes of people. One is more or less straightforward: "As for the disbelievers, whether you warn them or not, it is all one for them; they do not believe. God has sealed their hearing and their hearts, and on their eyes there is a veil. Theirs will be an awful doom" (Q 2:6–7). The other is more complex: "And of mankind are some who say, 'We believe in God and the Last Day,' when they do not believe. They think to trick God and those who believe, and they trick none save themselves; but they see not. In their hearts is a disease, and God increases their disease. A painful doom is theirs because they lie" (Q 2:8–10).

God has, in other words, two types of opponents, those who are open and obvious (the disbelievers) and those who are disguised or hidden (the "liars"). Like the early Christians, the Qur'an will call these "liars," who seem godly but are not, the "hypocrites." Their importance in Islamic thought will be considerable, for it is through the concept of "hypocrisy" that Islam, like Christianity, developed a critical language capable of accounting for conflict and adversity *within* Islam, and of helping to distinguish truth from falsehood in this dangerous world of "illusion" (Q 3:185). We are not far from the gospel world of "rabbis" and "Pharisees." But before we jump ahead, we should read further, to see how "The Cow" gives form and flesh to these categories of God's enemies.

Believer, disbeliever, liar: after this tripartite anthropology the sura provides a brief but exemplary history of the world. First comes the



creation of man and its consequences: the fall of Iblis/Satan (the proud angel who refused to bow before Adam "and so became a disbeliever") (Q 2:34); Satan's vengeance on mankind; Adam's expulsion from the Garden, armed with a revelation from God. God promises Adam that those who believe in this revelation shall neither fear nor grieve. "But those who disbelieve, and deny our revelations, such are rightful owners of the fire" (Q 2:39). The next line identifies Satan's followers in disbelief with the vocative: "O Children of Israel! Remember my favor . . . and fulfill your part of the covenant . . . ! Believe that which I reveal, confirming that which you already possess (of the Scripture), and do not be the first to disbelieve, and do not part with my revelations for a pittance, and keep your promise to me. Do not confound truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the truth" (Q 2:40-42).

Peeking out from beneath these negative commandments are four fundamental assertions, the last two prophetic: 1) The present revelation is a confirmation of God's covenants with (among others) Adam and Moses. 2) Those prior covenants contain prophecies about the truth of the present revelation. 3) To hide that fact, the Jews will sell their scriptures, altering them to conceal their confirmation of the latest revelation. 4) They will do so knowingly, and be the first to disbelieve, the first to confound truth with falsehood. Much of sura 2 elaborates this theme and puts it to work. It revisits all the episodes we have encountered in Christian exegesis: the Israelites' complaints about eating nothing but manna in the desert ("Would you exchange that which is higher for that which is lower?") (Q 2:61); the episode of the Golden Calf ("they said: we hear and we rebel.") (Q 2:93, 2:51-54); the Jews' attack on prophets ("Is it ever so, that when there comes to you a messenger [from God] with that which you do not desire, you grow arrogant, and some you disbelieve, and some you slay?") (Q 2:87).

The general point should already be familiar: the role of the Jews in sacred history is to reveal truth by attacking its prophets. Over and over again the Qur'an echoes the Acts of the Apostles: "You stubborn people . . . you are always resisting the Holy Spirit. . . . Can you name a single prophet your ancestors never persecuted? They killed those who

foretold the coming of the Upright One, and now you have become his betrayers, his murderers” (Acts 7:51–53).<sup>14</sup> Jewish persecution marks all prophets. “Who is an enemy to God, and His angels and His messengers, and Gabriel and Michael? Then, behold! God is an enemy to the disbelievers” (Q 2:98). Further, each new revelation makes its divinity and truthfulness historically and sociologically legible, in good Augustinian fashion, by defeating and humiliating this Jewish enemy. “And humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them and they were visited with God’s wrath. This was because they disbelieved in God’s revelations and wrongly killed the prophets. It was for their disobedience and their transgressions” (Q 2:61).<sup>15</sup>

Insofar as the Jews suffer the visible consequences of their disbelief, they are not so different from the other communities of unbelievers. “Systems have passed away before you. Travel the earth and see the consequences for those who rejected the messengers” (Q 3:137). The claim that the fate of peoples who reject God is clearly legible in the form of their ruined towns and cities (recall Christian exegesis of the conquest of Jerusalem) is a frequent, even formulaic, assertion in the Qur’an, used not only of Jews, but also of pre-Islamic Arabian cities that rejected prophets. It is a comforting position, insofar as it implies the promise that evil is punished and good rewarded in this world, and in historical time. The problem with the Jews was that they could not be so easily classified.

To begin with, not every Jew is an enemy of God: the Jewish prophets, particularly Abraham and Moses, are the very paradigms of godliness and prophecy. “And who is there that is better in religion than he who . . . follows the way of Abraham, a man of true faith?” (Q 4:125).<sup>16</sup> The Qur’an presents its own prophet as in every sense the colleague and successor of the Hebrew prophets, indeed as a second Moses. Moses and his revelations are everywhere in the Qur’an, rearticulated through the voice of this new prophet sent first to the Arabs and then to the world. In this sense the Jews and their holy books lie at the very origins of truth and cannot be wholly excluded from it. The task for the new scripture is to contain the implications of this centrality.

“The Cow” does so by separating the Jewish prophets from the Jews of their own day (who rejected them) and from those who came after. Like Paul and the evangelists, the Qur’an insists that lineage gives Jews no special claim to the covenant God made with Abraham: “[Abraham] said: of my offspring, will there be leaders? [God] said: my covenant does not reach to wrong-doers” (Q 2:124). Conversely, while the Jews were wrong-doers more or less from their first reception of revelation, the Qur’an claims—like Clement, Justin Martyr, Eusebius, and other church fathers—that their prophets were in some sense “Muslims” from the beginning, even before the coming of Muhammad: “Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian, rather he was a Muslim *hanif* (*hanifan musliman*), and not one of those who associate other beings with God (*mushrikun*)” (Q 3:67).<sup>17</sup> Nor do Jews have any privileged knowledge of scripture. In sura 62:5 their relationship to scripture is put in terms strikingly reminiscent of Saint Augustine: “The likeness of those who were charged with the Law of Moses, but who failed it, is as the likeness of an ass carrying great books. Evil is the likeness of people who deny the revelations of God.”<sup>18</sup> There the Jews are blind but accurate transmitters of scripture. Other suras, including sura 2, stress instead their untrustworthiness. Because the Jews rejected, concealed, sold, and falsified Moses’s message, they have no claim to scriptural authority.

A second complication stems from the fact that some Jews do heed the prophet’s call: “They are not all alike. Of the People of the Book there is an upright portion who recite the revelations of God . . . falling prostrate before him” (Q 3:113, 199). Who belonged to this “upright portion”? According to the traditionist Muqatil ibn Sulayman (d. AH 150), whose Qur’anic commentary is among the earliest to reach us, a small group of Jews was disgusted by the prophet-killing of their brethren among the Children of Israel. In answer to their prayer that they be separated from the rebellious, God opened a tunnel through the earth from the Temple in Jerusalem to China, and closed it behind them after their exodus. The righteous Jews have lived in China ever since, from whence they will return only to fight against the Antichrist. Others put the righteous community of Moses at the opposite end of the world,

beyond al-Andalus (the Iberian Peninsula), the western limit of Islam and of the then known world.<sup>19</sup>

Modern scholars have debated whether these passages refer to real communities of Jewish “sectarians” who had a profound influence on the material contained in the Qur’an. Some associate this righteous remnant with “Judeo-Christians,” a hypothetical community of Jews who (like the Ebionites that Jerome feared) accepted Jesus as Messiah and now accepted Muhammad as well. Others have suggested that they are Samaritans, an ancient group claiming descent from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which fell to the Assyrians in 721 BCE. The Samaritans oriented their prayer toward their former temple on Mount Gerizim in Nablus, not Jerusalem, and believed that their version of scripture, handed down from Aaron’s grandson, was more accurate than that possessed by the Jews of Judah, handed down through Ezra.<sup>20</sup> The Qur’an does indeed contain prophetic material that probably originated in such communities. But it is not much concerned with identifying who the “righteous” among the Children of Israel might be. Given that “most of them are perverted transgressors” concealing hatred in their breasts (Q 3:110), the Believer had better avoid them altogether: “O believers! Take not for intimates people other than your own. . . . When they meet you they say: We believe, but when they are alone they bite their finger tips at you in rage” (Q 3:118–119). For all practical purposes, the “righteous” among Moses’s people might as well live in China.

### **Zones of Confusion: Jew and Hypocrite**

We can generalize and say that the posture of the Qur’an toward the Jews is a double one, simultaneously of inclusion and exclusion. Precisely because the Qur’an adopts as its prophetic heart what it understands as “true Judaism,” it exiles as false and corrupt the “real” Jews it encounters. Exiles, but does not kill: Jewish enmity exists in the Qur’an to be combated and defeated, but not necessarily exterminated. The humiliation of the Jews, their preservation in a state of abjection, provides proof of the sovereignty and truth of Islam. As sura 9:29 has it, “Fight against

those who do not . . . practice the true religion from among the People of the Book, until they pay the *jizya* [poll tax] from their hand, with due submission.” This passage provides the Qur’anic basis for the continued existence of Jews (and Christians) in Muslim society, in a protected but humiliated status known as *dhimma*. From our perspective, this status seems designed to resolve many of the same paradoxes of “included exclusion” that Saint Augustine had approached through the figure of the Jew as “Cain.” And indeed, the Qur’an seems familiar with Augustine’s association. In sura 5, for example, it explicitly derives the Jew’s status as slayers of prophets from that of Abel’s murderous brother.<sup>21</sup>

But Islam, like Christianity, also faced a more serious “Jewish” problem, one that could be neither contained nor exiled, and this was the problem of the outer versus the inner, the appearance of belief versus its reality. We have seen how early Christianity deployed the figure of the Pharisee to think through this problem. Early Islam developed that of the “hypocrite.” Sura 2 became a proof-text for this category in Islam, although the Qur’anic words for hypocrisy and hypocrites (*nifaq*, *munafiqun*) do not appear in it. Instead, “The Cow” speaks of deceitful “People of the Scripture” who long ago hardened their hearts to Moses’s message, and today pretend to believe: “And when they meet the believers, they say: We believe, But when they go apart in private . . . Do they not know that God knows that which they conceal and that which they proclaim?” (Q 2:75–79).<sup>22</sup>

Here the disease of the hypocrite is put in purely Jewish terms. It is, however, highly contagious, so much so that anyone who challenges the prophet risks catching it: “Or would you question your messenger as Moses was questioned of old?” (Q 2:108).<sup>23</sup> “People of the Book” spread the sickness because they “wish they could turn you back to infidelity after you have believed, from selfish envy, for the truth has become manifest to them” (Q 2:109). Note how the two categories are already overlapping: the People of the Book are also hypocrites, knowing but concealing. The disease is so dangerous that it requires powerful diagnostics. God even changes the direction of prayer in order to make physically visible the recalcitrance of the unfaithful: “And we appointed

the *qiblah* [direction of prayer] which you formerly observed only so that We might test those who follow the messenger, from those who turn on their heels. In truth it was difficult, except for those whom God guided” (Q 2:143).<sup>24</sup>

The concept of the hypocrite flows through many suras of the Qur’an. For example, when sura 3 sets out to explore the relationship between Torah, gospel, and Qur’anic revelation, it introduces both the word “hypocrisy” and new tests for it. One of the most significant of these tests is war: “That which you suffered on the day when the two armies met, was by permission of God, so that he might test the true believers. And that he might know the hypocrites” (Q 3:166–167). Battle comes “in order that God might test what is in your breasts and prove what is in your hearts” (Q 3:154). By revealing the different behavior of those who strive in the way of God, and those who, like the Jews, fear the fight because they are “greediest of mankind for life” (Q 2:96), war makes visible the hidden inner doubt harbored by the hypocrite.

In the development of a vocabulary of hypocrisy in sura 3, we might see a distinction or evolution from the lying Jew of sura 2. Distinction, however, is not emancipation. Within the Qur’an the concept of hypocrisy is closely tied to Judaism. The hypocrite is *like* the Jew, sometimes *seduced* by the Jew (“O you who believe! If you obey a party of the People of the Book, they will make you disbelievers after your belief”) (Q 3:100) or *related* to the Jew (“Have you not seen the hypocrites say to their misbelieving brethren among the People of the Book, ‘If you are expelled, we too will go out with you.’”) (Q 59:11). But, and the distinction is crucial, the hypocrite is not necessarily a *real* Jew.

On the contrary, the concept of hypocrisy developed in the Qur’an is useful precisely because—much like Saint Paul’s “Judaizing” of Galatians 2:14—it explains how “Jewish” attributes (lying, envy, enmity, greed, cowardice, materialism, preference for this world over the next) can infect the “non-Jewish” followers of God. It provides a theory of seduction capable of accounting for the fact that despite the warnings of the prophets and the revelation of this “scripture wherein there is no doubt,” the world remains a place in which truth and falsehood are

easily confused. We are familiar with the principle from the gospel treatment of the Pharisees: the hypocrite looks fair but is foul. In the words of sura 63, “The Hypocrites,”

*When the hypocrites come to you they say: “We bear witness that you are indeed God’s messenger. . . . They make their oath a screen so that they may turn [men] from the way of God. Truly their deeds are evil. That is because they believed, then disbelieved, therefore a seal was set on their hearts so that they do not understand. And when you see them their exteriors please you; and if they speak you listen to their words. [They are] like blocks of wood in striped cloaks. They think that every shout is against them. They are enemies, so beware of them. The curse of God upon them! How they are perverted! (Q 63:1–4)”<sup>25</sup>*

It is not difficult to see the resemblance between the similes of sura 63 and those of, for example, Matthew 23. The work done by these similes is also similar: the Qur’anic concept of the hypocrite made it possible (though not necessary) to understand the dangerousness of the world in terms of the danger of Judaism. Later traditionists (as we will see in the next section) would put that possibility to work in order to construct a history for the Qur’an and a biography for its prophet. As a result, and from its opening pages to its last sura (112, *al-Ikhlās*, “The Sincerity,” traditionally understood as revealed against the rabbis), Jewish duplicity and enmity would become a basic axiom of Qur’anic ontology.

