DIVINE KINGDOM IN SYRIAC MATTHEW AND THE QUR’ĀN

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1. INTRODUCTION

The “Christian influence” on the Qur’ān is a discourse which has involved many scholars. Richard Bell was among the first to explicitly discuss the Qur’ān’s earliest Christian environment.1 John Trimingham similarly addressed the issue of Christianity in pre-Islamic Arabia.2 The “Christian influence” discourse proved to be especially interesting, as well as controversial, with respect to Syriac, or more generally Aramaic.3 As a Nestorian Christian, Alphonse Mingana, had the advantage of being one of the first to specifically examine the Syriac-Christian influences on the Qur’ān.4 Many subsequent studies on the Qur’ān followed; some of these studies stressed the important role Syriac literature and religious expression played in shaping the Qur’ān,5 but most did little to take the Syriac milieu of the Qur’ān into account.6 More recently, Günter Lüling7 and subsequently Christoph

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2 John Trimingham, Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times (Beirut: Longman, 1979).

3 For purposes of this study the words Aramaic and Syriac will be used interchangeably.

4 Alphonse Mingana, Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur’ān (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1927).


7 Günter Lüling, A Challenge to Islam for Reformation: The Rediscovery and Reliable Recon-
Luxenberg,\(^8\) despite their very different techniques in “de-coding” the Qur’an, have re-constructed a pre-Canonical Christian Qur’an on a purely linguistic basis. Lüling’s claim that the Qur’an was originally a collection of Christian strophic hymns that later went through a series of Islamicizing editorial stages,\(^9\) and Luxenberg’s claim that the Qur’an was originally a Syriac Christian lectionary (Syriac qeryānā) largely misunderstood by traditional Muslim interpreters,\(^10\) have certainly been controversial.\(^11\) One concern regarding the methodologies of Lüling and Luxenberg is that both of them believe the Qur’an to be originally an entirely Christian document, with little regard for the Qur’an ‘as a literary text…that has to be de-coded and evaluated historically’.\(^12\) The other concern is that their studies, like Mingana before them,\(^13\) take the liberty of freely changing the canonical text of the Qur’an in order to forge unique interpretations to fit their argument. Despite these problems, some of their conclusions can nonetheless prove beneficial to this discourse. Thus, the present study addresses the Qur’anic verses more conservatively in tracing Christian elements. By reading select unchanged Qur’anic verses alongside verses of the Syriac version of Matthew’s Gospel,\(^14\) whole phrases or partial clauses appear to have the same origin. These parallels are especially distinct in verses discussing matters of divine kingdom. The present paper will examine some further evidence in this vein. And in acknowledging the vast and ambiguous applicability of words like “Christian” and “influence,” this study will ultimately better inform us, not that there were indeed theological and linguistic

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10 Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, p. 81.


12 Ibid., p. 7.


14 However, where variant readings (all of which are early) can further shed light on the canonical verse, they will be cited accordingly.
elements of Christian origin inherent in the milieu of the Qur’an, but what kind of Christian tendencies made up this milieu. However, the present study would rephrase the question of inquiry away from seeking “Christian influences” on the Qur’an to investigating the audience and milieu of the Qur’an. First, we set the historical foundation upon which to begin our analysis.

2. SYRO-ARABIA: HISTORY AND SOURCES

The Arabian and Aramaean spheres of the Near East demonstrated a close and fluid relationship in the 1st millennium BCE through the 4th-7th centuries CE. More specifically, this was so in the region dubbed “Syro-Arabia” (Appendix E). This region subsumes the Hijaz-Najd region, or Arabia and areas to the north, as far as northern Syria. Other scholars have acknowledged this geographical entity. In the extreme south of this region lie cities like Ta‘if and Mecca. In the extreme north is Edessa, the birthplace of Syriac. Even so, this is only one of several geographical constructions of the late antique Near East.

Long before Christianity and Islam, Syro-Arabia existed as a cohesive social entity – an amalgamation of Aramaean peasantry and Arabian nomads. This produced border dialects, neither fully Aramaic nor Arabic, but a blend of the two. Thus, an ideal paradigm exhibiting the mixed nature of Aramaic-Arabic speech and writing is clearly evident in some inscriptions, especially the Raqush Inscription dating back to 267 CE (Appendix G).

