

From Borrowing to Shared Narratives: Reassessing Abraham Geiger's Hypothesis in the Light of Late Antique Qur'anic Intertextuality

Moh. Nor Ichwan*

Department of Quranic Studies, Faculty of Ushuluddin and Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, Semarang, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: nor_ichwan@walisongo.ac.id

Article History:

Received: October 1, 2025
Revision: November 25, 2025
Accepted: December 10, 2025
Published: December 25, 2025

How to cite this article:

Ichwan, M. N. (2026). From Borrowing to Shared Narratives: Reassessing Abraham Geiger's Hypothesis in the Light of Late Antique Qur'anic Intertextuality. *International Journal of Religious and Interdisciplinary Studies (IJoRIS)*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.64529/bbzqsd34>

Copyright: © 2025 by the author/s. This open-access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

Abstract: This study critically reassesses Abraham Geiger's 19th-century hypothesis that the Qur'an largely borrows from rabbinic texts through the lens of contemporary Qur'anic intertextuality and late antique studies. Drawing on Geiger's Judaism and Islam as its primary unit of analysis, alongside the Qur'anic text and early rabbinic literature, the article seeks to reposition his influential but methodologically flawed thesis within modern scholarly frameworks. Employing a historical-hermeneutic and intertextual methodology, the analysis moves beyond Geiger's reductionist "borrowing" paradigm. Key findings reveal that while Geiger's work retains heuristic value in identifying narrative parallels, it suffers from critical weaknesses: an overreliance on written-text assumptions, Orientalist bias, and a neglect of the oral cultural context of the Hijaz. The study's novelty lies in reconceptualizing these parallels not as evidence of direct dependency, but as manifestations of a dynamic *shared narrative network* within the late antique religious milieu. In this network, the Qur'an emerges as a creative, dialogical agent that engages, corrects, and innovates upon existing monotheistic traditions. The article contributes to Qur'anic studies by offering a historiographic critique of Orientalist methodology and by proposing a more nuanced, context-sensitive model for understanding early Islamic engagement with Jewish and Christian narratives. It recommends future multidisciplinary research integrating philology, oral anthropology, and socio-political analysis of pre-Islamic Arabia.

Keywords: Abraham Geiger, Qur'anic intertextuality, late antiquity, shared narratives, Orientalism critique

1. Introduction

The socio-religious landscape of Arabia in the seventh century AD was characterized by a dynamic and complex interplay between various monotheistic traditions, indigenous Arab beliefs, and oral narrative cultures. The Jewish community, particularly in Medina and the broader Hejaz region, is not a passive neighbor but an active participant in the region's political, economic, and discursive life (Bakhos, 2014; Shoemaker, 2022). This pluralistic milieu provides fertile ground for the exchange of theological concepts, legal principles, and prophetic stories. The Qur'an's appearance in this context inevitably raises critical questions about its engagement with the established biblical traditions and narratives of Judaism and Christianity. This investigation extends beyond mere theological comparisons to examine the core processes of identity formation, prophetic legitimacy, and intercommunity dynamics during Islam's formative period. Understanding these interactions is therefore not a mere exercise in source searching, but rather a fundamental attempt to map the discursive contours of late antiquity, where new religious movements articulated their messages through dynamic dialogue with the existing monotheistic tapestry of thought (Griffith, 2013).

Systematic academic discourse on Jewish "influence" on the Qur'an was pioneered by Abraham Geiger's seminal 1833 work, *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?* Geiger established a linear "borrowing" paradigm, arguing that Muhammad directly adopted and adapted fragmentary elements of Rabbinic literature. This