### **The Role of Jewish Enmity in the Construction of Muhammad’s Biography**

In its use of the Jews as figures for the confusion of godliness and falsity, and as an explanation for the vicissitudes of prophetic truth in this world, the Qur’an is quite similar, and much indebted, to the canonical gospels. But there is also an important difference. The gospels use Jewish enmity to narrate the life and the death of Jesus. In the Qur’an, the enmity of the Jews is not tied *explicitly* to events in the life of the

prophet Muhammad or of his community. It is not historical but constant, the screen against which man's progress toward prophetic truth is projected.

This "timelessness" of the Jews and their enmity is in some ways a general characteristic of the Qur'an itself: a book that does not unfold as a narrative in historical time, and provides no explicit account of its own revelation. Remember that although we read the Qur'an as a book, organized by chapter (*sura*) and verse (*aya*, "sign"), Muhammad did not receive it as a continuous text, according to Islamic tradition, but in poetic fragments of vision. The first of these fragments, "The Blood Clot," was (quite typically) only a few lines long: "Proclaim! in the name of your Lord and cherisher, who created, created man out of a leech-like clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And your Lord is the most bountiful, He who taught by the pen, taught man that which he did not know" (Q 96:1-5).<sup>26</sup>

From the reference to the Lord "who taught by the pen" in this first vision, we can see that the importance of previous scriptures appears already here at the beginning of Muslim prophecy. We can also see, from the fact that "The Blood Clot" comes in *sura* 96 and not in *sura* 1, that the Qur'an as scripture is not organized in the order in which it was received as revelation. It is not a requirement of revelation that it must organize itself chronologically or place itself historically. But how then did it come to be organized, and by what principle? According to Islamic tradition, the ordering, editing, and standardization of the Qur'an were carried out less than a generation after the Prophet's death, at the command of the caliph 'Uthman (AH 23-35/644-655 CE), who was troubled by the proliferation of variant versions. The caliph gathered together those who faithfully remembered both the content and the context of Muhammad's recitations. With their advice he created the standard text, after which he had all the other versions destroyed.

Of course, scholars should not accept the claims of the Islamic tradition about the authorship and transmission of the Qur'an any less critically than they accept traditional Christian claims that the gospels



as we have them were written by Jesus’s disciples; or traditional Jewish claims that the Torah was written by God before the creation of the world and handed to Moses at Mount Sinai. But even if we accept the traditional Islamic account about when and to whom the Qur’an’s fragments of revelation were revealed (that is, to Muhammad between 610 and 632 CE), and about when and by whom they were joined together and redacted into their canonical written form (by the caliph ‘Uthman between 644 and 655 CE), we still need to wonder about the principles that guided that redaction. How was this ordering achieved?<sup>27</sup>

The question is not a matter of idle historical curiosity, but a prerequisite for proper belief. After all, the Qur’an understands the entire prophetic tradition—including itself!—as containing revelations that are obsolete, that have been superseded or replaced: “Those of Our revelations that we abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We replace with one better or similar” (Q 2:106). The Qur’an itself suggests that chronology is crucial to faith: to know how to act we need to determine which revelation is the most recent, and therefore the one still in effect. But it gives Believers almost no guidance in making this determination.

We have already encountered one of the most famous cases of “abrogation,” the establishment of a new direction of prayer (*qiblah*) for Believers in sura 2:142–145. Centuries of Islamic tradition have understood this as representing a shift from Jerusalem to Mecca, a shift undertaken to confound the Jews and the hypocrites. But the Qur’an itself never mentions Jerusalem, and says only that a controversial change has occurred, that “the fools among the people” will complain about a change from a customary (but unspecified) direction of prayer; that “to God belongs both East and West”; that you should “turn your face in the direction of the sacred mosque” (what mosque that might be is not further specified); that this change was made to separate those who follow the Messenger from those who turn on their heels; that although God has taught them the truth, the People of the Book will refuse to agree to this or any other *qiblah*; and that the Believers should on no account follow the various *qiblahs* of the People of the Book.<sup>28</sup>

It is not obvious what these verses should mean, or which one should

supersede or abrogate the other. What was the old *qiblah* that must now be avoided? Or does the verse that to God belongs all East and West suggest that whereas once a direction was privileged, God is now indifferent to direction? Or is the verse about the sacred mosque the most recent one? And in that case, does that mean that one should pray in the direction of the closest mosque, or is there one mosque, known specifically as the sacred one, to which all must turn their faces? And what does any of this have to do with the “People of the Book” who know the truth but refuse to admit it, and why should Believers never follow their example? The Qur’an provides no guidance on these vital questions.<sup>29</sup> It is Islamic tradition that will come to the rescue here, explaining that the “fools” are Jews and hypocrites, that the old *qiblah* was Jerusalem, that the last and definitive revelation is the one enjoining prayer toward the sacred mosque, and that this means the pre-Islamic sanctuary known as the Ka’ba, in Mecca. In this case, as in countless others, it is the task of the tradition to give the Qur’an’s revelations a temporal dimension and place them within a historical context. And given that the Qur’an is itself extensively structured as a polemic against the Jews, it should not surprise us that, as in this case, the tradition frequently takes up the cutting edge of Jewish enmity as it strives to carve eternal prophecy into an historically recognizable shape.<sup>30</sup>

The monk Bahira’s warning about the threat posed by the Jews to the child Muhammad is just one example of how Jewish enmity could be used to fill in the Qur’an’s silence about its messenger, providing it with a narrative time-line in which to situate the revelation of its verses, and providing Muhammad with a biography appropriate to a prophet. Bahira appears in the most famous such biography, attributed to the “traditionist” Muhammad Ibn Ishaq. “Traditionist” refers to those early Muslims who dedicated themselves to collecting, classifying, preserving, and transmitting traditions about what the Prophet Muhammad had said or done during his life. Those traditions became tremendously important, not only because they served to establish the context for the revelation of the various verses of the Qur’an (a genre known as *asbab*

*al-nuzul*, "occasions of revelation"), but also because the Prophet's life, teachings, and example became the normative source for knowledge about how every Muslim should behave.

Early Islam did not function according to modern Protestant rules of *sola scriptura*: on the contrary, Muhammad's teachings and example, which came collectively to be known by the later tradition as *sunnah*, were as (or more) important for the establishment of Islamic law and practice as the Qur'an itself. But how were those traditions to be established? The task was not trivial, not least because it seems to have begun late. Ibn Ishaq, for example, died 151 years after the Hijra (768 CE).<sup>31</sup> By the time he began his work, a vast chronological gulf separated him from his subject. In between Muhammad's death and Ibn Ishaq's, the Prophet's legacy had transformed the world. Conquest had swept the centers of Islamic power far beyond lands the Messenger himself had trod, embracing territories stretching from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. Ibn Ishaq's own curriculum vitae attests to the wideness of that world: he was of Persian ancestry (his grandfather had been captured during the Muslim conquest of Persia in the mid-seventh century CE and sent to Arabia as a slave), grew up and spent much of his life in the Arabian Peninsula, studied in Egypt, and died in Iraq.

Not only geography, but politics had also been transformed in the momentous years since Muhammad's death. Heirs to his authority had risen and fallen: caliphs had been murdered, even the Prophet's close relatives had been killed, as the leading descendants of clans that traced their lineage back to Muhammad's Arabia struggled among themselves for power. In the course of that struggle one family, known as the Umayyads, had established itself in Damascus less than a generation after the Prophet's death (AH 41/661 CE), and proceeded to consolidate its authority over rival centers of power in the rapidly expanding Muslim world. As part of this consolidation the Umayyads even besieged Mecca and sacked Medina in AH 63, killing many who had been Companions of the Prophet and might have remembered his teachings. In the middle of Ibn Ishaq's career (AH 132/750 CE) the Umayyads were

themselves overthrown by the ‘Abbasids, descendants of a rival Meccan clan now based in Baghdad, a revolution that itself required, like most revolutions, a rewriting of history.

In short, even before our biographer drew his first breath, the Islamic past had already been deeply marked by the conflicts that would give shape to much of its future: conflicts between eminent clans and families, some claiming descent from the Prophet; between the aspirations of rival cities and centers of power (Medina, Mecca, Damascus, Kufa, Baghdad); between the claims of those lands and peoples who came early to Islam and those who came late. In the prosecution of all of these disputes, stories about the life and example of the Prophet were a powerful witness, interrogated by all sides for testimony helpful to their cause. Rivals remembered, reinterpreted, and even invented such stories to make good certain claims and tarnish others. It is not surprising, given these many diverse interests, that by Ibn Ishaq’s day there were many conflicting stories about how the prophet had lived, what he had said and done.

Ibn Ishaq was an early member of a group of collectors and transmitters of tradition—the “traditionists”—who hoped and claimed to impose order on this confusion. He is said to have studied the traditions collectors before him had transmitted, and to have spent much time in Medina (the city famous for being the first to acknowledge Muhammad as prophet), gathering stories from people who had known people who might have known the Prophet, or who had heard stories about him. The stories he gathered were expressed (or at least recorded) as memories of conversations (I once heard so-and-so say that he heard from so-and-so that she heard ‘A’isha, the wife of the Prophet, say that the Prophet, peace be upon him, once said . . . ). Ibn Ishaq evaluated the traditions according to his criteria of credibility, and arranged those he considered sound into the narrative form of a biography of the Prophet, a history of the founding of Islam.

In that history the Jews loom large as opponents of the Prophet. Their enmity begins, as we heard from Bahira, before the start of Muhammad’s mission. But once Muhammad began to receive revela-

tions, the Jews quickly emerged as his principal "testers." Of course in Mecca it was Muhammad's own tribe, the Quraysh, who were troubled by and often opposed his prophecy. But it was to the Jews, according to the tradition, that the Quraysh turned for ammunition:

*They sent . . . to the Jewish rabbis in Medina and said to them . . . "You are the people of the Torah, and we have come to you so that you can tell us how to deal with this tribesman of ours." The rabbis said, "Ask him about three things of which we will instruct you." . . . They came to the apostle and called upon him to answer these questions. He said to them, "I will give you your answer tomorrow," but he did not say "if God will." So . . . the apostle, so they say, waited for fifteen days without a revelation from God on the matter, nor did Gabriel come to him, so that the people of Mecca began to spread evil reports. . . . This delay caused the apostle great sorrow, until Gabriel brought him the Chapter of the Cave [sura 18], in which he reproaches him for his sadness, and told him the answers of their questions.<sup>32</sup>*

Ibn Ishaq then proceeds to explain the sura almost line by line, making sense of it through constant reference to this non-Qur'anic story. Obscurities in the prophetic material (in this case, allusions to some youths who slept for more than a century in a cave) are explained by tying them to a specific context of Jewish interrogation. The (again non-Qur'anic) story of Gabriel's tardiness makes clear the mechanics: Muhammad brings Gabriel the Jews' queries, and Gabriel brings Muhammad back answers that become the material of the Qur'an. Even during these difficult early days in Mecca, it is clear (to the later tradition, at least) that Jewish harassment is a good stimulus for prophecy. But that harassment reaches its peak with Muhammad's reception as prophet and ruler in Medina after—according to the tradition—members of rival polytheist clans in the city of Medina met Muhammad just outside Mecca, at a place called 'Aqaba, and promised to follow him faithfully as one, if he would come govern them. Muhammad came,

the clans (known collectively as the Ansar) brought their murderous rivalry to an end, and Medina became the first Muslim polity.