16 The 4th century is the time in which the Syrian Orthodox Church comes to flourish with such authors as Ephrem (d. 373 CE) and Aphrahat (d. 345 CE).
17 Luxenberg, Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran, p. 15; Tringham, Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times, p. 41. Not only does Tringham talk about the “Syro-Arab Region”, he also mentions the “Aramaic-Arab Peoples” (cf. pp. 7-20).
Syro-Arabia was bound together by, among other things, political alliances. Such alliances were not pacts exclusive to Aramaean and Arabian tribes. Other Semites, such as Assyrians, Phoenicians, and Israelites, were part of such alliances as well. Syro-Arabia was also linked by kinship ties through marriage, and general ties created by nomadism. The region was also perpetually connected through commercial relations. In addition, religious cults, belief systems, and institutions were constantly renewing and reinforcing social relations. These had many forms, not the least of whose examples were the spread of various pagan cults by Arab tribes, the conversion of certain Arab tribes to Judaism, and the Christian proselytizing of nomad Arabs by Palestinian and Syrian missionaries. Centuries of Aramaean-Arabian intermingling evolved into the intimate relationship between Syriac speaking Christian groups and the tribal and urban centers of Arabia, like the Hijaz.

Christianity became widespread in Syro-Arabia long before the 7th century CE. Christian teaching or scripture (whether oral or written) was therefore widely circulated therein. The Qur’an as well was produced in this Syro-Arabian realm. Therefore, it is with little surprise that one finds parallels in Aramaic and Arabic canonical religious expression at the advent of

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26 Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, pp. 243-255. Cf. also Galatians 1,17.
Islam. This is generally why the Gospel of Matthew in Syriac bears much in common with the idiom of the Qurʿān.

Unfortunately, no original Aramaic account exists from the time-period of Jesus and his earliest Palestinian ministry. The theory of an Aramaic origin to the Syriac Gospels is a matter of debate. Robert Murray’s Symbols of Church and Kingdom is informative regarding not only Syrian Christian origins, but early Christian Aramaic language, theology and institutions. Since Syriac is a dialect of Aramaic, Murray proposes, as other scholars before him, that some passages claimed to be the teachings of Jesus are better replicated in the Syriac translation of the Gospels than the Greek. Thus the Syriac Gospels, and especially Matthew, provide the hope and rare opportunity of being more precise than the Greek text itself.

The Diatessaron by Tatian (d. c. 165 CE), being perhaps the earliest translation of Syriac Gospels, is only available in an Arabic translation as the Syriac version is lost. The earliest extant Aramaic translations of the Gospels are called the Old Syriac Gospels, of which there are two, Sinaiticus and Curetonius. The New Testament Peshitta is a 4th-6th century Syriac revision of the Old Syriac Gospels.


31 Francis Burkitt, Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire: Two Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Dublin (Glasgow: Cambridge University Press, 1899), pp. 17-21. Burkitt states this generally, as he was an avid proponent of the supremacy of Semitic (Aramaic) translations of Christian scripture.

32 Brock, The Bible in the Syriac Tradition, p. 34. Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, pp. 4, 193-194. He prefers, in this example, the Syriac rab baytā (‘master of the house’) to the Greek translation.

33 Whether the Gospels were “originally” written in Greek or Aramaic is not significant herein. What is of greater import is that many critical passages of Matthew especially, such as the Lord’s Prayer, the Beatitudes and the parable of the Mustard Seed, exhibit some sort of rhymed prose. For an in depth analysis of such phenomenon, cf. Raphael Lancaster, Was the New Testament Really Written in Greek? (published privately, 2006). Furthermore this is not unlike the saj’ of the Qurʿān, where the concluding rhyme of the longer Qurʿānic verses, what Neuwirth calls “cadenza,” is an oral mechanism to delineate the ending of a verse. Cf. Neuwirth, ‘Qurʿān and History’, p. 12.

larly believed to be a slightly earlier translation of the Greek gospels. The Aramaic designation *pshitta* (Arabic *baṣṭab*; “simple/vulgar”) comes into effect much later in the 9th century. Nevertheless, the Peshitta remains the official testament of Semitic-Aramaic Christian tradition. Variant readings of the Aramaic gospels are available in George Kiraz’s *Comparative Edition to the Syriac Gospels*, which provides the text for all the extant Syriac Gospels: the Sinaiticus (4th century), Curetonius (4th-5th century), Peshitta (4th-6th century), and Harklean (7th century; revised 12th-13th century) versions.