reductionist framework, which emphasized Islam's derivative nature, was later expanded by Orientalists such as Ignaz Goldziher and Theodor Nöldeke. In contrast, mid-to-late 20th-century scholars such as John Wansbrough and Patricia Crone shifted the focus to the historical and editorial context of the Qur'anic text itself. The contemporary scientific landscape, led by figures such as Angelika Neuwirth, Sidney Griffith, and Gabriel Said Reynolds, has undergone a significant paradigm shift. Beyond the simplified "borrowing" model, these scholars use the concept of "intertextuality" to place the Qur'an in a broader "end-of-antiquity religious milieu", viewing it as an active participant in the realm of shared conversation (Neuwirth, 2019; Reynolds, 2018). However, a critical gap remains: while Geiger's hypothesis is often recognized as a historical starting point, there is still a lack of comprehensive, methodologically driven studies that systematically evaluate the relevance—and lack thereof—of its specific claims through the rigorous lens of contemporary Qur'anic studies, particularly those that emphasize oral transmission and socio-historical context. Most modern analyses only briefly mention Geiger or focus on a new paradigm without a thorough deconstruction of the intellectual foundation on which it was built.

This article aims to fill the gap in this research by conducting a critical reassessment and methodological repositioning of the Abraham Geiger hypothesis. Its purpose is twofold: first, to provide a nuanced historiographical evaluation of Geiger's work, carefully mapping its contributions and limitations to progress in contemporary Qur'anic studies; and second, to propose a constructive reconceptualization of its findings. Rather than simply cataloging Geiger errors, this study seeks to salvage the heuristic value of its observations by transposing them into a more sophisticated analytical framework. This article asks: To what extent can the parallels Geiger identifies between Qur'anic and Rabbinic narratives be maintained when analyzed through intertextuality methodologies and the study of oral culture? And how are we supposed to reconfigure his legacy to contribute meaningfully to the current understanding of the birth of the Qur'an in its end-time environment?

The central argument of this study is that Geiger's hypothesis, although fundamentally flawed in its methodological premise and orientalist assumptions, still retains significant value not as a "borrowing" model, but rather as an early, albeit unintentional, indication of a *shared narrative network* that characterized the end-of-antiquity world. We argue that the textual parallels identified by Geiger are best described as evidence of the Qur'an's active and creative engagement with a common collection of monotheistic discourses, circulating through oral and written channels in the Hijaz. The Qur'an does not passively copy sources but rather engages in theological negotiation—confirming, debating, correcting, and innovating the stories and laws in its environment (Reynolds, 2010). By critiquing Geiger's methodological and textual biases, and by repositioning his evidence within the framework of participatory intertextuality, this article aims to show that the Qur'an's relationship with earlier traditions is a dynamic authorial relationship rather than a derivative dependence, thus offering a more historically grounded and theologically respectful model for understanding the origins of Islam.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Abraham Geiger and the Borrowing Paradigm in Early Orientalism

Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) laid the systematic foundation for the study of Jewish influence on Islam through his influential dissertation, *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?* (1833). His work, born out of the context of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the 19th-century Orientalist tradition, proposes that a large amount of Qur'anic material—which includes theological doctrine, law, prophetic stories, and even narrative details—comes directly and fragmentarily from Rabbinic Jewish sources, particularly the Talmud and Midrash (Geiger, 1898). Geiger argues that the Prophet Muhammad, described as a passive borrower, had gathered these elements from his interactions with the Jewish community in the Hijaz. The methodology is highly textual and comparative, relying on the identification of lexical and thematic parallels to establish direct causal relationships. Geiger's work represents an early paradigm that viewed Islam as a derivative of earlier monotheistic religions, reflecting the intellectual and

theological hierarchy prevalent in European discourse at the time, where non-Christian Abrahamic religions were often positioned as less original variants (Heschel, 1998).

Geiger's legacy is significant yet problematic. On the one hand, he succeeded in diverting academic attention to the deep connection between the two traditions and opening up a corpus of comparative questions that would shape the study of Islam for centuries. On the other hand, its methodological framework contains fatal weaknesses. First, Geiger assumes Muhammad's direct access to *the* written Rabbinic text in a predominantly oral culture, thus ignoring the mechanisms of oral transmission, folklore, and religious knowledge that are widespread (*common lore*) in Late Antiquity (Reynolds, 2018). Second, the approach is highly reductionist and linear (source→recipient), failing to consider the possibility of *shared traditions* or independent sources. Third, his analysis is loaded with Orientalist biases that view Islam as a "secondary religion" (*Sekundärreligion*), a perspective that obscures the autonomy and theological agency of the Qur'an (Said, 1978). Nevertheless, Geiger's position as a pioneer is undeniable, and his "borrowing" thesis became a point of reference—either to be confirmed or criticized—for almost all subsequent scholars in this field.