There were, however, also several Jewish clans in Medina and its environs, tied by bonds of oath, trade, feud, and marriage to the various polytheist ones. The Jews, we are told, were not pleased by the arrival of Muhammad, for they had always reveled in their prophetic superiority to the Arabs. Moreover, Muhammad's revelations threatened to unmask their own corruption, for there was much in their own scripture that they neglected to practice, and much else that they had altered for their own ends. Therefore though they knew full well his godliness, they set themselves in deadly opposition to him. The traditions reported by Ibn Ishaq stage the point frequently and explicitly. He even reports a story in which one Jew asks another, who has just visited Muhammad, "Is he *he* [that is, the Prophet announced in the Torah]? Do you recognize him, and can you be sure?" "Yes!" "And what do you feel about him?" "By God, I shall be his enemy as long as I live!"<sup>33</sup>

The Jews did not proclaim this enmity openly. Instead, they pretended to follow their allies in supporting Muhammad, agreed to provide him financial support, and swore to treat his enemies as theirs. Behind his back, however, they constantly belittled him and schemed against him. When, for example, Muhammad's trusted companion Abu Bakr went to gather money from them, Rabbi Finhas scoffed that since Muhammad was begging from the Jews, his god must be poorer than they were. Abu Bakr punched Finhas in the face, and the rabbi complained to Muhammad, denying what he had said. The resulting condemnations echo those of the Pharisees in chapter 2:

*God sent down refuting him and confirming what Abu Bakr had said: "God has heard the speech of those who say: 'God is poor and we are rich.' We shall write what they say and their killing the prophets wrongfully and we shall say, Taste the punishment of burning." (Sura 3,181) Then He [God] said . . . : "And when God laid a charge upon those who received the book: You are to make it clear to men and not to conceal it, they cast it behind their backs and sold it for a small*

*price. Wretched is the exchange! Think not that those who rejoice in what they have done and want to be praised for what they have not done—think not that they will escape the punishment: theirs will be a painful punishment.” (Sura 3.187) He means [Ibn Ishaq explains] . . . the rabbis . . . who rejoice in what they enjoy of worldly things by making error attractive to men and wish to be praised for what they have not done so that men will say they are learned when they are nothing of the kind, not bringing them to truth and guidance and wanting men to say that they have done so.<sup>34</sup>*

Islamic tradition created a biography of the Prophet through stories like these, which gave Jewish names and faces to Muhammad’s enemies. On their heads, as on rocks spaced in a shallow river, Muhammad steps along the course of his prophetic career. The reconstruction of that career, achieved in large part through the naming of these enemies, helped the traditionists of early Islam to provide a context for the revelation of each Qur’anic passage: helped them to provide, in other words, a sense of time and place to the Qur’an. As Ibn Ishaq puts it, “It was the Jewish rabbis who used to annoy the apostle with questions and introduce confusion, so as to confound the truth with falsity. The Qur’an used to come down in reference to these questions of theirs, though some of the questions about what was allowed and forbidden came from the Muslims themselves.” The task of traditionists like Ibn Ishaq was (in part) to build a “reception history” for the Qur’an through the construction of a prophetic biography propelled by Jewish enmity.<sup>35</sup>

The crimes of the Jews were manifold. Though they knew from their own scripture that Muhammad was a true prophet, greed, jealousy, and hatred made them deny the fact to everybody else. They fortified the Meccans in their persecution of the Prophet by claiming that he contradicted Hebrew scripture. And they sowed dissension among the Ansar in Medina by mocking and criticizing Muhammad’s revelations, and by harping on the danger of fighting against Mecca. Better to stay home and live, they murmured, than to die needlessly supporting the false claims of a prophet whose own people had rejected him. Many among

the Medinans were influenced by the malicious lies of their Jewish allies, and came to harbor doubts about Muhammad and his mission: these were the “hypocrites,” “whose inclination was towards the Jews,” as Ibn Ishaq put it, “and [who] strove against Islam.” The Jews even cast spells on Muhammad, making him impotent for a year.<sup>36</sup> Finally, not satisfied with egging on Muhammad’s enemies and sowing doubt among his friends, they resolved to kill him themselves, though they never quite had the opportunity to do so. (Or did they? We will return to this point.)

How, in the traditionists’ accounts, did Muhammad react to this constant persecution by the Jews? Of course he exhorted them to be true to the promise of their own scripture, and recognize him as prophet. Like Jesus, he debated with their “rabbis,” pointing out the contradictions and omissions in their interpretation of Hebrew scripture, and receiving Qur’anic revelations to confound them. But he also took strategic action. The first Jewish tribe he turned against was the Banu Qaynuqa’. When they refused his exhortation to convert to Islam, he besieged them until they surrendered unconditionally. Muhammad intended to execute them, but a leader of a Muslim tribe with whom these Jews were allied interceded on their behalf, grabbing the Prophet by the cloak: “I will not let you go until you deal kindly with my clients. Four hundred men without mail and three hundred mailed protected me from all mine enemies. Would you cut them down in one morning?” The apostle spared the Banu Qaynuqa’, but the Muslim leader’s intercession was not approved of. He was associated with the Jews and hypocrites, and it is in response to this event (according to the tradition) that sura 5:56 was revealed: “O you who believe, do not take Jews and Christians as friends. . . . Who takes them as friends is one of them.”<sup>37</sup>

The Jews suffered different fates. One prominent warrior, for example, was assassinated at Muhammad’s command so that “there was no Jew in Medina who did not fear for his life.”<sup>38</sup> According to the tradition, Muhammad explicitly authorized lying and deceit to entrap the Jewish leader, and even told the Believers to “kill any Jew that falls into your power.” The willingness of his followers to do so was considered so striking by some pagan Arabs that it prompted them to convert to



Islam: "By God! A religion which can bring you to this is marvelous!" one is said to have exclaimed, after watching his brother kill a Jewish friend and partner.<sup>39</sup>

By and large, however, the Jewish problem was solved tribe by tribe. For example, Muhammad received news "from heaven" that the Jewish tribe of the Banu Nadir planned to kill him, so he sent out his army against them. Abandoned by their "hypocrite" allies among the Muslims, the Jews begged Muhammad to send them into exile, and their property became the Prophet's, "to dispose of as he wished." It is said that sura 59, "Exile," was revealed about them: "He it was who hath caused those of the People of the Scripture who disbelieved to go forth from their homes unto the first exile." Thus "the Rabbis were disgraced through their treachery."<sup>40</sup>

All of this only hardened the Jews in their deceit. Determined to put an end to Muhammad, leaders of a Jewish tribe known as the Banu Qurayza went to the pagan tribes that most bitterly opposed him (including his own tribe of the Quraysh in Mecca), and formed an alliance to attack Medina. Their siege was broken by many miracles (a handful of dates that fed an army, a dust storm that blinded the enemy), the sowing of dissension in enemy ranks ("War is deceit," as Muhammad put it), and the defensive ditch Muhammad ordered dug around the city (hence the name "Battle of the Ditch"). The pagan tribes returned home in disgust. But for the righteous there was no rest. Immediately the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad. The angels, he told the Prophet, "had not yet laid aside their weapons." They rode in pursuit of the Jewish instigators. "God commands you, Muhammad, to go to the Banu Qurayza."

Their fort surrounded by armies of Muslims and angels, the Jews were in a difficult position. Should they acknowledge what (according to Ibn Ishaq) they knew to be true, that Muhammad was the prophet promised in the Torah, and convert to Islam? Or should they, echoing the zealots in Masada, sacrifice their own women and children and then perish in a last suicidal sally? In the end, they decided to surrender unconditionally. Their fate was decided by an arbiter among their

former allies, and confirmed by heaven and Muhammad, though it was unheard of in the long history of feud and warfare in the region: “[T]he men should be killed, the property divided, and the women and children taken captive.” “The apostle went out to the market of Medina (which is still its market today) and dug trenches in it. Then he sent for [the Jews] and struck off their heads in those trenches as they were brought to him in batches. . . . There were 600 or 700 in all, though some put the figure as high as 800 or 900.” According to other traditions it was ‘Ali who struck off their heads, and their blood flowed like a river to the olive groves.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Politics of Anti-Judaism**

By calling these stories “traditions,” I do not mean to imply that they are less authoritative or more fictional than the Qur’an. On the contrary, it is out of such accounts about what the Prophet had said or done that much of Islamic law and practice was derived, and within their context that the Qur’an itself was interpreted. Moreover, the question of which came first, traditions or codified prophecy, is itself a vexed one in the academic study of Islam. But there are important differences between the traditional and the prophetic material. Two are particularly relevant for our topic. First, more than the prophetic texts of the Qur’an, the traditional material is explicitly interested in using the Jews and the hypocrites to make claims about the sovereignty of Islam, and to explore what the politics of that sovereignty should look like. Second, again more than the prophetic texts, the traditional material struggles to maintain the tension between conquering the Jews and exterminating them.

First, politics: there are few pillars of the Islamic political order that were not explicated by the traditionists through stories of Jewish opposition. We have already seen, for example, how the story of Rabbi Finhas “Judaized” fiscal intransigence and tax resistance. Similar stories “Judaized” resistance to Muhammad’s other claims to rulership. For example, the Prophet’s judicial supremacy had been a main point of

the "Constitution of Medina": justice and sovereignty go hand in hand. But according to one important tradition, the hypocrites preferred to take their disputes to Jewish "Cohens" and pagan sorcerers, rather than to the Prophet. It was in response to this resistance that, according to the traditions, Qur'an 4:63 was revealed: "Have you not seen those who pretend that they believe in that which is revealed to you . . . [?]" Such incidents of jurisdictional "Judaizing," as we remember from John Chrysostom, arouse the ire not only of God but also of the godly. Sure enough, in some traditions 'Umar (the future caliph) beheads the leader of the hypocrites. In return he receives from Gabriel the highest praise an angel can give: he is called a man who knows how to distinguish between truth and falsehood.<sup>42</sup>

In each conflict with the Jews, a different aspect of the early Islamic "state" articulates and solidifies itself. The exile of the Banu Nadir, for example, provided the Prophet with the first "public treasury," the first property he controlled as sovereign. Similarly the massacre of the Banu Qurayza provided the occasion to articulate the proper balance between the claims to property of the sovereign and those of the soldier in the wars of Islam: "Then the apostle divided the property, wives, and children of B. Qurayza among the Muslims, and he made known on that day the shares of horse and men, and took out the fifth. . . . It was the first booty on which lots were cast and the [prophet's/sovereign's] fifth was taken. According to its precedent and what the apostle did the divisions were made, and it remained the custom for raids." The principle (eventually known in Christian Europe as "the king's fifth") will remain an important one for many economies based on the profits of battle and the conquest of land and labor.<sup>43</sup>

We can easily understand the elaboration of these traditions as the political expression of a prophetic concept: truth and right order express themselves in opposition to the Jews. Like Christianity before it, early Islam understood its conquest of the Jews as proof, both prophetic and political, of Muhammad's claim to succeed Moses. Just as the Qur'an did the work of "incorporating" the Hebrew patriarchs into an Islamic prophecy, so the tradition sought to do the work of incorporat-

ing the Jews into an Islamic polity. But precisely because the prophetic takeover had been so hostile (depending as it did on the idea that the Jews have always been the bitterest enemies of their own prophets), the political one would not be easy. As we have already seen, the political solutions to the “Jewish problem” represented in the traditions are much tenser and more violent than the prophetic ones in the Qur’an. Perhaps Qur’anic prophecy, being timeless, could simply appropriate the patriarchs and declare victory. For politics, on the other hand, the corrupting power of Judaism was a more abiding worry.<sup>44</sup>

The ambivalence is most beautifully staged in traditions about the Prophet’s conquest of the Jewish fortifications of Khaybar (in AH 7/629 CE). In one sense, the conquest of the most powerful Jewish community in the region provided Muhammad’s followers with the strongest evidence they had had thus far of their prophet’s sovereignty. Muhammad performed the subjugation of the community in the time-honored way: by having sex with the daughter of its slain leader. In the political language of the day, his marriage to the Jewess Safiya, orphaned and widowed in the Muslim attack, was the most telling sign of his power. Hence it was vaunted in the announcement of his victory to his enemies in Mecca: “Muhammad has conquered Khaybar, and has left married to the daughter of their king.”

But the traditionists also transmitted plenty of suspicions that the marriage would not be an easy one:

*When the apostle married Safiya . . . [he] passed the night with her in a tent of his. Abu Ayyub . . . passed the night girt with his sword, guarding the apostle and going round the tent until in the morning the apostle saw him there and asked what he meant by his actions. He replied, “I was afraid for you with this woman for you have killed her father, her husband, and her people, and till recently she was in unbelief. . . .”*<sup>45</sup>

Safiya did not slay Muhammad. But according to the traditions Zaynab, another captured Jewess of Khaybar, poisoned a roast lamb she pre-

pared for Muhammad. One of his companions ate greedily, and died of the meal. Muhammad himself "took hold of the shoulder and chewed a morsel of it, but he did not swallow it." His prophetic prudence saved his life, though the poison began the illness that would eventually kill him. It is because of the Jewish poison he ate on the victory field of Khaybar that "the Muslims consider that the apostle died as a martyr, in addition to the prophetic office with which God honored him."<sup>46</sup>

Traditional accounts of the conquest of Khaybar express ambivalence about the inclusion of Jews in Islamic polity and prophecy in yet another significant way. When the people of Khaybar surrendered themselves and their property to Muhammad, they begged to become sharecroppers, working the land in exchange for half the produce. The apostle agreed, on the condition that "[i]f we wish to expel you we will expel you." He reserved for himself, in other words, the power of exile over the Jews. According to one tradition, he exercised that power on his deathbed, when he decreed that "two religions should not be allowed to remain in the peninsula of the Arabs." According to another, his words were, "May God fight the Jews and the Christians! They transformed the tombs of their prophets into mosques. Two religions will not remain in the land of the Arabs."<sup>47</sup>

The traditions give no reason for Muhammad's dying wish, but (given the stories about what caused his death) we can imagine that it represents Muhammad's awareness of the danger posed by the ongoing presence of Judaism in Islam. Islam, like Christianity, staked its claims in the name of Jewish truth, but guaranteed those claims with Jewish falsity. Godliness, in other words, contained within itself the source of its own corruption. It is to cure this paradox that Islamic tradition focuses not so much on the conversion of the Jews, as on their exile or execution. Muhammad's dying words, as represented by the traditionists, reached for the political prophylactic of exile, hoping to preserve the purity of prophecy by expelling the Jews from the homeland of Islam (which had not yet spread beyond Arabia).