Whilst the early Greek Church was linguistically and culturally estranged from the atmosphere in which Jesus lived, the communities of Syro-Arabia inherently shared his native Aramaic idiom. The early Greco-Roman world that came to accept Jesus as the Christ, was dependant on the Greek Gospel accounts to familiarize itself with and understand Jesus of Nazareth. Their Syro-Arabian counterparts would come to know him through daily custom and common speech, not least because Arabs and Syrians regularly encountered Jesus personally in first-century Galilee.

Regarding the content of the New Testament, aside from Matthew’s Gospel, certain passages of Mark and Luke likewise resemble verses of the Qur’an. This is a result of Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s inter-relatedness due to the Biblical source reconstruction of their content. Mark is popularly accepted as the earliest of these three “Synoptic” Gospels. All the Synoptic Gospels are believed to have been authored sometime in the late first century CE. The author of Matthew is believed to have drawn upon material from three sources: (1) Mark; (2) a unique source called M; and (3) a source shared with Luke called Q. Matthew used these sources to create a distinctive portrayal of Jesus as a new Moses who provides the authoritative Syriac manuscripts date from the 4th century. Rabbula (d. 435 CE) has customarily been credited with translating-transcribing the Peshitta into its present state, and destroying variant copies.

35 Burkitt, *Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire*, p. 17.
37 Burkitt, *Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire*, p. 25.
38 Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, pp. 41-41.
interpretation of the Jewish Law. Thus, Matthew’s Gospel can therefore not only be considered a Christian text, but a Jewish one as well. Furthermore, first-century CE Judaism which contributed to the Gospel of Matthew had been an Aramaic religious phenomenon for six centuries. The post-Exilic shift of Near Eastern Jewry from using Hebrew to using the Near Eastern lingua franca, Aramaic, in the 5th century BCE, settled immigrant Jewish communities more widely in Syro-Arabia.

Thus, if Matthew is the most Mosaic, or more generally Jewish, of the canonical Gospels, it stands also as the most Syro-Arabian. Matthew’s ascription of an Old Testament-like genealogy of Jesus at the opening of his account, his restraint from stating “God” and substituting it with “Lord,” placing Jesus’ sermon on a “mount” analogous to that of Moses’, and insistence that Jesus came to “fulfill the Law” are all examples of his Jewish, Syro-Arabian predisposition. Additionally the Gospel of Matthew was likely the most widely read in the late antique world.

Regarding the Qur’an, elements of its diverse and complex origins have been studied for some time by Muslim authors. Books like Kitāb al-maṣāḥif46 by Ibn Abī-Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 888 CE) are evidence that the early Muslims were aware that the written text of the Qur’an, whilst divine revelation, was as a text subject to human handling. This is one factor that led some prominent medieval Muslim scholars, like Abū Maṣūr al-Jawāliqi47 (d. 1145 CE) and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūtī48 (d. 1505 CE), to dedicate separate monographs to the study of the foreign vocabulary of the Qur’an. Along with this foreign vocabulary came foreign contexts: Judeo-Christian scrip-

41 Ibid., p. 9.
42 Matthew 1.
43 Matthew 5-7.
44 Matthew 5,17.
tural verses, apocryphal narratives, and old Syro-Arabian rhymes. This diverse context constituted a critical part of the pre-Islamic jāḥiliyyah, and therefore the Qur’ān.

Insofar as the classical Muslim interpreters understood or misunderstood (as Lüling and Luxenberg often claim) such foreign vocabulary, consulting the tafsīr literature is an essential foundation. Yet, due to the vastness of the tafsīr literature and limited scope of this study, we shall suffice with using those of Ṭabarî (838-923) and Qurṭubî (d. 1273).

In addition, Abraham Katsh’s Judaism in Islam, has the special status of being principally a ‘Jewish-tafsīr’ of the Qur’ān. Tracing various Qur’ānic passages back to Talmudic and Biblical references, such a feature is most beneficial in comparing the Qur’ān with a ‘Jewish Gospel’ like Matthew.

Lastly, various collections of Syrian and north Arabian inscriptions are beneficial, insofar as they may expose the presence or absence of certain key words pertaining to divine kingdom in Syro-Arabia. Such documentary evidence can at times explain how words, and therefore ideas concerning divine kingdom, were exchanged in late-antique (c.4th-7th centuries CE) Syro-Arabia.