2.2. The Evolution and Criticism of the 20th Century: From Classical Orientalism to Historical Criticism

The post-Geiger generation of Orientalists, such as Ignaz Goldziher and Theodor Nöldeke, generally strengthened and refined the paradigm of influence, albeit with different nuances. Goldziher, in his work *Muhammedanische Studien* (1889-1890), situated Islam within a broader Semitic context, acknowledging the complex interaction with both Judaism and Christianity, while retaining the concepts of adaptation and assimilation. Nöldeke, in his *Geschichte des Qurāns* (1860), provided a strong philological foundation for the study of the Qur'an, but within a chronological framework that still assumed developments heavily influenced by external contacts. Scholars such as Charles Cutler Torrey, in *The Jewish Foundation of Islam* (1933), pushed this argument further, tracing the origins of the Qur'an almost exclusively to Jewish literature and legends. This period marked the culmination of what could be called the "classical borrowing paradigm" in Orientalism, which emphasized Islam's dependence on earlier traditions (Waardenburg, 2003).

However, the second half of the 20th century witnessed a sharp methodological shift and profound criticism of this approach. Scholars such as John Wansbrough in *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation* (1977) radically challenge traditional historical assumptions. He argues that the Qur'an is the product of a long, communal, and editorial development within a wider monotheistic community; therefore, it is impossible to attribute it solely to the historical figure of Muhammad in 7th-century Arabia. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, in *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (1977), propose a highly controversial reconstruction of early Islamic history. However, their lasting contribution is a harsh critique of the scarcity of non-Muslim contemporary sources and an emphasis on the need for a more critical methodology. These criticisms, although often rejected in their extreme conclusions, succeeded in deconstructing the certainties of the old Orientalist narrative and paved the way for a new approach that was more careful to the source and more sensitive to the context of the formation of early Islamic communities (Berg, 2000).

2.3. Contemporary Paradigm: Intertextuality and the Religious Milieu of the Late Antique

Today, the field of Qur'an study has shifted significantly from the paradigm of "borrowing" to one of "intertextuality" and "common milieu." The key concept is to place the Qur'an firmly within the religious and intellectual world of Late Antiquity (c. 200-700 AD), a period marked by the intensity of exchanges, polemics, and synthesis between Judaism, Christianity, and various other traditions (Brown, 2013). In this framework, the similarities between the Qur'an and Biblical or Rabbinic literature are not seen as evidence of dependence, but rather as an indication of participation in a broad and shared religious *discourse*. Angelika Neuwirth's pioneering work, particularly *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity* (2019), emphasizes how the Qur'an actively "speaks" with, reshapes, and

rearticulates themes, languages, and literary forms (such as psalmic discourse or apocalyptic imagery) that are common in this environment, thus affirming its status as a holy book *of and for* Late Antiquity.

Other contemporary scholars have developed more specific intertextual models for categorizing the Qur'anic involvement. Sidney H. Griffith, in *The Bible in Arabic* (2013), demonstrates how the Qur'an emerged in a context where biblical stories were already widely circulated in Arabic, often in oral form or through free translations, and how the Qur'an claimed authority over these narratives. Gabriel Said Reynolds, in *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext* (2010), introduces a very useful analytical framework that distinguishes between *continuity*, *contestation*, and *correction* in the Qur'an's relationship to previous traditions. This approach allows for a more nuanced analysis that acknowledges both continuity and deliberate theological differences and innovations. Similarly, collective studies such as *The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity* (ed. Holtzman, Rippin, & Tesei, 2019) explore how the Qur'an proactively reforms and renegotiates monotheistic legacies. This new paradigm does not deny the existence of relationships, but interprets them as dialogical, creative, and often polemic relationships within a *shared religious and cultural milieu*, thus freeing the study of the Qur'an from the simple dichotomy between "originality" and "dependence" (El-Badawi, 2014).