It was, however, far too late. According to tradition, all the remaining Jews in Arabia were indeed expelled after the Prophet's death, by

the caliph ‘Umar I (634–644 CE). But precisely because of the importance of Jewish prophecy and enmity in Islam, no massacre or expulsions could ever succeed in ridding Islam of “Judaism.” The Qur’an itself recognized the impossibility of solving the problem within the limits of this world: “The Jews say: God’s hand is bound. Let their hands be tied and they be accursed for saying so. . . . We have placed among them enmity and hatred till the day of final judgment. As often as they light the fire for war, God extinguishes it. Their effort is for mischief in the land, and God does not love mischief makers” (Q 5:64). Islamic tradition, too, acknowledged that the problem would not be solved until the end of the world. When the Antichrist comes, says one eschatological tradition, Jesus will return to slay all the Jews, and even the rocks will call out to betray where they are hiding. Until then, Muhammad’s dying injunction remains nothing but a dream, a dream of the emancipation of Islam from Judaism.<sup>48</sup>

Over the course of the previous pages we have watched the prophetic material contained in the Qur’an and the life story of Muhammad become mutually intelligible through the creation of a narrative of confrontation between prophecy and its enemies. “[W]e make for every prophet an adversary,” in the words of our Qur’anic epigraph, “evil ones among humans and Jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deceit” (Q 6:112). In the case of Muhammad, as in that of Jesus and some of the Hebrew prophets, that enemy was given a “Jewish” face, a face whose epistemological and ontological features were to some degree already familiar from the Christian and the Hebrew prophetic tradition. We have seen these Jewish figures put to particular kinds of work by the early community of Believers as it sought to appropriate the prophetic traditions of Judaism while at the same time distancing itself from them. We have touched on some of the problems—some of them very similar to those faced by early Christian communities—that this work produced: how to appropriate the prophetic claims of Jewish communities without “Judaizing” Islam? How

to contain or exclude them without severing Islam from its Abrahamic foundations?

### **Judaizing and De-Judaizing Islam**

Neither the utility of Jewish enmity, nor the problems it posed, ceased with the passing of the Prophet. On the contrary, the Jewish ambivalences produced in the prophetic generation came to serve as paradigm or pattern of thought for the Islamic community as it expanded with almost unimaginable rapidity into an empire whose borders surpassed even those of Alexander's Hellenistic empire or Augustus's Roman one. The simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of Judaism became for Islam—as it had been for Christianity—a structuring principle of the world, one through which Islamic truth was explored, discovered, and articulated.

The incorporation of Jerusalem into the sacred topography of Islam provides a good example of this structuring principle. As we saw already in the case of the direction of prayer (*qiblah*), the Qur'an never mentions the city of David, Solomon, Jesus, and many other prophets. The opening verses of sura 17 (called alternately "Children of Israel" or "The Night Journey") perhaps hint that Muhammad miraculously journeyed from Mecca to Jerusalem and back in one night: that, at least, is how the tradition came to interpret the cryptic verses "Glory to God, who took his Servant for a journey by night from the sacred mosque to the farthest mosque" (Q 17:1).<sup>49</sup> But it was not until the reign of his second successor, the caliph 'Umar (the same who was said to have expelled the Jews from Arabia) that Jerusalem was conquered from the Christians.

What to do with this prophetically overdetermined city? The question posed problems for Islam similar to those posed to Christianity, first by the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans and later by Constantine's imperial appropriation of the city's Christological symbolism. In the event, 'Umar and his followers seem to have set out to discover the site of the Jewish Temple so long ago destroyed by the Romans. For this, according to tradition, they called on the services of a Mus-

lim convert from Judaism called Ka'ḇ "of the Rabbis." The place he identified was being used by the Christians as a garbage dump. The caliph ordered it cleaned and had a small place of prayer built on it, precursor to the al-Aqsa mosque. The subsequent Umayyad caliphs went even further, building on the site (by 691) the monument we know today as the Dome of the Rock, and decorating it with Qur'anic inscriptions asserting Islam's continuity with and fulfillment of Jewish and Christian revelation.<sup>50</sup>

We know from contemporary Christian chronicles that Christians of the day, stunned by the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem and so many other places, sought to "Judaize" the Muslims by claiming that they were simply rebuilding the Temple of the Jews, much as Julian the Apostate had been accused of doing some three hundred years before. The Muslims undoubtedly understood things very differently. They were appropriating the power of Jewish prophecy, not of Jews. Their building on the Temple Mount was every bit as much a monument to the supersession of Judaism as the Christians' garbage dump had been.<sup>51</sup>

If we focus for just a moment on early Islamic traditions about the event, we can see just how delicate and difficult this work of appropriation and supersession was. Many of those traditions involve the figure Ka'ḇ of the Rabbis, or, Ka'ḇ al-Ahbar. Ka'ḇ was an early Jewish convert to Muhammad's teachings who plays an important role in the early traditions as an "indigenous informant" about the deep Abrahamic past of Islam. It was he, according to these traditions, who identified the Christian garbage dump as the site of the ancient Temple Mount. But given everything we have seen, we should not expect the tradition to rest easy with this identification, and the following early tradition does not disappoint:

*When [the caliph] 'Umar . . . approached the gate of the Temple complex he said, "Keep an eye on Ka'ḇ for me." And when he passed the gate, he said, "I am at your service, O God. I am at your service in whatever is you most desire." Then he made a beeline for the . . . Mihrab of David (peace and blessings upon him). That night he prayed in it, and*



*soon he climbed up the outcropping and . . . led the people in prayer, and he recited with them [sura 38, about David and Solomon], and he sat with them. He then rose and recited with them on the second prostration the Sura "Children of Israel" (sura 17). Then he whistled and said, "Ka'b with me!" and Ka'b was brought to him. And he said, "Where do you think we should make our place of prayer?" And Ka'b said to him, "Toward the Rock." And [Umar] said, "By God, Ka'b, you imitate Judaism! . . . Nay, rather, we shall make its qiblah facing in the way the Messenger of God made the qiblah of our mosque."<sup>52</sup>*

This story about the precursor to the Al-Aqsa mosque is striking for the way in which it appropriates Jewish learning, while at the same time stigmatizing the expert in that learning. Here, at the very moment that Ka'b is asked to establish the *qiblah*, he fails the test we saw set up in sura 2: he "turns on his heels" in the wrong direction, and thereby aligns himself with the Jews and the hypocrites. Through this alignment the tradition proclaims its supersession of what has come before. It is not the informant's Jewish learning but 'Umar's inspired guidance that orients the Jerusalem mosque's prayers in a direction that is neither "Jewish" nor "Christian," but Muslim and true.

We could say that Ka'b personifies the plight of "Judaism" in early Islam: both necessary and noxious, prophetic and pernicious. He is often called on by the tradition to authorize a given practice and elucidate its prophetic origins, but he is equally often suspect, even cursed: "God damn this rabbi (*habr*) and rebuke his rabbinic learning (*habriyya*)!" In this he can be made to stand for the problem that "Jewish lore" (called *isra'iliyyat* in Arabic) posed as a whole to early Islam. This lore cannot be purged from the traditions of Islam any more than stories about Jewish prophets can be purged from the Qur'an. Yet it threatens to convert Islam into "Judaism," and hence must be differentiated, stigmatized, and contained.<sup>53</sup>

This double gesture toward Judaism permeates early Islam. As a last example, let's touch briefly on a later development: the role of Judaism in the formation of Islamic law. We saw in chapters 2 and 3 just

how important Judaism was in Christian thinking about the law. Early Islam also put Judaism to legal work, but unlike early Christianity, Islam seems not to have had “antinomian moments” in which it imagined the possibilities of a world free of law. It strove instead to differentiate Islamic law from what had come before. Muslim exegetes did not hesitate to formulate this as a claim of supersession: “The faith of the Jews prescribed cleaving to the Torah and to the *sunna* of Moses until Jesus came. Once Jesus came . . . whoever did not reject these and follow Jesus was condemned to perdition. The faith of the Christians consists of adhering to the Evangel and to the laws of Jesus (*shara’i* ‘*Isa*) until Muhammad should come. Once Muhammad came, whoever of them did not follow Muhammad . . . was lost.” In theory, this claim of supersession applied to Christian as well as to Jewish law. But early Islam focused on the latter, and once again with its characteristic double gesture: on the one hand condemning Judaism as a negative foil for Muslim law, on the other incorporating that Judaism within itself.<sup>54</sup>

Already the Qur’an begins this process, presenting its Messenger as one who mercifully ameliorates the strict laws that came before. Some of these specific ameliorations, like the abolition of many dietary restrictions associated with Judaism—“O People! Eat the lawful and good things from what is in the earth, and follow not in the footsteps of Satan” (Q 2:168)—are familiar to us from texts like the Acts of the Apostles in the Christian tradition. But the Qur’an also approaches the general principle that Jewish law was a punishment imposed on the Jews for their hardness of heart. The Messenger, says the Qur’an, “makes lawful to [the People of the Book] the good things and prohibits to them the bad, and removes from them their heavy covenant and the shackles that were upon them” (Q 7:157).<sup>55</sup>

The Islamic tradition presents many particular laws or rulings of the Prophet as ameliorations or abrogations of Jewish norms. This one is fairly typical in form if not in content:

*A group of the Prophet’s companions were sitting around one day, and a Jew was nearby, and one of the Companions said to the others: “I*

*have sex with my wife lying down.” Another said: “I have sex with her standing.” A third said: “As for me, I take my wife while she’s on her side or on all fours.” The Jew came over and exclaimed: “You people are no better than animals! We Jews have intercourse in only one position.” In response to this God revealed: “Your wives are a tilth for you; come to your tilth in any manner that you please.” (Q 2:223)*

The example is typical, too, in the deep dialogue with Judaism it encodes. For in fact the Muslim traditionists are here adopting and adapting the various arguments that emerge in the rabbis’ debates on the topic. They take the liberal majority position that the Talmud had in fact settled on—“whatever a man wishes to do with his wife, he may”—and attribute it to Muhammad’s “amelioration.” And they take a view reported by the Talmud as that of an overruled minority of one—that sex in any position other than the “missionary” results in deformed offspring—and project it onto Judaism as its normative law.

The textual details of this engagement reveal just how well informed by Judaism the Islamic legal traditions on this subject were. (The debate on whether husbands are permitted anal intercourse with their wives—a question on which the Talmud is unequivocally more liberal than the Islamic tradition—is particularly revealing of the interpretive principles at stake.) But my point is not whether Rabbinic Judaism is really more liberal sexually than Islam or vice versa. I want only to note once again how early Islam makes its claim to truth through a logic of supersession that appropriates “Judaism” and includes it within itself, while at the same time defining itself against that Judaism as a perversion of prophecy—stigmatized, enslaving, hostile—to be left behind by the Believer.<sup>56</sup>

It is this double gesture of inclusion and exclusion that made it possible—though not inevitable—for Islam to produce “Judaism” out of its own entrails, much as Christianity had done before. Again and again the Islamic tradition invoked the threat of Judaism to make critical sense of its cosmos. We have already seen how the prophetic material contained in the Qur’an and the history of early Islam (understood as the life story of Muhammad) became mutually intelligible through a narrative

structure of confrontation between prophecy and its “Jewish” enemies. This utility did not cease with the passing of the Prophet. Of course the young and rapidly expanding religion had many enemies, including the empires of Rome and Persia. All of these enmities, however, tend to resolve themselves within the early tradition. Even the emperor Heraclius, who led the first fruitless decade of Roman military resistance against the forces of the new religion, turned out to be a closet Muslim according to traditionists like Ibn Ishaq.<sup>57</sup> The position assigned to the Jews, however, was more productive, for their prophetic legacy and their irreducible enmity could be combined to explain not only truth and falsity, but all the complex and confused space in between, the space in which all human life takes place.