3. DIVINE KINGDOM

The Syriac word malkūṭā meaning kingdom, sovereignty, reign, is used in the Gospel of Matthew 51 times in total. All instances of the word refer in

49 This may not go back exclusively to Arab pagan jāḥili poetry, but maybe even go back to Syriac Christian hymns.
50 Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarî, Tafsīr al-Ṭabarî (s.l.: Wizārat al-Shuʿūn al-Īslāmiyyah wa al-Awqāf wa al-Da’wah wa al-Īrshād, s.d.). Along with Qurṭubî’s text, this is an electronic edition. Therefore instead of page numbers, I shall refer to sura and verse citations.
51 Abū ‘Abd-Allāḥ al-Qurṭubî, al-Jāmi’ li abkām al-Qur’ān (s.l.: Wizārat al-Shuʿūn al-Īslāmiyyah wa al-Awqāf wa al-Da’wah wa al-Īrshād, s.d.).
52 Abraham Katsh, Judaism in Islam.
54 Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, p. 240.
some manner to the divine kingdom ushered in by Jesus. This divine kingdom has two names in Syriac: *malkūtā dashmāyā*, “the kingdom of heaven”; and *malkūtā dalāhā*, “the kingdom of God”. Unlike the other Synoptic Gospels, the latter is much more sparingly used, as it occurs only five times. This may be ascribed to the author of Matthew’s Jewish background and his subsequent reluctance to overuse the word *alāhā*, God. Thus, to the author of Matthew, “heaven” is a metaphor for “God”. In the two instances where *malkūtā* refers to worldly kingdoms, these instances occur in parables that Jesus uses to contrast the divine kingdom with the fractious kingdoms of men. Therefore, in Matthew kingdom appears exclusively in conjunction with the divine, whether it be God directly or heaven as an equal but alternate divine representative. This is furthermore, a direct implementation of the classical Syriac meaning of kingdom. Similar phrases including *malkūtā* occur in earlier Syriac literature like the *Odes of Solomon*. The meaning of the word in the *Odes* may be construed, depending on the original author’s intent, as a heavenly and/or apocalyptic kingdom. This duality in meaning is also made clear in Matthew, as Jesus preaches his fundamental message, “repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near”. It is difficult to discern exactly what the author of Matthew means in this verse, but the apocalyptic overtone is clear nonetheless. Moreover, this apocalyptic theme is ostensibly a product of the still closely inter-related Judeo-Christian community of the 1st–2nd century CE. This is especially the case in the Targum literature, where the divine kingdom is directly related to *malkā mshīḥā*, “the King Messiah”. Consequently, the Gospel writers, and especially Matthew, retain this Jewish notion.

Similarly, the phrase *malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-ard*, “the kingdom of the heavens and the earth”, occurs twice in the Qur’an, and *malakūt kull
"shay, “the kingdom of all things” occurs twice as well. As in Matthew, the notion of kingdom here is divine. The word malakūt is clearly a form of the Aramaic construct noun malkūt, and unlike mulk (see below) which can be associated with either God or human beings, exclusively connotes divine kingdom. Rabin adds that the word, and all Arabic words ending in -ūt, were an archaic absolute state preserved in the dialect of the Hijazi Jews in Arabia. Additionally, early attestation of mlkt is supported by ancient north Arabian inscriptions. However, how the ancient north Arabian mlkt was vocalized is of secondary importance, for it does not exclusively denote a female noun based on the final t, like “queen”. Both Thamudic and Safaitic inscriptions use the word to mean a variety of abstract nouns, some of which are, “possession,” and “royalty”, which are furthermore at least once used in conjunction with “force”. These connotations are virtually synonymous with “kingdom”. This would further establish the antiquity of a word like malakūt, as one form of the ancient mlkt, in the Syro-Arabian region as a notion of kingdom. At any rate, the word, in its –ūt form, seems to have entered the Qur’ān from an Aramaic source. Mingana adds that the author of the Qur’ān adopted the word explicitly from Matthew’s “kingdom of heaven”.