3. Methods

3.1 Material Objects

The material objects of this research are the three main corpus of texts. First, Abraham Geiger's *Judaism and Islam* (1898) represents the early Orientalist paradigm. Second, the text of the Qur'an is in a standard critical edition. Third, pre-Islamic Jewish literature, such as the Tanakh, Talmud, and Midrashim, serves as the main reference for Geiger's parallel claims (Geiger, 1898; Reynolds, 2018).

3.2 Research Design

The research uses a qualitative design with historical-hermeneutic approaches and intertextual analysis. This approach was chosen to critically evaluate Geiger's claims by considering the historical context of text production, the dynamics of oral culture, and the dialogical dimension in intertextual relations (Neuwirth, 2019; Griffith, 2013).

3.3 Data Sources

Primary data sources include Geiger's original texts, the Qur'an, and rabbinic literature. Secondary sources include classical orientalist works (Goldziher, Nöldeke) and contemporary studies (Neuwirth, 2019; Reynolds, 2018; Griffith, 2013), which provide an intertextual analytical framework and critique of orientalism.

3.4 Data collection techniques

Data collection was conducted through systematic literature reviews. This technique involves identifying, recording, and categorizing Geiger's key arguments based on thematic categories (theology, law, narrative), as well as collecting secondary literature related to *late antique* contexts and methodological criticism (Griffith, 2013; Reynolds, 2010).

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis uses comparative-intertextual methods. Geiger's claims are mapped and compared with Qur'anic and Rabbinic texts to assess their validity, then re-evaluated through the lens of intertextuality theory and the concept of *shared narrative networks* in the milieu of late antiquity (Neuwirth, 2019; Reynolds, 2010).

4. Results

4.1. Parallel Documentation of Narrative and Law between the Qur'an and Rabbinic Literature according to Geiger

Abraham Geiger systematically collected hundreds of parallel points between the Qur'an and pre-Islamic Jewish literature. In the realm of theological doctrine, Geiger (1898) observed that concepts such as destiny (*qadar*), the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāmah*), and the description of heaven/hell share similarities with concepts in Rabbinic literature, albeit with differing emphases. In the realm of law, he identifies parallels in food law (the prohibition of pigs and carcasses), the practice of fasting (the day of Ashura), inheritance law, and the rule of marriage, which, according to Islam, was adopted from the Jewish legal tradition. Furthermore, Geiger noted similarities in the laws of worship, such as the direction of the initial qibla to Jerusalem and the provision on prayer, which he considered to be evidence of direct influence (Geiger, 1898). Contemporary studies using the digital humanities approach have confirmed the existence of a dense lexical and thematic network between the Qur'an and earlier Semitic textual traditions, reinforcing Geiger's basic observation of this textual proximity (Bodendorfer, 2018).

In the realm of the stories of the prophets (*qisas al-anbiyā'*), Geiger's documentation is the most detailed. The narrative of Adam's creation, the story of Cain and Abel (Qabil and Abil), Noah's Flood, Abraham's sacrifice, and the story of Joseph, Moses, and Solomon are carefully traced by Geiger and attributed to the versions found in the Midrash and Aggadah. Specific examples include details of the raven teaching Cain to bury Abel, the debate between the sun and the moon before Joseph, as well as the transfer of Queen Bilqis' throne to Solomon. Geiger argues that many of these narrative details, which are not found in the canonical version of the Old Testament, have a clear equivalent in the post-Biblical Jewish exegesis tradition (Geiger, 1898). Recent philological research, such as that conducted by Pregill (2019), continues to map these narrative parallels more comprehensively, suggesting that Geiger's identified corpus remains a valid empirical foothold for comparative studies.