The fate of the Umayyads, the first dynasty of sovereigns over Islam, provides a good example. Like Muhammad and his immediate successors, the Umayyads appropriated aspects of Judaism to claim authority over prophecy. We have already mentioned one such appropriation: the caliph ‘Uthman’s production of a canonical text of the Qur’an. In retrospect that redaction may seem uncontroversial, but it was resisted in its own day, perhaps because it was thought to represent an extension of the caliph’s power over prophecy. According to the critics, rather than reconciling conflicting texts, the caliph had “mutilated and destroyed the divine word.”<sup>58</sup>

From what we have seen of how early Muslims thought about prophecy, we can already guess the form that this accusation of mutilation of scripture took. ‘Uthman’s edition of the Qur’an was attacked as Jewish. According to one strand of the tradition, the Prophet Muhammad’s own scribe condemned Zayd b. Thabit, the editor picked by the caliph: “I read the Qur’an while this Zayd was still a boy with two sidelocks playing among the Jewish children in their grammar school.” It may seem shocking that the tradition preserves the claim that the standard edition of the Qur’an is corrupted by Judaism, but in fact the charge should not be so surprising, for two reasons: because of the process of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion that we have already discussed, and because both the falsification of scripture and

the "false" claim to control its text were so thoroughly typed as Jewish in the Qur'an itself.<sup>59</sup>

But the tradition did not stop there. Most of the traditionists whose work has reached us lived after the overthrow of the Umayyads by the rival Meccan clan of the Abbasids. They therefore worked hard to justify that overthrow, putting the Umayyads in the worst possible light. Thus we find Ibn Ishaq—who lived through the Abbasid revolution—stressing in his life of Muhammad the Prophet's constant persecution by the Umayyad clan in Mecca. It is because of this persecution, he explains, that Muhammad ordered the execution of 'Uqba, a leading member of the clan captured in the Muslim victory at the Battle of Badr (624 CE). "But who will look after my children," pleaded the prisoner. "Hell," answered Muhammad.<sup>60</sup> After their overthrow, the traditionists develop such stories into a narrative of feud between the Umayyad clan and the Prophet. Ibn Ishaq memorably depicts the mother of the first Umayyad caliph seeking vengeance at the battle of Uhud. She is shown leaping into the thick of the fray to exhort the pagan troops to fight harder against Muhammad's forces, and then, after the pagan victory, chewing exultantly on the bloody liver of the Prophet's beloved uncle Hamza, slain in the battle.<sup>61</sup>

Ibn Ishaq's alignment of the Umayyad ancestors with the most persistent enemies of the Prophet already puts them in proximity to the Jews. Other traditionists went so far as to unite them. According to one important tradition 'Uqba, whom we just saw unsuccessfully pleading for his life with the Prophet, did so not on account of his children, but by reason of their shared tribal membership. "Shall I be killed, although I am of the Quraysh?" The prophet replied, "But are you not merely a Jew, from the Jews of Sepphoris?" The question was a genealogical one, and the story goes on to explain that it was settled in the manner that the Quraysh settled such questions: with divining arrows. The arrows were cast, and the way in which they pointed determined whether one was of the tribe. In this case the arrows pointed thumbs down: 'Uqba was determined a Jew, not Quraysh, and was killed.<sup>62</sup>

This "Judaizing" of Islam's first sovereign dynasty is only one exam-

ple of the way in which the traditionists put the threat of Judaism to work in making prophetic sense of their world and its politics. In fact association with Judaism became for the traditionists a crucial critical principle in their own work, as they struggled to distinguish sound (*sahib*) Islamic traditions from unsound ones, good from bad transmitters of Muslim memory. The two tasks were interrelated. The reliability of a tradition about what the Prophet Muhammad had said or done was only as strong as the reputation of the Muslims who claimed to remember and transmit it. Each tradition was therefore accompanied by an *isnad*, or list of names of those Muslims who had passed it from one to another across the space of time. These lists were carefully scanned for (among many other things) evidence of Judaism, with traditions handed down in the name of transmitters thought to be descended from Jews (or to have been friendly with them, as the hypocrites had been) potentially suspect.

In other words, the soundness of a tradition or text was determined by studying the genealogy of the people who transmitted it. The early traditionists generated countless (often conflicting) genealogies in their attempts to establish the truth or falsity of the traditions they codified. Jews are everywhere in these genealogies: even the Prophet's own tribe of Quraysh intermarried with them (as did Muhammad himself). It is thanks to this genealogical methodology that historians know much of what they think they know about the figures that people the history of early Islam. But it is also thanks to this methodology that many of these figures became "Jewish."

Were these figures really descended from Jews, or were they "Judaized" by the power of a critical language that understood both prophecy and falsity as "Jewish"? Stories about divining arrows do not suggest incorruptible genealogical memories. Nor does the frequent accusation among traditionists of manufacturing genealogies in order to flatter friends or attack enemies. For example, one eminent transmitter is said to have had the best information about who fought for and against the Prophet at the Battle of Badr. Allegiance at Badr had become an index of nobility in early Islam so that the testimony of this venerable trans-

mitter—he died in AH 123 at over a hundred years old, having known ‘Ali and many other Companions of the Prophet—was very valuable. But everything he said was considered suspect by later traditionists because he was poor, and it was feared that he switched people’s sides depending on the size of the presents they gave him. Of course the poor were not the only ones with vulnerable memories: it is well known that genealogies were widely manipulated in the course of the sectarian and political conflicts that roiled early Islam.<sup>63</sup>

Even in cases where the transmitter’s own genealogy was not suspected of Judaism, the accusation of Judaism remained a powerful tool in the critical work of distinguishing truth from falsehood within Islamic tradition. Ibn Ishaq himself became a victim of this logic when a rival who also worked in Medina, the great traditionist Malik b. Anas, pronounced him an “antichrist” (*dajjal min al-dajajila*) and drove him out of the city. Malik denounced Ibn Ishaq, not because he was descended from Jews, but because he “reports traditions on the authority of Jews” (that is, he collected traditions transmitted by descendants of converts). The verdict stung as much in death as in life. While Ibn Ishaq was cited constantly by later authors of Qur’anic commentary (*tafsir*) and prophetic tradition (*hadith* and *sira*), his reputation remained suspect. Of course, his defenders claimed that the charge was false, triggered by fear of Ibn Ishaq’s phenomenal genealogical memory. According to them, Malik believed that Ibn Ishaq had spread the rumor that he was the descendant of a slave and not an Arab, thereby besmirching his lineage. Given the highly charged genealogical atmosphere of early Islam, the charge is certainly plausible. Nevertheless, to this day Ibn Ishaq remains associated with the introduction of dangerous “Jewish knowledge” into Islam.<sup>64</sup>

Muslim traditionists strained to purge Islam of “Judaism” by using genealogy to identify and quarantine “Jews” and transmitters of “Judaism.” Their efforts had the reverse result—much as similar efforts would have in late medieval Spain or modern Europe—of spreading “Judaism” rather than purging it. But even if they had heeded the warnings of the Qur’an and paid less attention to lineage, they would not have

avoided this dangerous diffusion of Judaism, for in Islam, just as in the Hebrew Bible and early Christianity, the errors that revelation locates in the specific flesh and lineage of the Jews are cognitive failings that affect everyone in the corporeal world.<sup>65</sup>

Like Jewish and Christian scripture, the Qur'an contains the awareness that the problem is one of language: "He . . . revealed unto you the Scripture in which there are verses of clear meaning [*muhkamat*] . . . , and others which are ambiguous [*mutashabihat*]. But those in whose hearts is perversity pursue the ambiguous, looking for discord [*fitna*] and seeking to interpret it" (Q 3:7).<sup>66</sup> Interpretation, the human desire to make sense of communication, is the wellspring of discord. Like so many Qur'anic passages about the sowing of scriptural confusion, this one referred to the Jews' inability to read correctly.<sup>67</sup> The Jews' "reading disability" was paradigmatic, so strong that at times God gave up on their literacy altogether and turned them into apes. But the same risks applied to non-Jewish readers: "Lo, the worst of beasts with God are the deaf and the dumb who do not understand" (Q 8:22). Tradition relates that Muhammad meant here "the hypocrites, whom I have forbidden you to imitate." But if hypocrisy means falling like an animal into the trap of language—recall Jesus's warning to his disciples about the "yeast of the Pharisees!"—then no human except perhaps the Prophet himself is exempt.<sup>68</sup>

According to a famous tradition, Muhammad recognized the danger: "There will come out of my community people in whose souls these deviations will spread like rabies." The "heretical" movement of the Khawarij that arose after his death was often interpreted as the first such deviation. The Khawarij emphasized the reading and interpretation of the Qur'an over the following of traditions about the Prophet. Their enemies said of them, alluding to sura 3:7, that "[t]hey believe in the *muhkam* [of the Qur'an], but perish in its *mutashabih*." They are "people who speak eloquently, but act badly; they recite the Qur'an, but it does not extend past their throats . . . they invoke the book of God, but are not related to it in any way. Whoever fights them will be closer to God than they are." Even if we did not know that by alluding to this



verse their critics were assimilating them to Jews, the images of hypocrisy should alert us to the possibility. In fact, not only sura 3:7 but many other Qur'anic texts about Jews and Judaism were explicitly applied to the Khawarij, to convince them (as 'Ali is said to have told them) that "they [the Jews] are you."<sup>69</sup>

In turn, the followers of 'Ali themselves suffered this same fate of "becoming Jewish." According to (Sunni) critics, the elevation of 'Ali by the early Shi'i movements was an imitation of the Israelites' worship of the golden calf. These critics even went so far as to give Shi'i Islam a specifically Jewish paternity, claiming that it was the Jew 'Abd Allah ibn Saba' who convinced the Muslim community to elevate 'Ali. The Shi'i, of course, attacked the Sunni with the same ammunition. So powerful is the logic that, in the words of a recent historian, "it would be difficult to find a Muslim heresy that was not at one time or another traced back to a Jewish originator" by its opponents.<sup>70</sup> (You will recall from chapter 3 that the same could be said of the church fathers.) Muhammad himself, according to tradition, is said to have foreseen the endpoint of this process: "Those who were before you of the People of the Book became divided into 72 sects [*milla*], and this community will be divided into 73, 72 in Hell, and one in Paradise." If indeed Muhammad uttered these words, they express the prophetic awareness that the critical language of "Judaism" could turn every Muslim into a potential Jew, and "Judaize" much of Islam.<sup>71</sup> If, on the other hand, the words are those of later traditionists describing their own sectarian landscape, the awareness, equally melancholy, is that it already had.

## **Potential Futures**

In the preceding pages we have explored some of the ways in which the Qur'an and the early Islamic tradition developed a tension between the truth of Jewish scripture and the falsity of Jews in order to create a complex language capable of criticizing and comprehending the confusions of their world. In this, they were no different from their Christian predecessors, nor indeed from their Jewish ones. The reason for this

similarity is obvious, but it bears repeating: the many different groups of early Muslims, Christians, and Jews that peopled the histories we have been visiting all drew on the same tools. These tools were, above all, the self-critical prophetic tradition through which the many “Israels” of Hebrew scripture explained their tribulations to themselves. We feel the deep tones of that tradition already in the voice of the psalmist:

*Hear my teaching, my people. Turn your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, . . . that the generation to come might know, . . . that they might . . . not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that didn't make their hearts loyal, whose spirit was not steadfast with God. (Ps. 78:1–8)*

This is the voice of a vision of Israel claiming harmony with God, even as it finds discord in the voices of others: “And they flattered him with their mouth, / with their tongues they lied to him, while their heart was not straight with him, / And they kept no faith with his covenant” (Ps. 78:36–37). It was because of this hypocrisy that God “rejected the tent of Joseph, and didn't choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which he loved” (Ps. 78:67–68).

The voice of each vision speaks in a distinctive accent, and that accent does matter. Orthodox Christianity, for example, eventually settled on the Jews as faithful transmitters of scripture, whereas early Islam did not: “Some of those who are Jews change words from their contexts and say: ‘We hear and disobey . . .’ distorting with their tongues and slandering religion” (Q 4:46, 2:87). The Muslim charge of Jewish alteration and falsification of scripture would come to fundamentally distinguish Islamic attitudes toward the Hebrew Bible from Christian ones. Such differences are fateful, but it is the similarities I would emphasize here. In Islam as in early Christianity, the Children of Israel are the offspring of prophecy, sometimes legitimate, often not. The many similarities between what the church fathers and early Islamic traditionists had

to say about the Jews does not derive from a similarity between their respective encounters and struggles with "real" Jews. It stems rather from the fact that both were doing similar political and theological work within the same overarching prophetic tradition.

Did Islam inherit from Christianity this way of thinking with Jews and Judaism? Certainly there are many echoes of Christianity among the early Muslim traditionists. Ibn Ishaq, for example, borrowed from the Gospel of John to explain why the Prophet Muhammad had to be opposed by the Jews: "Among the many things which have reached me about what Jesus the son of Mary stated . . . to describe the apostle of God, is the following . . . : 'He that hateth me hath hated the Lord. . . . But the word that is in the law must be fulfilled, 'They hated me without a cause.'"<sup>72</sup> Sometimes we may even see an implicit acknowledgment of such debts in the Qur'an: "You will find the most vehement of mankind in hostility to those who believe to be the Jews, and the idolaters. And you will find the nearest of them in affection to those who believe to be those who say: We are Christians. That is because there are among them priests and monks, and they are not proud" (Q 5:82).

Nevertheless it would be misleading to understand Islam's critical use of Jews and Judaism as a "borrowing" from Christianity, or from the many forms of Judaism (Rabbinic, Samaritan, Judeo-Christian, etc.) that we find traces of in early Islamic prophecy and tradition. More than a "borrowing," it was the product of arguments about how to read prophetic texts, arguments common to all who wanted to understand themselves as the "True Israel" in a world full of competing claims to truth. To point out the importance of this reading practice in early Islam is not to say that Islam is "essentially anti-Semitic" any more than it is to say that Christianity (or Rabbinic Judaism!) is. It is only to say that Islam, like Christianity and many another "True Israel," contains within itself the potential to understand the adversity it encounters in terms of "Judaism."

That potential is not always activated in the same way: the history of Islam's engagement with its Jewish "friends" and "enemies" is very different from that of, for example, Catholic Christianity's. That difference

lies, not so much in the kinds of “pre-judgments” and stereotypes about Jews that were available to Muslim thinkers, but in the kinds of cognitive work to which these concepts were put. It is easy enough to find, throughout the vast sweep and range of Islamic history, quotes saturated with certainty about the Jews’ ontological status as figures of hypocrisy, such as this one from the thirteenth century:

*Know that these people are the most cunning creatures, the vilest, most unbelieving, and hypocritical. While ostensibly the most humble and miserable, they are in fact the most vicious of men. This is the very essence of rascality and accursedness. If they remain alone with a man, they destroy him . . . They are the most unbelieving and most perfidious of men. So beware of their company. They have no belief or religion.*<sup>73</sup>

What seems to me less common (and here the accounting can be only subjective) is the application of such ideas to the “Judaizing” critique of spheres of culture.