The word mulk occurs 38 times in the Qur’ān, but with different meanings. At least one of these meanings does indeed coincide with that of the Qur’ānic malakūt, and ultimately Matthew’s malkūtā. This is especially evident in the common phrase mulk al-samāwāt wa al-ard, “kingdom of the heavens and the earth”. In passing, Lüling asserts that the unification of

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69 Ibid., p. 225.
71 Mingana, Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur’ān, p. 86.
72 Two of these meanings are “authority” (Qur’ān 2:247) and “power” (Qur’ān 2:248, 251; 3:26).
73 Qur’ān 2:107; 5:40; 5:120; 9:116; etc.
the ummah by the Arabs in the 7th century was the implementation of “the kingdom of God on earth”.\textsuperscript{74} This explanation is only possible if we consider the pre-Islamic Arabians to be Christians as Lüling does. Katsh provides a more likely explanation, given the volume of rabbinical teachings in the Qur’ân, by relating the phrase to the Midrash.\textsuperscript{75} Furthermore, this phrase is evidently no different in meaning than malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-ard. Thus, the early Qur’ân interpreters were correct, as far as the mentioned verses are concerned, in equating malakūt with the Arabic infinitive mulk, sovereignty.\textsuperscript{76}

Furthermore, as will be evident throughout this study, the expression, \([X] \text{al-samāwāt wa al-ard,}\) is a formulaic expression in the Qur’ân embodying divine kingdom. We thus read, rabb\textsuperscript{77} al-samāwāt wa al-ard, “Lord of the heavens and the earth”. Likewise in Matthew, when speaking about God as the master of divine kingdom, Jesus explicitly includes the earth in the expression, mārā dashmāyā wadarā, “Lord/Master of the heavens and the earth”.\textsuperscript{78} Ultimately, the above Qur’ânic formula and Matthew 11,25 likely originated from Hebrew scripture. This is explained in the Psalms, where it states for example, ‘The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it – you have founded them’.\textsuperscript{79}

Still it remains striking that the Qur’ânic divine kingdom always encompasses both the heavens and the earth, whereas Matthew excludes the latter (save for Matthew 11,25). Perhaps this is so because the author of Matthew considered the heavens as the more significant component worthy of mention. Lüling suggests by etymological derivation that smw, literally “sky”, in the Semitic languages means, “that one which causes water” (i.e. rain).\textsuperscript{80} The

\textsuperscript{74} Lüling, A Challenge to Islam for Reformation, p. 358.
\textsuperscript{75} Katsh, Judaism in Islam, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{76} Tabari, Tafsir, Q 6:75; Qurṭubi, al-Jāmi’, Q 6:75; M. Plessner, EI², s.v. “Mulk”.
\textsuperscript{77} Whilst Jeffery and Lüling ultimately trace the Qur’ânic usage of rabb to Aramaic, each scholar derives its meaning differently. Jeffery prefers the more conventional meaning, “lord” or “master”. Cf. Jeffery, The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ân, pp. 136-137. Lüling, on the other hand, prefers “leader” or even “archangel”. Cf. Lüling, A Challenge to Islam for Reformation, pp. 72-73. The Qur’ânic use of rabb, however, most resembles that which Murray claims when speaking about the Aramaic term rab baytā (Arabic rabb al-bayt), “master of the house”. Cf. Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, pp. 193-194; see also Luxenberg, Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran, p. 166.
\textsuperscript{78} Matthew 11,25.
\textsuperscript{79} Psalms 89,11. Cf. also Psalms 108,5; 135,6; Deuteronomy 10,14.
\textsuperscript{80} Lüling, A Challenge to Islam for Reformation, p. 460 n. 31.
great dependence of rural Near Eastern communities on rain may itself have been sufficient for the author of Matthew to express divine kingdom. On the other hand, perhaps his exclusion of the earth may be attributed to a verse in the Gospel of John where Jesus says, ‘my kingdom is not of this world’. In other words, God’s kingdom includes all existence (the heavens and the earth), but Jesus’ share is limited to the heavens. This is critical. For the purpose of Matthew’s kingdom of heaven is to designate a religious community on earth such as a church, or at least the symbolic heavenly authority over such a community. The divine kingdom of the Qur’ān on the other hand, is more basically the manifestation of God’s absolute possession, royal power, and authority. It therefore also lacks the immediate apocalyptic connotation of Matthew and earlier Judeo-Christian texts. Therefore, whilst Matthew’s malkūtā dashmāyā and the Qur’ān’s malakūt al-samāwāt wa al-ard are philologically and textually related, they serve two relatively different purposes.