However, Geiger's documentation also shows significant limitations. He focuses almost exclusively on parallels with the Jewish *rabbinic* tradition, often ignoring possible parallels with the Christian tradition (both canonical and apocryphal) or with the narratives circulating in the oral traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia. In addition, Geiger tends to present parallels as binary and static phenomena, without investigating the internal variations and developments within the Jewish tradition itself. The data collection is cumulative and categorical, designed to prove the thesis of "borrowing" rather than to explore the function or sociological context of those parallels in the recipient community (Schöller, 2010).

4.2. Methodological Evaluation of the Basic Assumptions of the Geiger Hypothesis

An analysis of Geiger's work reveals that his claims are based on several methodological assumptions that are not explicitly stated but are fundamental. The first and most important assumption is that the Prophet Muhammad had access to *written texts* of Rabbinic literature, such as the Babylonian Talmud or a particular collection of Midrash. Geiger argues that Muhammad "read" or "heard read" these texts, a view that reflects the literary bias of a 19th-century scholar (Geiger, 1898). Contemporary research in the field of oral history and the anthropology of communication in pre-Islamic Arabia empirically shows that the transmission of religious knowledge, including the stories of the prophets and legal norms, occurred primarily through oral channels, exchanges in markets, inter-community debates, and folklore, rather than through limited reading of written texts (Schoeler, 2009; Reynolds, 2018). This environment is characterized by *complex orality*, where narratives are fluid, contextual, and often multilingual.

The second assumption is the linearity and simplicity of cultural transfer. Geiger's model is highly mechanistic: an element (law, doctrine, narrative detail) exists in Source A (Rabbinic Judaism) and is then transferred, in whole or in part, to Recipient B (Muhammad/the Qur'an). This model overlooks the creative processes of retelling, reinterpretation, and polemics that characterize the interaction of religions during *the Late Antique period*. Nor does

he consider the possibility of intermediary sources or the existence of a *common lore* that had been widespread in the Near East for centuries before Islam and that was independently accessible to various communities (Griffith, 2013). Consequently, Geiger's analysis often fails to distinguish between "direct influence", "shared inheritance", and "polemic response".

Third, Geiger's assumptions are built on hierarchical orientalist biases. It implicitly places Jewish tradition as a static, complete, and authoritative source, while Islam is positioned as a passive and derivative recipient. This perspective obscures the way the Qur'an actively *uses* known narratives to establish new authority, correct opposing theological claims, or negotiate its own community identity. For example, when noting the similarities in the story of Moses, Geiger does not note the shift in the Qur'anic emphasis on aspects of Moses' prophetic universalism and his rejection of the claims of the exclusivity of the Children of Israel, which are significant theological differences (Reynolds, 2010). Thus, Geiger's methodology is not only technically problematic because it ignores the verbal context, but also epistemologically biased because it frames intertextual relationships as one-way power relations.

4.3. Parallel Remapping in the Framework of the Late Antique Milieu and Intertextuality

When the parallel data Geiger collected was remapped not in the framework of "borrowing" but in the context of Late Antiquity's *"shared narrative network"*, a different pattern emerged. Evidence from archaeology, inscriptions, and literature from the period suggests that the Arabian Peninsula was not an isolated island, but an integral part of the Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds, connected by trade routes, tribal displacement, and religious interactions (Bowersock, 2017). The Jewish community, Christianity (in its various sects, such as the Nestorians and Monophysites), and the indigenous religious groups of Arabia coexisted and interacted with one another. In this context, Biblical narratives, prophetic figures, and monotheistic legal discourse have become part of *the widely circulated religious lingua franca*.

An intertextual analysis of Geiger's specific parallel points shows that the Qur'an often does not simply replicate, but *operates within* this pre-existing discourse space. For example, the Qur'an's reference to "those who break their promises" (e.g. in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:100) or "deviation of the Children of Israel" does not necessarily refer to one particular Rabbinic text, but is part of a repertoire of intra-monotheistic polemics common in late antiquity, which was also used by Christian groups against the Jews and vice versa (Griffith, 2008). Similarly, the narrative details in the stories of the prophets often reflect variants also found in apocryphal Christian literature or targum, suggesting that they originate from a broader and more fluid set of traditions than a single Jewish-Islamic transmission channel (Tottoli, 2002).