In the following chapter, for example, we will see how many medieval Christians came to think of certain kinds of government as “Jewish,” and to criticize their princes as “Jews.” I do not think such a widespread “Judaization” of politics took place in the Islamic world until modernity. There were, however, exceptions, and those exceptions enable us to appreciate the *potential* power that figures of Judaism had within Islamic thought, even if that potential was not *actualized* as frequently (again, the accounting is at best impressionistic) in the medieval Islamic world as it was in the medieval Christian.

Perhaps the most remarkable of these exceptions took place in Islamic Spain. We can trace its contours clearly enough through the career of one individual, the Muslim scholar, poet, and politician ‘Ali Ibn Hazm (AH 384–456/994–1064 CE). Ibn Hazm was born in the Caliphate of Cordoba, the vast (and vastly rich) Islamic state that then occupied much of what we now call Spain. He lived in an extraordinary era, often called “the Golden Age” of medieval Judaism, but a distinctly

stormy period for the political elites of the peninsula. He came of age as civil war tore the caliphate into dozens of factions and competing principates, called the “party kingdoms” by historians (not for their festive but for their fractious mood). Within this fragmented politics, Ibn Hazm himself rose very high, occupying for a time the office of *wazir* or “chief minister,” of the last caliph, ‘Abd al-Rahman V. But he also fell very low, suffering imprisonment at the hands of his rivals, and spending a good deal of his life in exile in different “party kingdoms,” such as Seville (where his books were condemned and burned) and Mallorca.

Jews were not the cause of the strife that so adversely affected Ibn Hazm’s political career, but the chaos of civil war did create opportunities for some Jews. One of these was Samuel ibn Naghrila, who became *wazir* of the “party kingdom” of Granada because, as a Muslim chronicler put it, of the king’s “utter lack of confidence in anyone else, and the hostility of his kinsmen.”<sup>74</sup> Ibn Hazm’s reaction to the appointment is preserved in a treatise he penned, entitled “The Refutation”:

*Oh God, we complain to Thee, for the rulers of our faith absorbed in worldly affairs neglect the observance of their religion. . . . Absorbed in piling up riches—sometimes with results fatal to their own lives and helpful to their enemies—they are deflected from their faith and people. . . . Non-Muslims become arrogant, and infidels wag their tongues.*

The complaint is addressed to God, but it was aimed at one particular ruler, the *amir* of Granada, and one particular “non-Muslim,” Samuel ibn Naghrila. Samuel was, according to Ibn Hazm, “a man who is filled with hatred toward the Apostle [Muhammad], a man who is, in secret, a materialist, a free thinker, a Jew, of that most contemptible of religions, the most vile of faiths.” Ibn Hazm’s warning to the king on the subject of his servant lies somewhere between prayer and curse:

*It is my firm hope that God will treat those who befriend the Jews and take them into their confidence as He treated the Jews them-*

*selves. For whosoever amongst Muslim princes has listened to all this and still continues to befriend Jews . . . well deserves to be overtaken by the same humiliation and to suffer in this world the same griefs which God has meted out to the Jews, apart from their chastisement in the next world. Whosoever acts in this manner will be recompensed by suffering along with the Jews themselves. . . . Let any prince upon whom God has bestowed some of his bounty take heed . . . let him get away from this filthy, stinking, dirty crew beset with God's anger and malediction, with humiliation and wretchedness, misfortune, filth and dirt, as no other people has ever been. Let him know that the garments in which God has enwrapped them are more obnoxious than war, and more contagious than elephantiasis. May God keep us from rebelling against Him and His decision, from honoring those whom he has humiliated, by raising up those whom He has cast down.<sup>75</sup>*

The political theory encoded in this invective does not sound so distant from that of Ambrose's warning to the emperor Theodosius ("that king has become a Jew"), or the medieval Christian critics of monarchs whom we will encounter in the next chapter. The desire for material wealth lures rulers into raising Jews from the miserable position assigned to them by God. In doing so, the ruler becomes (like the Jews) a rebel against God, and will be punished as such. Like the punishment of the Jews for their ancient enmity, which is everywhere obvious in their wretchedness, God's punishment of the ruler will also be visible in this world, in the form of abasement and defeat.

In "The Refutation" Ibn Hazm presents Jewish power as cause, as well as symptom, of a world turned upside down, a world in which Jews were becoming more powerful than Muslims, and the Muslim monarchs—or worse, all their Muslim subjects!—were becoming "Jews." In the words of one poet, the Granadans are "a people who are considered to be nothing but Jews, though they are called Berbers." The Granadans themselves apparently agreed that this "Judaism" had to be eliminated. Though Ibn Hazm did not quite live to see it, in 1066 the

Muslims of Granada revolted against their *amir's* employment of Samuel's son Joseph, killing him and three or four thousand other Jews.<sup>76</sup>

We should not treat these attacks as merely strategic, although they were also that. Behind them there stood a vast intellectual edifice, an ontology. One of the most monumental wings of that edifice was erected by Ibn Hazm himself. In his encyclopedic *History of Religions*, a work that is sometimes called the first comparative history of religious ideas, the scholar devoted long pages to the Jews. On the one hand, their accursedness was obvious, apparent even in their persons: they were the filthiest and smelliest of peoples. Their intellects stank too: the equivalent, among odors, of garlic. Equally clear was the corruption of their texts. Jewish tampering with the Torah had made it an incoherent stupidity to which no Muslim should lend credence or authority, and the Talmud had obviously been written by atheists "without a law."

Nevertheless, and despite this obvious falsity, Ibn Hazm did assign to the Jews an important role in the history of religion. This role was not that of the vessel through which the written word of God was first poured into the world. Rather the opposite: Ibn Hazm's Jews moved history along through their lies. By bribing Saint Paul to spread false teachings, the Jews tricked the early Christians into believing that Jesus was divine rather than simply a prophet (as Muslims believe). Then the Jews spread schism within Islam, instigating all the principle heresies that afflicted the faith from its earliest days. Always it was the Jews' "materialism" that drove them to such deceptions: "[T]he religion of the Jews tends strongly towards that, for there is not in their Torah any mention of the next world, or of reward after death."<sup>77</sup>

It is not his basic conception of the Jews as figures of hypocrisy that makes Ibn Hazm's example exceptional. As we have seen, that idea was widespread already at the foundations of Islam. Nor is the problem of Jews in the service of Muslim rulers particular to Islamic Spain. Rulers throughout the Muslim world often employed non-Muslims in their service, and were commonly criticized for this practice.<sup>78</sup> What is unusual about Ibn Hazm and his context is that it produced not only a massacre, but also a systemized model of thought capable of explain-

ing all of world history in terms of the ontological trickery wrought by figures of Judaism. (I say “figures of Judaism” rather than Jews because many of the “villains” in Ibn Hazm’s history were Christians or Muslims, not Jews: it was the system of thought that rendered them “Jewish,” not their own beliefs.)

There were not many Ibn Hazms in the medieval Islamic world, nor were there many massacres or mass expulsions of Jews. This is not to say that the status of Jews was “better” under Islam than under Christianity. It is only to say that in Islam the Jews’ peculiar positions in scriptural ontology and their peculiar position in Muslim societies did not often combine in such a way as to generate politically useful general theories capable of explaining the world’s struggles in “Jewish” terms—not often, that is, until modernity. But the prooftexts for such thought were widespread in the Islamic tradition. And as Ibn Hazm’s example reminds us, the potential power of that thought to make sense of Muslims’ place in the world was great. Neither the potential for nor the power of this struggle with Judaism can be dismissed as something extraneous to Islam.<sup>79</sup>



CHAPTER 4: "TO EVERY PROPHET AN ADVERSARY"

- 1 NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION: I have omitted all diacritical marks when converting words from Arabic, Aramaic, and other Near Eastern languages to Roman letters, with the exception of the signs for 'ayn (ء) and hamza (أ). However, in citing the titles of other authors' works, I have retained any diacritics they used in those titles.  
 On Qur<sup>2</sup>an 6.112, see John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* [henceforth *QS*] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 61. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Qur<sup>2</sup>an [henceforth *Q*] are my own, though I recommend to readers the translation of 'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, trans., *The Meaning of the Holy Qur<sup>2</sup>a'n*, 11th ed. (Beltsville, MD: Amana, 2006).
- 2 On the Bahira legend, see Barbara Roggema, *The Legend of Sergius Bah,ī'ra': Eastern Christian Apologetics and Apocalyptic in Response to Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
- 3 Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, the author of the biography, died in AH 150/768 CE His work reaches us mainly through the recension of 'Abdu'l Malik Ibn Hisham (died ca. AH 218). The transliteration I cite here and throughout is that of A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq's Si'rat Rasu'l Alla'h* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 79–81. *Medina*: The name has additional resonances in Aramaic, "place of law (*din*)."
- 4 "Believers": Fred M. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers at the Origins of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 57. For reservations about Donner's thesis, see Patricia Crone, "Among the Believers: A New Look at the Origins of Islam Describes a Tolerant World That May Not Have Existed," *Tablet* (August 10, 2010) at <http://www.tabletmag.com/news-and-politics/42023/among-the-believers/> (accessed January 3, 2012). Great systematizers: e.g., Ahmad ibn Hanbal, founder of one of the main schools of Islamic law, as reported by Abu Bakr al-Khallal, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanadiqa wa-tarik al-salah wa-'l-fara'id min kitab al-jami' li-'l-Khallal*, ed. Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Sultan (Riyadh, 1966), 55ff. Thomas Sizgorich argues that a hundred years earlier, by contrast, the traditionalist Dahhak ibn al-Muzahim could still treat the martyrs of Najran as simultaneously "Christian" and "people of Islam"; see "'Become Infidels or We Will Throw You into the Fire': The Martyrs of Najran in Early Muslim Historiography, Hagiography, and Qur<sup>2</sup>anic Exegesis," in Arietta Papaconstantinou, ed., *Writing "True Stories": Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval Near East* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).
- 5 On the rarity of situating the message within Muhammad's life, see, e.g., sura 66. Muhammad is mentioned in 3:144, 33:40, 47:2, 48:29; and once as AHMaD, 61:6. Cf. Wansbrough, *QS*, 64.
- 6 Various prophets of the Arabs: Some of these names have a very uncertain history. James A. Bellamy argues, e.g., that Shu'ayb is not a prophet of the Arabs, but a misreading of Isaiah: see his "More Proposed Emendations to the Text of the Qur<sup>2</sup>an," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116 (1996), 196–204 (197–198).
- 7 The Qur<sup>2</sup>an uses two different terms, "Jews" (*Yahud*) and "Children of Israel," and the differences are significant.
- 8 Thus in the Targum (Aramaic translations of Hebrew scripture) Mount Sinai is referred to as *Tura de-sinai*. It is, however, impossible to be certain whether the influence here is Jewish or Christian.
- 9 BT Shabbat, 88a; BT Avodah Zarah 2b; D. Hoffman, ed., *Mekhilta de-Rabi Shim'on ben Yohai 'al sefer hemot* (Frankfurt: Koyffmann, 1905), 100. Other Agadic traditions derive the same story from Cant. 8.5, "Under the Apple tree did I stir thee up"; see L. Grünhaut, ed., *Midrash shir-ha-shirim* (Jerusalem: Bi-defus ma'arekhet ha-Tsevi, 1897), 47b and Cant. Rabba 45a col. B (top).
- 10 The Qur<sup>2</sup>anic transformation of this phrase was itself deeply influenced by Rabbinic Jewish commentaries, as Julian Obermann brilliantly demonstrated in "Koran and Agada: The Events at Mount Sinai," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 58 (1941), 23–48. See also G. D. Newby, "Arabian Jewish History in the Si'rah," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986), 121–138, here 136–138; and I. de Mateo, "Il Tahrif od alterazione della Bibbia secondo i musulmani," *Bessarione* 38 (1922), 64–111, 223–360. A recent argument for reading the Qur<sup>2</sup>an in the light of these intertexts is Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qur<sup>2</sup>an and Its Biblical Subtexts* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010).
- 11 The Muslim accusation against the Jews of *tahrif* (distortion, corruption) and *tabdil* (alteration, substitution)