In another verse of Matthew, Jesus tells his disciple Peter: lak etal qlīde dmalḵūtā dashmāyā, ‘I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven’. It was rather common in the Semitic world, and therefore in Syro-Arabia, for keys to symbolize the “binding and loosening…of legal or moral authority”. Matthew is no exception. The key (Syriac absolute qlīd or iqlīd; from Greek kleis) symbolizes “authority”, a concept that shall be discussed in more depth shortly. The use of keys in this manner, especially after the writing of Matthew, is carried on in Syriac by prolific fourth-century Syriac authors like Ephrem and Aphrahat. Its influence was even more far reaching, as it appears in the Qur’ān. For it states about God, labu maqālīd al-samāwāt wa al-ard, ‘He possesses the keys of the heavens and the earth’. Qur’ān interpreters, mu’ārabāt scholars, and western scholars, take maqālīd as an Arabic broken plural of iqlīd. By using the word maqālīd, as opposed

81 John 18,36.
82 Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, pp. 240-241.
83 M. Plessner, s.v. “Mulk”, in Encyclopedia of Islam.
84 Matthew 16,9.
85 Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, p. 182.
to the standard Arabic word for keys, *mafaqīth*\(^8^9\), the verse of the Qur’ān seems to be directly adopting Matthew’s notion of “keys to the kingdom of heaven”, but reading the plural, “the heavens and the earth”. This also informs us about the difference in the meaning of each verse. In Matthew, the verse explicitly entrusts divine authority (symbolized by keys) to a man, the disciple Peter. This further agrees with another verse in Matthew, that Peter was the foundation, literally “rock”, of the church.\(^9^0\) The Qur’ān, in contrast and perhaps even in response to this Christian position, never explicitly grants the intermediacy of divine authority to any human being, but rather keeps it with God alone.\(^9^1\)

In the Gospel of Matthew, the divine kingdom is to be inherited by those at God’s right hand. It states, *yartū malkūtā da’tidā, ‘they will Inherit the kingdom prepared’.\(^9^2\) In this instance, the divine kingdom comes close to resembling a paradise – not unlike the paradise of the Qur’ān.\(^9^3\) Yet the divine kingdom is not the only realm that is inherited in Matthew, so is the earth. It states, *tūbayhin lamkikā dhānūn nertūn lar’ā, ‘blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth’.\(^9^4\) This verse is one of the Beatitudes (from Latin *beatudo*, “happiness”).\(^9^5\) The other gospels never mention the inheritance of a kingdom or the earth, but rather “eternal life”.\(^9^6\) In spite of this, the actual interpretation of this Beatitude is immaterial. What is of more significance, is the trace(s) of it that we can find in the style of certain Qur’ānic verses.

Thus we read in the Qur’ān, *al-ard yarituhū ‘ibādī al-ṣāliḥūn, ‘the earth shall be inherited by My good servants’.\(^9^7\) Although this Qur’ānic verse does not match Matthew’s text as closely, it is from among those that Mingana considers related to the content of Matthew’s Beatitude in terms of its sentence structure.\(^9^8\) In other words, there is a semblance in ideas, which in this

\(^{89}\) Ţabarī makes this equation as well in his *Ṭafīr*, Q 39:63.

\(^{90}\) Matthew 16,18.


\(^{92}\) Matthew 25:34.

\(^{93}\) Qur’ān 7:49; 56:27-31, 90-91; compare with Matthew 2,26.

\(^{94}\) Matthew 5,5.

\(^{95}\) An alternate translation to the Beatitude style of writing is, ‘happy are…’, instead of ‘blessed are…’

\(^{96}\) Mark 10,17; Luke 10,25; 18,18.

\(^{97}\) Qur’ān 21:105.