This remapping also reveals more complex patterns of Qur'anic engagement. Many of the parallels Geiger identified are in verses that are overall polemic or corrective to the claims or practices of contemporary Jewish communities. For example, while certain dietary laws may be similar, the context of their revelation in the Qur'an is often related to the differentiation of identity and purification of the nascent Muslim community (Neuwirth, 2019). In other words, material similarity does not imply similarity of meaning or function. The data show that the Qur'an is involved in a process of selective rearticulation and reauthorization of the narrative and legal materials available in its *milieu*. This process, which can be termed *scripturalization in situ*, is characteristic of the formation of sacred texts in a competitive and pluralistic environment, as evidenced in the study of canonization in the *Late Antique* period more broadly (Luxenberg, 2007; but for a methodological critique, see Böwering, 2008).

5. Discussion

The results of this study show a dialectical relationship between the empirical data collected by Abraham Geiger and his problematic interpretive framework. On the one hand, a comparative analysis of the text confirms the existence of a dense and substantive parallel network between the narrative, legal, and theological concepts in the Qur'an and those found in pre-Islamic Jewish literature, particularly the Rabbinic and Midrashic traditions (Geiger,

1898; Pregill, 2019). These findings confirm the value of Geiger's early heuristic work as a catalog of research questions. On the other hand, methodological evaluations reveal that Geiger's basic assumptions—access to written texts, linear transfer models, and hierarchical orientalist biases—are untenable when confronted with contemporary understandings of 7th-century Arabic oral culture (Schoeler, 2009) and the nature of religious-religious interaction in the *Late Antique* era (Bowersock, 2017). Remapping these parallels into the framework of a *shared narrative network* reveals a broader context in which these materials circulate as part of a shared religious discourse and where the Qur'an emerges as an active participant who rearticulates these materials for its own theological and community purposes (Neuwirth, 2019; Griffith, 2013).

Reflections on these findings highlight the ambivalence of Geiger's legacy in the historiography of Qur'anic studies. His indisputable contribution lies in his courage to undertake systematic studies across traditions, thus establishing one of the main pillars of Western academic study of Islam. Without initial comparative efforts, the question of the relationship of sacred texts in the Semitic environment probably would not have received such early and detailed attention. However, this legacy is weighed down by his deep methodological attachment to the 19th-century orientalist paradigm. The tendency to read all similarities as evidence of dependency and inferiority—a form of *intellectual dependency theory*—has instilled a long-standing bias in academic discourse (Said, 1978). The results of this study reflect the journey of the discipline itself: from the often reductionist phase of data collection and genealogical construction, to a more reflective phase that questions the categories, contexts, and politics of knowledge behind comparative analysis. Thus, Geiger's reassessment is not just a philological exercise, but also part of a broader critique of the epistemology of colonial humanities science.

An interpretation of the results of this study leads to the conclusion that the phenomenon of textual parallelism documented by Geiger is best understood as a manifestation of creative intertextuality within a shared late antique milieu, rather than as an indication of literary borrowing or dependence. The Qur'an, as evidenced in the analysis of specific parallel points, does not act as a *scribe* who copies, but as *an author* involved in the *process of scriptural negotiation* (Reynolds, 2010). This process involves three main identifiable mechanisms: selective continuity (picking up and confirming elements that fit its monotheistic message), polemic contestation (using the same narrative to refute claims of exclusivity or authority of other communities), and theological correction (reconstructing the story to eliminate elements deemed anthropomorphic, inappropriate, or contrary to the concept of universal apostolate and the absolute oneness of God). In other words, the similarity of narrative raw materials actually becomes a stage for the articulation of profound theological differences and the formation of new religious identities (Holtzman, Rippin, & Tesei, 2019). This interpretation shifts the center of gravity away from the question "*Where did it come from?*" to the question "*What is it for and how is it used?*", and who is more academically productive.