- has a long bibliography. See esp. Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), chap. 7, 223–248.
- 12 On the many prophetic traditions within the Qurʾān, see Brannon Wheeler, *Prophets in the Qurʾān: An Introduction to the Qurʾān and Muslim Exegesis* (London: Continuum, 2002). For some new methodological approaches to the study of intertexts, see Dirk Hartwig, Walter Homolka, Michael Marx, and Angelika Neuwirth, eds., *“In Vollen Licht der Geschichte”: Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und die Anfänge der kritischen Koranforschung*, Ex Oriente Lux 8 (Würzburg: Ergon, 2008).
  - 13 For Judeo-Christians, see S. Pines, “Notes on Islam and on Arabic Christianity and Judaeo-Christianity,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 4 (1984), 135–152. On the Samaritans, see the (odd) article by John Bowman, “Banu ʾIsraʾīl in the Qurʾān,” *Islamic Studies* 2 (1963), 447–455, who argues that many Samaritans greeted Muhammad as the “prophet like unto Moses” promised in Deut. 18:18. See also Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 14–15, 21–28. On the importance of Syriac Christian gospel commentaries and traditions in the Qurʾānic community, see Joseph B. Witztum, “The Foundations of the House (Q 2:127),” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 72 (2009), 25–40, as well as the same author’s PhD dissertation: “The Syriac Milieu of the Quran: The Recasting of Biblical Narratives” (Princeton University, 2011).
  - 14 Q 2:61, 87, 91, and in many other suras.
  - 15 Cf. Q 3:112: “Ignominy will be their portion wherever they are found.”
  - 16 Compare Q 16:123, 5:47, 42:13, and passim.
  - 17 Yusuf ʿAli oddly leaves *musliman* untranslated, eliding the difficulty. *Hanif* is an obscure term meaning something like “natural monotheist.” Cf. Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers*, 71.
  - 18 The simile is also Talmudic: see Avodah Zarah 5b, which presents the image in a much less derogatory way.
  - 19 See Muqatil ibn Sulayman, *Tafsir al-Qurʾān*, commenting on Q 17:104, and discussed in Uri Rubin, *Between Bible and Qurʾān: The Children of Israel and the Islamic Self-Image* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1999), 27–28. Such traditions seem to develop from debate over the ten tribes of Israel lost ca. 722 BCE, when the Assyrian conquerors of Israel deported them (see 2 Kings 7:6, 23; 2 Esd. 13:41–42, 46–47; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, trans. Ralph Marcus [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937], 11.133). Might they also reflect knowledge of rabbinic stories like the Jerusalem Talmud’s account (Kilʾayim 9.4) of Rabbi Meir’s emigration to “Asia”? The idea that the ten lost tribes had settled in Central Asia was popular among medieval and early modern Europeans as well, including the famous historian Guillaume Postel in his *Des Histoires Orientales* (Paris, 1575), 34–37.
  - 20 Qurʾānic verses that allude to a believing fragment include 7:159, on a “group” (*umma*) of righteous people among the “people of Moses” (*qawm Musa*); 43:65; 61:14: “a faction [*taʾifa*] of the Banu ʾIsraʾīl believed, and a faction disbelieved.” On the extensive writings of slightly later Muslim commentators about Jewish sects, see S. Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew: The Problem of Symbiosis under Early Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), chap. 4.
  - 21 Q 5:31–33. On early Islamic thinking about the inclusion of non-Muslims in Islamic society, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
  - 22 The phrase is formulaically applied to hypocrites throughout the Qurʾān. Note that these verses are aimed specifically at the Children of Israel.
  - 23 The tradition will amplify the associative logic, as when Ibn Ishaq, 380, uses Jewish terms to describe the prophet’s tribe of the Quraysh, because they are constantly questioning the prophet.
  - 24 But see 2:142–145. On the change of direction of the *qiblah*, see recently (and helpfully) U. Rubin, “The Direction of Prayer in Islam: A Contribution to the History of a Struggle between Rituals” [in Hebrew], *Historiya* 6 (5460/2000), 5–29.
  - 25 “[S]triped cloaks” or alternatively, “propped up pieces of timber.”
  - 26 For traditions about Muhammad’s ambivalent reaction to this first experience of revelation, see Ibn Ishaq, 106, and Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 103–112.
  - 27 I will suggest in subsequent text that the prophetic material eventually included in the Qurʾān, on the one hand, and Islamic traditional accounts of the life of the Prophet, on the other, were structured and made intelligible through reciprocal and mutual reference to each other. The vast text-critical scholarship on the Qurʾān is clearly of relevance to this question. It need not, however, be summarized here, since I intend what

- follows in the text to be coherent from the point of view of any of the three most influential text-critical approaches: those founded by Theodore Noldeke (*Geschichte des Qorans* [Göttingen, 1860; expanded by F. Schwally, Leipzig, 1909]); by John Wansbrough (*Quranic Studies; The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978]); and by Angelika Neuwirth (*Studien Zur Komposition der mekkanischen Suren* [Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981]); “Vom Rezitationstext über die Liturgie zum Kanon,” in S. Wild, ed., *The Qurʾan as Text* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 69–105; and “Erzählen als Kanonischer Prozeß: Die Mose-Erzählung im Wandel der koranischen Geschichte,” in R. Brunner et al., eds., *Islamstudien ohne Ende: Festschrift für Werner Ende* [Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002], 323–344).
- 28 The notes to this passage in Yusuf ‘Ali’s edition of the Qurʾan are representative, identifying the “fools among the people” with the idolaters, Jews, and hypocrites, and comparing them to the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus’s day (‘Ali cites Matt. 22:15, 23). It is worth stressing the strong link in the Islamic tradition between this articulation of the crucial Islamic concept of “abrogation” (2:106) and the change of the *qiblah* as a way of confounding the Jews and their allies (2:142ff.). See, among countless examples of traditionists who emphasized this link, Ibn Ishaq, 258–259; and for a much later example, Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad Ansari al Qurtubi (d. 1272 CE), *Al-Jami‘ li-Ahkam al-Qurʾan* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tawfiqiya, n.d.), vol. 2, 55, 131ff. See also John Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 174–183; Christopher Melchert, “Qurʾanic Abrogation across the Ninth Century,” in Bernard Weiss, ed., *Studies in Islamic Legal Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 84; and Rubin, “Direction of Prayer in Islam.”
- 29 This may be one reason why the prophetic material collected in the Qurʾan was not drawn on as a source of law in the early Islamic period, as it would be later on. On this point (made early by Joseph Schacht), see now Wael B. Hallaq, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7–15, esp. 10.
- 30 I disagree with Fred Donner’s conclusion, from the fact that the Believers’ movement included some Jewish Believers, that critiques of Judaism in the Qurʾan and the tradition were a purely contingent reaction to “particular attitudes or political actions on their [the Jews’] part,” so that in fact one should not speak of a hostility to Judaism in the Believers’ movement, any more than the punishment or execution of some of Muhammad’s opponents among his own tribe of the Quraysh “should lead us to conclude that he was anti-Quraysh” (*Muhammad and the Believers*, 74). On the contrary: like early Christianity, both the Qurʾan and the early Islamic tradition structure their engagement with previous scripture using ideas about Jews and Judaism adopted and adapted from those earlier traditions. Their use of Judaism is in this sense structural, and it affects how they perceived and represented the “particular attitudes” of living Jews. As to the question of whether the Qurʾan frequently takes the form of an anti-Jewish polemic *because* it was redacted under the influence of the tradition, or whether the tradition frequently takes up Jewish enmity *because* Jewish opposition to prophecy is such a prominent theme in the Qurʾan, this cannot be answered without taking a controversial position on the relative chronology of both the Qurʾan and the tradition. It is unnecessary to do so here.
- 31 His work, like that of many early traditionists, reaches us through redactions by later authors, in this case ‘Abdu’l Malik Ibn Hisham (died ca. AH 218) and others. Ibn Ishaq is only one of several important early traditionists. I focus on his work in part because his traditions (as redacted by Ibn Hisham) survive in a narrative form, and in part because that narrative is the best known and the most easily accessible in English translation (by A. Guillaume). But this narrative has a complex redaction history: even as redacted by Ibn Hisham, it circulated in multiple forms. Moreover for each of the traditions Ibn Ishaq reported, there are traditions from other traditionists that differ. I will mention some of these in the endnotes. Marco Schöller, e.g., reconstructs traditions about the Prophet’s conflict with the Jews of Medina gathered by one of Ibn Ishaq’s contemporaries: “Si‘ra and Tafsīr: Muḥammad al-Kalbī on the Jews of Medina,” in Harald Motzki, ed., *The Biography of Muḥammad: the Issue of the Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 18–48. These variances do not, however, affect my general arguments. Finally, this is not the place to enter into the long debate about the reliability of the traditional material in general as historical evidence for “what really happened” in early Islam, nor of Ibn Ishaq’s material in particular. For an accessible survey of this debate, see Rubin’s “Introduction: The Prophet Muhammad and the Islamic Sources,” in Uri Rubin, ed., *The Life of Muḥammad* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998): xiii–xlvi.
- 32 Ibn Ishaq, 136–137. A similar story is related in the *Tafsir* (Qurʾanic commentary) attributed to Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 150/767), regarding Q 18:9. See the analysis by Wansbrough, *QS*, 122–127.
- 33 Ibn Ishaq, 241–242.

- 34 Ibn Ishaq, 263–264.
- 35 The quotes are from Ibn Ishaq, 239–242.
- 36 Ibn Ishaq, 240. The episode was much debated, with some (like Mu‘tazila) arguing that the prophet could not be bewitched, and others (Suhayli) opining that he could be, since prophets were not immune to physical afflictions. For some of the many traditions on the bewitching, see Michael Lecker, “The Bewitching of the Prophet Muḥammad by the Jews: A note à propos ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīḥ’s Mukhtaṣar fi l-ṭibb,” *Al-Qanṭara* 13 (1992), 561–569.
- 37 Ibn Ishaq, 364.
- 38 The warrior was Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf; his murder is described by Ibn Ishaq, 368. For a variant and interesting tradition about the killing of Ka‘b, see Michael Lecker, “Waṭiqī di’s Account on the Status of the Jews of Medina: A Study of a Combined Report,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 54 (1995), 15–32.
- 39 Ibn Ishaq, 369.
- 40 Q 59:2; Ibn Ishaq, 438.
- 41 Ibn Ishaq, 464. On this episode, see M. J. Kister, “The Massacre of the Banu Qurayza: A Re-examination of a Tradition,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8 (1986), 61–96; and Michael Lecker, “On Arabs of the Banu Kilaḥ Executed Together with the Jewish Banu Qurayza,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 19 (1995), 66–72.
- 42 The hypocrite was Mu‘attib b. Qushayr. Some traditions specify that the case was brought to the Jew Ka‘b ibn al-Ashraf. Ibn Ishaq, 245, says only that “some Muslims” preferred to bring their cases to “Kahins” (pagan soothsayers). For a discussion of some of the many traditions, see Moshe Gil, “The Medinan Opposition to the Prophet,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987), 65–96 (here 81), an article important for many of the issues discussed here. On the constitution, see above all Michael Lecker, *The Constitution of Medina: Muḥammad’s First Legal Document* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 2004). See also R. B. Serjeant, “The Sunnah Ja‘mi‘ah, Pacts with the Yathrib Jews, and the Tahri‘m of Yathrib: Analysis and Translation of the Documents Comprised in the So-Called Constitution of Medina,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 41 (1978), 1–42.
- 43 Ibn Ishaq, 466; cf. 521–523.
- 44 In making this comparative judgment I do not mean to minimize the violence of passages like Q 33:25–27, about how to deal with the “People of the Book” that opposed the Believers: “[S]ome you kill, and some you take captive. And He [God] made you inherit their lands and homes and property.” Not surprisingly, this passage is linked by the traditionists to the treatment of the B. Qurayza after the Battle of the Ditch.
- 45 Ibn Ishaq, 517.
- 46 Ibid., 515–516. See 794 for Ibn Hisham’s notes on Zaynab as a wife of the Prophet.
- 47 The first quotation in this paragraph can be found in Ibn Ishaq, 515; the second is from 523 and 689. The other tradition is from Malik b. Anas. The same words are attributed to ‘Umar when he expelled the Jews from Khaybar. On this tradition and its afterlife, see Maribel Fierro Bello, “A Muslim Land without Jews or Christians. Almohad Policies regarding the ‘Protected People,’” in Matthias M. Tischler and Alexander Fidora, eds., *Christlicher Norden-Muslimischer Süden. Ansprüche und Wirklichkeiten von Christen, Juden und Muslimen auf der Iberischen Halbinsel im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2011), 231–247.
- 48 The influential modern Qur’anic commentator ‘Afif ‘Abd al-Fattah Tabbara cited Q 5:64 in support of Hitler’s claim in *Mein Kampf* that the Jews were corrupting German youth. Cf. Suha Taji-Farouki, “A Contemporary Construction of the Jews in the Qur’an,” in Taji-Farouki and Ronald Nettler, eds., *Muslim-Jewish Encounters: Intellectual Traditions and Modern Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998), 24–25. He also cited the related 7:167 (“your Lord proclaimed He would send forth against them, unto the Day of Resurrection, those who should visit them with evil punishment”) as proof of the Qur’an’s divine nature: “However, the certainty that this persecution, which became a historical fact and continued for a long time after the arrival of Islam, would shadow them until the Day of Resurrection, represents a statement concerning the unknown, which no human could possibly have made, furnishing undisputable evidence of the divine nature of the Qur’an.” In Augustinian fashion, the Jews’ degradation confirms the truth of a later scripture. For the eschatological *hadith* (in which I hear an echo of the Revelation of John 6:16), see Georges Vajda, “Juifs et Musulmans Selon le Hadit,” *Journal Asiatique* 229 (1937), 57–127.
- 49 Phrase “farthest mosque,” *Ar. al-masjid al-aqsa*: But where was that? The Qur’an makes no mention. It might well have been in heaven.