\(^{98}\) Mingana, *Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur’ān*, pp. 91-93.
case goes back to the Hebrew Bible. For earlier in the verse, the Qurʾān acknowledges this maxim as coming from previous scripture (dhikr), in which case it may refer to the literature of the Prophets or Psalms. For example Psalm 2:8 states, ‘I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession’. Therefore, the earth, as a divinely gifted or inherited reward, is a motif of Hebrew scripture, one that was likely known by the authors of Matthew and the Qurʾān. What makes the Qurʾānic verse more closely related to that of Matthew (and less so the Psalms) is the common use of the root yrt, to inherit. The root yrt is used in the same manner in earlier Syro-Arabian inscription will-testimonies left by kings and nobles for their heirs. This is primarily because many occurrences of the root yrt are used in conjunction with the name of a god and otherworldly phrases like, lyomat ʿālmā, ‘till eternity’. Another trace of Matthew’s Beatitude occurs in the Qurʾān as follows, ṭūbāḥ labūhūm, ‘blessed are they’. Although the root tyb, from which ṭūbā comes from, is common to the Semitic languages in general, two features of this Qurʾānic verse compel us to draw its connection with Matthew’s Beatitudes. One is the final long ā vowel (alif maqṣūrah), which corresponds to the Aramaic emphatic or definite state (functioning like the Arabic definite article, al-) and which is otherwise foreign to Arabic. The other indicator is ṭūbā’s conjunction with labuḥum, which is equivalent to the Aramaic of Matthew, ṭūbayḥūn, ‘blessed are they’.

At another juncture, albeit more subtly, the use of light as another manifestation of the divine or divine kingdom, appears to relate the text of Matthew to the Qurʾān. The “light verse” of the Qurʾān states: allāh nūr al-ṣamāwāt wa al-ard, ‘God is the light of the heavens and the earth’. Certainly, the doctrine of God as light is extremely common in ancient Semitic, Iranian and Hellenistic religious thought. It is even used in jāhili

99 Ṭabarī, Taṣfīr, Q 21:105.
100 Drijvers and Healy, The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene, pp. 151, 163, 178.
101 Qurʾān 13:29.
103 Qurʾān 24:35a.
However, two factors may relate this Qur’anic passage to a Judeo-Christian source. One of these is that in Matthew, Jesus publicly tells his followers in the ‘sermon on the mount,’ antūn nūḥreh d‘ālmā, ‘you are the light of the world’.106 In the Gospel of John similarly, Jesus states, ‘I am the light of the world.’107 As in the previous instance where Jesus delegates heavenly authority symbolized in the key to human beings, and the author of the Qur‘ān seemingly responds by reclaiming the keys as the possession of God alone, this verse ostensibly delegates a divine manifestation (light) onto mankind or even Jesus himself. In a like manner, Muhammad most likely found this proximity of mankind with the divine problematic once again. Thus, besides the similarity in wording between, “light of the heavens and the earth” and “light of the world”, there appears to be a conscious effort on the part of Muhammad’s mission to “correct” the Christian verse in Matthew by distancing God from mankind/Jesus. This corrective tendency is certainly not unheard of in the Qur‘ān.108 Consequently, the remainder of the light verse carries on magnifying and distancing God,

‘His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as if it were a brilliant star that is being kindled by a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western. Its oil would light up, even though no fire touched it. Light upon light. God guides to His light whomsoever He wishes. And Allah narrates parables for people. And Allah is knowledgeable about everything.’109

The other factor that lends the lamp-light verse as distinctly Judeo-Christian, and possibly related to Matthew (although John remains a possibility,

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107 John 8,12; 9,5.

108 Certainly the Qur‘ān is quite critical of Christian doctrine, especially because of its fondness to intimately associate God with the earth, mankind, and Jesus. Cf. Qur‘ān 2:116; 5:116; 72:3; etc.

109 Qur‘ān 24:35.
though written later than Matthew), occurs in the immediate subsequent verse, Qur’ān 24:36. It states:

‘[It shines] within buildings which God has allowed to be erected and in which His Name is commemorated. Therein He is glorified mornings and evenings – by men who are neither distracted by commerce or business from the remembrance of God, nor from establishing prayer or giving charity.’

These “buildings” might well be churches as some have suggested, or perhaps given the tenets of remembrance, morning and nightly prayer (vigils?), and charity, some other non-pagan Judeo-Christian house of worship. Furthermore in 2 Samuel, “the house for God’s name” is established to forever bless David’s kingdom, which is a divine kingdom mandated by God unto Israel. Thus the lamplight verse of the Qur’ān, and the related subsequent passage concerning buildings of remembrance, whilst augmenting the verse in Matthew, ultimately hearkens back to early Israelite notions of divine blessing and divine kingdom.