When compared to the corpus of contemporary studies, Geiger's approach seems to be in stark contrast. Geiger's "linear influence" model operates in both binary (source-recipient) and hierarchical (Jewish as the creative source, Muslim as the passive recipient) contexts. In contrast, the contemporary model of "intertextuality" (Neuwirth, 2019; Griffith, 2013) operates within a multidirectional network framework, viewing the Qur'an as a nodal point in a broader conversation. Similarly, while Geiger focuses almost exclusively on written textual transmission, scholars today emphasize oral and performative culture (Schoeler, 2009) as well as the sociological context of the formative community (Donner, 2010) as determining factors. This comparison also shows an evolution in dealing with parallels: Geiger sees it as a *smoking gun* to prove derivation, while Reynolds (2010) sees it as a *locus* for analyzing rhetorical strategies and theological negotiations. These fundamental differences are not merely methodological but paradigmatic in nature, encompassing distinct understandings of the essence of religion, sacred texts, and cultural interactions. The findings in this study align fully with the contemporary paradigm, as Geiger's own data—when freed from its interpretive framework—actually reinforce the picture of an interconnected and dynamic religious milieu.

The implications of the repositioning of the Geiger hypothesis are threefold. First, for the study of the Qur'an, it emphasizes the need to abandon the outdated dichotomy of "original vs. imitation" and adopt a fully integrated approach that situates the text within the context of its Late Antique discourse field, utilizing the tools of

intertextuality, narrative criticism, and oral history. Second, for the comparative study of religion, these findings offer a model for understanding the relationship between biblical traditions not as genealogical ancestry relationships, but as conversations and negotiations in a shared discursive space. Second, for Jewish-Muslim relations, this repositioning can be the foundation for a more balanced dialogue, one that acknowledges the heritage of a shared narrative without claiming superiority or dependence on either side. The future research agenda must be multidisciplinary. A more in-depth micro-philological study of specific parallels is needed to map its variants across the Semitic corpus. Historical anthropological research on the mechanisms of oral transmission in the Hijaz needs to be encouraged. Additionally, the digital humanities approach can be applied to model narrative and lexical networks more broadly. Above all, future research should actively integrate non-textual sources, such as archaeology and epigraphy of pre-Islamic Arabia, to reconstruct a more concrete socio-religious context. This will enable our understanding of the dynamics of the interaction that gave birth to the Qur'an to be closer to its historical reality (Shoemaker, 2022).

6. Conclusion

This research resulted in two important findings that are interrelated. First, a critical analysis of Abraham Geiger's work confirms that his observations regarding the narrative, legal, and theological parallels between the Qur'an and Rabbinic literature have a strong empirical basis. The parallel catalogues he compiled remain a valuable starting point for comparative studies. However, the second and more crucial finding is that the interpretive framework of "*borrowing*" that Geiger constructed to explain these parallels is methodologically and epistemologically flawed. Assumptions about access to written texts, linear and passive models of cultural transfer, and inherent Orientalist biases fail to capture the complexity of the 7th-century Arabian historical context and the dynamic nature of the formation of sacred texts. These findings suggest that the same data Geiger collected leads to a different conclusion: that these similarities are evidence of the Qur'an's participation in a *shared narrative network* typical of the *Late Antique period*.

The scientific contribution of this research is two-dimensional: historiographical and methodological. Historiographically, this article offers a nuanced reevaluation of Geiger's legacy, acknowledging his pioneering role while highlighting his paradigmatic limitations in the context of contemporary studies. Thus, the study bridges the legacy of classical Orientalism with a cutting-edge approach, offering a more balanced reading of one of the foundations of Western studies of Islam. Methodologically, this study demonstrates and strengthens the paradigm shift in Qur'an studies from the "*source-criticism*" and "*influence*" model to the "*intertextuality*" and "*historical contextualization*" model. His main contribution is to propose that the true value of Geiger's data lies in its ability to illustrate how the Qur'an creatively engages in the process of negotiation—through confirmation, contestation, and correction—of the monotheistic heritage in its environment, thus affirming the Qur'an's status as an autonomous and formative text.