- 50 On Ka'b, who will figure more later, see Israel Wolfensohn, *Ka'b al-Ahbar und seine Stellung im Hadit und in der islamischen Legendenliteratur* (Gelnhausen: F. W. Kalbfleisch, 1933); Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'a'n*, 13–17, 56–57, 77; Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, 21–35. Thomas Sizgorich left incomplete a monograph tentatively titled "Ka'b and 'Umar Go to Jerusalem: Jewish Knowledge, Christian Stories, and Muslim Memory in the Early Islamic World" at his untimely death. I have benefited from reading his unpublished second chapter, which I cite with his permission. On the traditions about 'Umar as conqueror of Jerusalem, see Heribert Busse, "Omar's Image as the Conqueror of Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8 (1986), 149–168; and Busse, "Omar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb in Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984), 73–119. The most famous traditional Islamic history of the conquests is that of Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-muluk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje et al., 15 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1887–1901). The sections concerning Palestine have been translated by Yohanan Friedmann, *The History of al-Ṭabari*, vol. 12: *The Battle of al-Qaḍisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992).
- 51 For Christian portrayals of the Muslims as rebuilding the Temple, see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 161, n. 1–3. Following Sebeos's account, Crone and Cook also suggested that the Muslims installed a Jewish *Ishkhan* (governor) in Jerusalem (103). Sebeos was a seventh-century Armenian bishop. The (probably pseudonymous) account attributed to him was edited by Keropet Petrovich Patkanean, *Patmout'iun Sebe'osi Episkoposi i Herakln* [History of Sebeos, Bishop of Heraclea] (St. Petersburg, 1879), here 111. See Robert Hoyland, "Sebeos, the Jews, and the Rise of Islam," in Ronald L. Nettle, ed., *Medieval and Modern Perspectives on Muslim-Jewish Relations* (Luxembourg: Harwood Academic, 1995), 89–102.
- 52 Tabari, *Ta'riḫ*, 1:2408. For another version of this tradition, in which Ka'b is portrayed as trying to reconcile the teachings of Muhammad and Moses, see Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'riḫ madinat Dimashq*, ed. Salah al-Din Munajjid (Damascus, 1951), 1:557. See Uri Rubin, "The Ka'ba: Aspects of Its Ritual Function," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 12 (1989), 321–371.
- 53 The curse is attributed by al-Tabari to 'Abd Allah b. Abbas. See David T. Halperin and Gordon D. Newby, "Two Castrated Bulls: A Study in the Haggadah of Ka'b b. al-Aḥḅār," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 12 (1982), 631–638. The literature on *isra'iliyyat* is large, but see esp. Ismail Albayrak, "*Isra'iliyyat* and Classical Exegetes: Comments on the Calf with a Hollow Sound (Q.20.83–98/ 7.147–155) with Special Reference to Ibn 'Aṭiyya," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 47 (2002), 39–65; Albayrak, "Re-evaluating the Notion of *Isra'iliyyat*," *D.E.U. İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 13–14 (2001), 69–88; Jane Damen McAuliffe, "Assessing the *Isra'iliyyat*: An Exegetical Conundrum," in S. Leder, ed., *Storytelling in the Framework of Non-fictional Arabic Literature* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988); and Roberto Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term *Isra'iliyyat* in Muslim Literature," *Arabica* 46 (1999), 193–210. Tottoli and others have observed a resurgence of Islamic exegetical criticism of *isra'iliyyat* since the establishment of the State of Israel, criticism that I might interpret as a modern application of the tools of thought discussed in this section.
- 54 The quote with "faith of the Jews" is from Tabari's Qur'an commentary, as cited in Ze'ev Maghen, *After Hardship Cometh Ease: The Jews as a Backdrop for Muslim Moderation* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006), 56, n. 1. Compare Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 37.
- 55 The notion that Mosaic law was given as a punishment to the Jews will be well developed in Islamic thought: see Maghen, *After Hardship*, 52–71. Though this idea undoubtedly owes a good deal to Pauline Christianity, it also has roots in Hebrew scriptural and rabbinic traditions, as in Ezek. 20:25, "I gave them laws that were not good." On the exegetical history of this passage in the Second Temple and rabbinic periods, see P. W. Van der Horst, "'I Gave Them Laws That Were Not Good': Ezekiel 20:25 in Ancient Judaism and Christianity," in A. S. van der Woude et al., eds., *Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992), 94–118. The notion will be amplified by Spinoza (see chap. 10) before being broadly diffused within European philosophical thought (see chap. 12).
- 56 The key Talmudic text, whose logic is closely followed by the Islamic debate, is Nedarim 20b. For the topic of anal sex, see also the medieval Tosafot commentary on the passage. The topic is explored with subtlety and acuity by Maghen, *After Hardship*, chap. 9: "Turning the Tables: The Muslim-Jewish Polemic over Sexual Positions," 161–209.
- 57 The confrontation with Byzantium does acquire apocalyptic overtones within the tradition over time, but I would nevertheless maintain the significance of my distinction.
- 58 For this quotation, see the entry for 'Uthma'n b. 'Affa'n in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. M. T. Houtsma et al.

- (Leiden: Brill, 1987).
- 59 The charge was reportedly made by the Prophet's scribe Ubayy b. Ka'ab, who was angered that the caliph 'Uthman picked Zayd b. Thabit for the task of compilation. See Michael Lecker, "Zayd b. Thabit, 'a Jew with Two Sidelocks': Judaism and Literacy in pre-Islamic Medina (Yathrib)," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 56 (1997), 259–273.
  - 60 Ibn Ishaq, 308.
  - 61 The executed leader was 'Uqba b. Abu Mu'ayt, the mother of the first Umayyad caliph, Hind bt. 'Utba. See also R. Sellheim, "Prophet, Caliph, und Geschichte: Die Muhammad-Biographie des Ibn Ishaq," *Oriens* 18–19 (1965–66/7), 33–91.
  - 62 The use of divining arrows was forbidden in the Qur'an (2:219, 5:90). They had many uses, but the one intended here, the adjudication of genealogical claims, is discussed in Ibn al-Kalbi, *Kitab al-Asna'm* (Cairo, 1965), 28. Ibn Ishaq, 67, describes a different method. For a full discussion of the tradition concerning 'Uqba, see Seth Ward, "Muhammad Said: 'You Are Only a Jew from the Jews of Sepphoris': Allegations of the Jewish Ancestry of Some Umayyads," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 60 (2001), 31–41. The Umayyads are also assimilated to Jews in other ways, as in the tradition that reports a vision of the Prophet in which he sees the Umayyads climbing the *minbar* in the form of "apes and pigs"; see Rubin, "Apes, Pigs, and the Islamic Identity," *Israel Oriental Studies* 17 (1997), 89–105, here 101.
  - 63 The traditionist was Shurahbil ibn Sa'd. An early analysis of Shurahbil can be found in Josef Horowitz, "The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and Their Authors," trans. Marmaduke Pickthall, *Islamic Culture* 1 (1927), 552–553.
  - 64 J. Fück, *Muhammad ibn Ishaq: literarhistorische Untersuchungen* (Frankfurt am Main: [n.p.], 1925), chap. 2; Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, xxxv–xl; Moshe Gil, "The Origins of the Jews of Yathrib," in F. E. Peters, ed., *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998), 219. The story was often retold, as in Abu Hatim ibn Hibban's (d. AH 354) book on reliable narrators. Because of this anti-*isra'iliyat* sentiment Ibn Hisham, Ibn Ishaq's medieval editor, in fact suppressed the entire first book of Ibn Ishaq's work, called the *Kitab al-Mubtada'*. That lost book has been recently reconstructed from citations in al-Tabari and other sources by Gordon Newby, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).
  - 65 Among the early transmitters who came under suspicion were Ka'b al-Ahbar (d. ca. 32/652–653) and Wahb b. Munabbih (d. ca. 110/728), as well as later ones like (to a much lesser extent) Ibn Ishaq. On the increasingly strident condemnations of *isra'iliyat*, i.e., stories, traditions, and memorabilia that the traditionists understood as Jewish, see among others Ze'ev Maghen, *After Hardship*, 73.
  - 66 On these terms, see L. Kinberg, "*Muḥkama't* and *mutasha'biha't* (Koran 3/7): Implications of a Koranic Pair of Terms in Medieval Exegesis," *Arabica* 35 (1988), 143–172.
  - 67 Or so the earliest commentaries understood it. See, e.g., Muqatil ibn Sulayman, *Tafsir al-Qur'an*, ed. 'Abdallah Mahmud Shihata, 5 vols. (Cairo: Al-Hay'at al-Misriyya al-'amma li'l-Kitab, 1979), 1:264.
  - 68 On the occasion of revelation of Qur'an 8:22, see Ibn Ishaq, 322. The Qur'an mentions the punishment of metamorphosis (*maskh*) into apes and pigs at 2:65, 5:60 (and the often associated 7:78), and 7:166. It does not identify the victims, but the tradition universally agrees that they were "Children of Israel," and specifically Jews (*Yahud*). The cause of the punishment varies according to the commentators. A Shi'i tradition says that the curse punished the Jews' killing of 120 prophets from the house of David (Ps.-Mas'udi, *Ithbat al-Wasiyah lil-Ilam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib 'alayhi al-Salam* [Qum: Manshu'ra't al-Rida', 1983], 80). On the Jews as apes and pigs, see I. Lichtenstaedter, "And Become Ye Accursed Apes," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 14 (1991), 153–175; Michael Cook, "Early Muslim Dietary Law," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986), 222–223; and Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 213–220. Rubin shows how the punishment extended in the tradition to Muslim heretics (220–232). For the tradition that Q 8:22 refers to the hypocrites, see Ibn Ishaq, 322. On the Prophet's immunity to hypocrisy, see the traditions that attribute to Ka'b a prophecy drawn from the Torah, describing the coming prophet as the one who "says in private what he says in public, and his word and deed are equal," cited in Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 14.
  - 69 For the many traditions linking the Khawarij to sura 3:7, see Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 147–167. Those cited here are from Ibn Abi Shayba, 15, no. 19748, and Ahmad, Musnad, 3, 224. Rubin provides numerous others. The quotation at the end of the paragraph can be found in Tabari, *Tafsir*, 16:27.
  - 70 Tabari, *Ta'rikh* 6:82 (2:702), and further sources are found in Rubin, *Between Bible and Qur'an*, 168ff. See also

Steven M. Wasserstrom, "The Shi'is Are the Jews of Our Community': An Interreligious Comparison within Sunni Thought," *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994), 297–324. On the "Jewish lineages" of all sects, see Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 157–158. His use of the word "heresy" is a bit misleading here, since the denomination is relative. The Khawarij, e.g., probably considered their (eventually victorious) opponents a "Judaizing heresy."

- 71 Rubin, *Between Bible and Qurʾān*, 137. Cf. 117–146.
- 72 Ibn Ishaq, 103–104, quoting John 15:23, is here adopting John's claim that the divine plan requires the groundless enmity of the Jews toward the word, and redirects it forward in time, translating John's Greek "paraclete" through a Syriac variant (*menahhemana*, "comforter") into the Prophet Muhammad. For related traditions, see Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, 22–23.
- 73 *Revealing the Secrets and Disclosing the Concealed*, bk. 5, translated in "Disclosing the Fraudulence of the Jewish Doctors," by 'Abd al-Rahim al-Jawbari, trans. M. Perlman, "Notes on the Position of Jewish Physicians in Medieval Muslim Society," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972), 315–319, here 316.
- 74 'Abd Allah bin Buluggin, *Tibyan*, cited by Ross Brann, *Power in the Portrayal: Representations of Jews and Muslims in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Islamic Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 45–46.
- 75 Ibn Hazm, "The Refutation of Ibn Naghrila the Jew," trans. Moshe Perlmann, "Eleventh-Century Andalusian Authors on the Jews of Granada," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 18 (1948–49), 269–280, here 281–283. On this treatise, see Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*, 78–79.
- 76 The poem is by Muhammad ibn 'Ammar, cited by Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*. Further examples given by Brann include the criticism of Khalaf b. Faraj al-Sumaysir (51–52); or the comment of the Tibyan that "most of the subjects in Granada... were only Jews" (44–45). Brann's book explores this Muslim "projection" of political anxiety onto Jews: "[T]he texts we will examine all prove to be concerned with issues of sovereignty, power, and control of knowledge and are reflective of concerns and paradigms internal to Islam for which the Jew serves as a speculum" (8).
- 77 'Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Hazm, *Al-Fisal fi l-milal wal-ahwa' wal-nihal*, 6 vols. (Beirut, 1982), 1:325. See Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 105. On Paul as a Jewish agent, see the citations in Moshe Perlmann, "Eleventh-Century Andalusian Authors," n. 37, 278.
- 78 On such complaints, Bernard Lewis's *Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 28–30, is a useful starting point. Lewis adduces an exemplary *fatwah* by the thirteenth-century scholar al-Nawawi (from his *Al-Manthurat*, ed. Ignaz Goldziher, *Revue des études Juives* 28 [1894], 94), which contains an explicit authorization of political critique: anyone who works to secure the monarch's dismissal of a nonbeliever will be rewarded by God, for "they will spare no pains to corrupt you" (Q 3.114). Ibn Khaldun, however, treats the use by Muslim monarchs of Christians and Jews in administrative posts as more or less a historical constant: 2:8–9, chap. 3, sect. 32 (Brann, *Power in the Portrayal*, 47)
- 79 For an attempt to compare the relative status of Jews under Islam and Christianity, see Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). Maribel Fierro Bello, in "A Muslim Land without Jews or Christians," shows well how arguments for expulsion (or extermination) of Jews drew on well-known traditions such as those of Muhammad's dying words, and suggests that the Almohads' expulsion and forced conversion of the Jews were attempts to implement those words. Other critiques akin to Ibn Hazm's include those of al-Turtushi, whose "mirror for princes" (*Siraj al-muluk*) criticized (in its chap. 51) various Islamic monarchs for empowering "dhimmis." I do not deal here with the most famous medieval "exception," Ibn Taymiyya (who died in Damascus in 1328 CE), whose influence on modern "Islamism" has been (perhaps too) widely noted. See Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed, eds., *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. the essay by Mona Hassan, "Modern Interpretations and Misinterpretations of a Medieval Scholar: Apprehending the Political Thought of Ibn Taymiyya," 338–366. An argument against the categorization of Ibn Taymiyya as an "extremist" can be found in Yahya Michot, *Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule: Ibn Taymiyya*, trans. Jamil Qureshi (Oxford: Interface, 2006).