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978-1-107-06568-0 - Interpreting Scriptures in Judaism, Christianity and Islam:
Overlapping Inquiries

Edited by Mordechai Z. Cohen and Adele Berlin

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INTERPRETING SCRIPTURES IN JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

This comparative study traces Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptural interpretation from antiquity to modernity, with special emphasis on the pivotal medieval period. It focuses on three areas: responses in the different faith traditions to tensions created by the need to transplant scriptures into new cultural and linguistic contexts; changing conceptions of the literal sense and its importance vis-à-vis non-literal senses, such as the figurative, spiritual, and mid-rashic; and ways in which classical rhetoric and poetics informed – or were resisted in – interpretation. Concentrating on points of intersection, the authors bring to light previously hidden aspects of methods and approaches in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This volume opens new avenues for interdisciplinary analysis and will benefit scholars and students of biblical studies, religious studies, medieval studies, Islamic studies, Jewish studies, comparative religions, and theory of interpretation.

MORDECHAI Z. COHEN is Professor of Bible and Associate Dean of the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University. His publications include *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimbi* and *Opening the Gates of Interpretation: Maimonides' Biblical Hermeneutics in Light of His Geonic-Andalusian Heritage and Muslim Milieu*.

ADELE BERLIN is Robert H. Smith Professor of Hebrew Bible Emerita in the Department of English and the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Maryland. She is the author of seven books, including *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, and commentaries on Zephaniah, Esther, and Lamentations.

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EDITED BY

MORDECHAI Z. COHEN AND ADELE BERLIN

with the assistance of

MEIR M. BAR-ASHER, RITA COPELAND,
AND JON WHITMAN



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Rheims, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 133, f. 4v, gloss on
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poetics and Hebrew poetry; medieval Jewish legal hermeneutics and Muslim jurisprudence; and modern literary approaches to the Bible. Among his published works are *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor: From Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (2003) and *Opening the Gates of Interpretation: Maimonides' Biblical Hermeneutics in Light of His Geonic-Andalusian Heritage and Muslim Milieu* (2011).

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Aramaic. Among his books are *Arabische Dichtung und griechische Poetik: Hāzīm al-Qartāğannīs Grundlegung d. Poetik mit Hilfe aristotel Begriffe* (1969), *The Hand of the Northwind: Opinions on Metaphor and the Early Meaning of Isti'āra in Arabic Poetics* (1977), and *Studies in Neo-Aramaic* (1990).

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C.E. (1997) and edited *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources* (2003).

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Acknowledgments

This volume is the result of the collaborative research of a fourteen-member team of scholars – each represented within its pages – in a project entitled “Encountering Scripture in Overlapping Cultures: Early Jewish, Christian and Muslim Strategies of Reading and Their Contemporary Implications.” First conceived in 2007, the project was designed initially by Mordechai Cohen and Jon Whitman, soon joined by Adele Berlin and Meir Bar-Asher. Eventually, the full team crystallized and convened as a research group directed by Mordechai Cohen and Meir Bar-Asher at the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies (IIAS) in Jerusalem from September 2010 until February 2011. We wish to acknowledge the IIAS, its then director Eliezer Rabinovici, associate director Lea Praver, and the entire IIAS staff for supporting the research group, providing the uniquely suited setting for its collaborative inter-disciplinary scholarly activity. Special thanks to Netta Hazan, our dedicated research assistant, who ably and cheerfully facilitated the work of our group members during their stay in Jerusalem.

The editors wish to acknowledge each of the authors who contributed the chapters that make up this volume. In addition to their own studies, as members of the research group they offered valuable new perspectives on the work of their colleagues. These additional perspectives are represented in the general introduction and prefaces to each chapter appearing in the volume.

A special follow-up conference hosted by the IIAS in Jerusalem in July 2012, attended by a large part of the group, enabled us to integrate the chapters of this volume into a cohesive study that demonstrates the importance of investigating the interpretation of scriptures in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam comparatively. We are particularly grateful to Rita Copeland for the central role she played in planning and shaping the sessions of the conference, which contributed to its success.

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Acknowledgments

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We note with sadness the passing of Wolfhart Heinrichs in January 2014. Despite his final illness, he made every effort to submit his chapter for the volume, which we hope will be a fitting memorial to this great scholar of Islam. We are most grateful to Robert Gleave, who drew upon his expert knowledge of Muslim legal hermeneutics to supply the primary references for Professor Heinrichs' chapter.

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Mordechai Cohen and Adele Berlin

Jerusalem, August 2014

Abbreviations

1–2 Chr	= 1–2 Chronicles
1–2 Cor	= 1–2 Corinthians
1–2 Kgs	= 1–2 Kings
1–2 Sam	= 1–2 Samuel
<i>Aen.</i>	= <i>Aeneid</i>
Ar.	= Arabic
b.	= Babylonian Talmud
c.	= circa
CSEL	= <i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum</i> . Ed. Iosephi Zycha, et. al. Vienna: F. Tempisky, 1866–
Dan	= Daniel
Deut	= Deuteronomy
<i>DSD</i>	= <i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>EI</i>	= <i>Encyclopaedia of Islam: New Edition</i> . Ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al. Leiden: Brill, 1960.
Exod	= Exodus
Gal	= Galatians
Gen	= Genesis
<i>HBOT</i>	= <i>Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation</i> . Volume I/1: Antiquity. Ed. Magne Sæbø, Menahem Haran and Chris Brekelmans. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1996. Vol. I/2, <i>The Middle Ages</i> . Ed. Magne Sæbø, Menahem Haran, and Chris Brekelmans. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000. Vol. II: <i>From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment</i> . Ed. Magne Sæbø, Michael A. Fishbane, and Jean-Louis Ska. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2008.
Heb.	= Hebrew
Hos	= Hosea
Isa	= Isaiah

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List of abbreviations

j.	= Jerusalem Talmud
JAOS	= <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
Jer	= Jeremiah
JQR	= <i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
Jub.	= <i>Jubilees</i>
Judg	= Judges
Lev	= Leviticus
m.	= Mishnah
Matt	= Matthew
MT	= Masoretic Text
Num	= Numbers
PEPP	= Greene, Roland, and Stephen Cushman, eds. <i>The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics</i> . 4th ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.
PL	= <i>Patrologia Latina (Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Latina)</i> . 221 vols. Ed. Jaques Paul Migne. Paris: Migne, 1844–1864. (References are given by volume and numbered columns.)
Prov	= Proverbs
Ps	= Psalms
Q.	= Qur'an
Rom	= Romans
Song	= Song of Songs
s.v.	= <i>sub verbo</i>
t.	= Tosefta
TDOT	= <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Ed. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, rev. edn. Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1974.
TDNT	= <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Ed. Gerhard Kittel, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1964.
Zech	= Zechariah