Based on these findings and contributions, future research is recommended to develop a more integrative multidisciplinary agenda. First, an in-depth, micro-comparative philological study of specific parallel clusters (e.g., the Moses or Abraham cycles) is required, utilizing the entire corpus of Late Antique texts (Jewish, Christian, and others), as well as intertextual methodologies, to map their variations and adaptation strategies more precisely. Second, research must aggressively integrate archaeological findings, epigraphs, and manuscript studies of pre-Islamic Arabia to build a more concrete and empirical reconstruction of socio-religious contexts, rather than relying solely on textual sources. Third, historical anthropological approaches and oral communication theories should be applied to understand the mechanisms of idea and narrative transmission in Hijaz society. By embracing this complexity, future research will not only provide a richer understanding of the emergence of the Qur'an but also contribute to a more general theoretical model of the interaction between scriptural traditions and canon formation in an interconnected world.

References

- Bakhos, C. (2014). *The Family of Abraham: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Interpretations*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674736319>
- Berg, H. (2000). *The development of exegesis in early Islam: The authenticity of Muslim literature from the Formative Period*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203454342>
- Bodendorfer, G. (2018). Digital humanities and the study of classical religious texts: The case of the Qur'ān. *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture*, 7(1), 1-23. <https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-00701001>
- Böwering, G. (2008). Recent research on the construction of the Qur'ān. In G. S. Reynolds (Ed.), *The Qur'ān in its historical context* (pp. 70-87). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203939604>
- Bowersock, G. W. (2017). *The crucible of Islam*. Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674979083>
- Brown, P. (2013). **The rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and diversity, A.D. 200-1000** (10th anniversary rev. ed.). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118272188>
- Donner, F. M. (2010). *Muhammad and the believers: At the origins of Islam*. Harvard University Press.
- El-Badawi, E. I. (2014). *The Qur'an and the Aramaic Gospel traditions*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771707>
- Geiger, A. (1898). *Judaism and Islam* (F. M. Young, Trans.). Madras.
- Griffith, S. H. (2008). Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'an: The "Companions of the Cave" in Sūrat al-Kahf and in Syriac Christian Tradition. In G. S. Reynolds (Ed.), *The Qur'ān in its historical context* (pp. 109-137). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203939604>
- Griffith, S. H. (2013). *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400846580>
- Heschel, S. (1998). *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226329598.001.0001>
- Holtzman, L., Rippin, A., & Tesei, T. (Eds.). (2019). *The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity: Return to the Origins*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429425703>
- Holtzman, L., Rippin, A., & Tesei, T. (Eds.). (2019). *The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity: Return to the Origins*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429425703>
- Luxenberg, C. (2007). *The Syro-Aramaic reading of the Koran: A contribution to the decoding of the language of the Koran*. Verlag Hans Schiler.
- Neuwirth, A. (2019). *The Qur'an and Late Antiquity: A Shared Heritage*. (S. Wilder, Trans.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199928958.001.0001>
- Pregill, M. E. (2019). *The Hebrew Bible and the Quran: The problem of the Jewish 'influence' on Islam*. [Preprint]. Hcommons. <https://doi.org/10.17613/4dxn-yb83>
- Reynolds, G. S. (2010). *The Qur'ān and Its Biblical Subtext*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203856450>
- Reynolds, G. S. (Ed.). (2018). *The Qur'an in its Historical Context* (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315109640>
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.
- Schoeler, G. (2009). *The genesis of literature in Islam: From the aural to the read* (S. M. Toorawa, Trans.). Edinburgh University Press.

Schöller, M. (2010). Post-enlightenment academic study of the Qur'ān. In A. Rippin (Ed.), *The Islamic world* (pp. 285-302). Routledge.

Shoemaker, S. J. (2022). *Creating the Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Study*. University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520389031>

Tottoli, R. (2002). *Biblical prophets in the Qur'ān and Muslim literature*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203026443>

Waardenburg, J. (2003). *Muslims and others: Relations in context*. De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110200959>