While some of the discussed intricacies like church, community, delegation of authority, and apocalypticism, set Matthew’s notion of divine kingdom apart from that of the Qur’ān, there is complete agreement regarding the nature of divine authority. As in the other Synoptic Gospels, Matthew uses the word šūltānā generally to mean “authority”. Like Arabic sūltān, this authority can be secular or religious, human or divine. Nevertheless, most instances in which authority is mentioned in the Qur’ān denote divine authority and the early interpreters customarily associated it with “proof” or “argument”. It is consequently a mysterious force, usually signifying ‘the moral or magical authority supported by proofs or miracles

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110 Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, p. 265.
111 Luke 13,35.
112 2 Samuel 7,13,26.
113 2 Samuel 22,51.
114 Matthew 9,6,8; 10,1; 21,23-24,26; 28,18. Compare Mark 2,10; 10,42; Luke 4,6; 22,25; etc.
115 A different form of the word is used this way in 3rd century CE Edessan inscriptions.
117 W. Kadi, s.v. “Authority”, in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*. 
which afford the right to make a statement of religious import.\textsuperscript{118} In any case, the Arabic 
\textit{sul\d{a}n} is etymologically derived from Aramaic \textit{sh\d{u}l\d{a}n}.\textsuperscript{119} The earliest Muslim interpreters differed regarding its meaning, whether it could mean, "permission," "sovereignty", or something else.\textsuperscript{120} Another view is advanced by Lüling, who equates the term \textit{sul\d{a}n} with an actual person. He takes this a step further and discerns in it traces of Jewish and Christian angelology.\textsuperscript{121} This he does especially regarding Qur\'ān 30:35, 'or have We sent down upon them an authority/power'. This becomes even more intriguing and compelling should we find such a statement in the Gospel of Matthew. In due course, Matthew 9,8 states, \textit{shba\d{u}l\d{a}h\d{a} dyabh sh\d{u}l\d{a}n\d{a} dakh h\d{a}n\d{a} labnayn\d{a}, 'they glorified God who had given such authority to human beings'. In a similar manner, Matthew and the Qur\'ān consider authority as a power that is endowed by God unto mankind.

Consequently, in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus' followers frequently glorify God (\textit{shba\d{u}l\d{a}h\d{a})\textsuperscript{122} who is the source of all authority. The same is the case in the Qur\’ān, where dozens of times \textit{sab\d{a}h} or \textit{sub\d{a}h} are mentioned, all of which exclusively invoke God. The phrase \textit{sabbah\d{a}h yusabbi\d{a}h lill\d{a}h ma f\d{i} al-sam\d{a}w\d{a}t wa (m\d{a} f\d{i}) al-ard, 'all that is in the heavens and the earth glorifies God', occurs 6 times in the Qur\’ān. It follows the traditional Qur\’ānic formula for divine kingdom, namely \textit{[X] al-sam\d{a}w\d{a}t wa al-ard}. The phrase \textit{sub\d{a}h\d{a}n all\d{a}h} occurs 9 times. However, it is worth mentioning that as early as the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BCE, the root \textit{sh\d{h}} is attested in ancient north Arabian Lihyanite.\textsuperscript{123} It occurs in \textit{jahi\d{i}li} poetry as well, and conveys the meaning of "speed" and then "distance".\textsuperscript{124} Nawal Zarzūr makes only the most cursory mention of the evolution of \textit{sh\d{h}} into the normative religious distancing of God from man;\textsuperscript{125} she does not mention how this

\textsuperscript{118} C.E. Bosworth and J.H. Kramers, s.v. "Sultān", in \textit{Encyclopaedia of Islam} (2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.)
\textsuperscript{119} Jeffery, \textit{The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur\’ān}, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{120} Tabari, \textit{Tafs\textsuperscript{\imath}r}, Q 3:151.
\textsuperscript{121} Lüling, \textit{A Challenge to Islam for Reformation}, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{123} Drijvers and Healy, \textit{The Old Syriac Inscriptions}, pp. 140, 193. One attestation is dated 7 CE, the other 73 CE.
\textsuperscript{124} Zarzūr, \textit{Mu\textsuperscript{\imath}jam alf\d{a}l\d{a}g\d{a} al-qiyam al-akhla\d{g}iyah}, p. 206.
\textsuperscript{125} For more information on this see D. Gimaret, s.v. "Subhān", in \textit{Encyclopaedia of Islam} (2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.).
shift occurs.\textsuperscript{126} In addition, the root \textit{sbh} is attested as early as the 1\textsuperscript{st} century CE, in old pagan Aramaic inscriptions as \textit{yeshba\textoverline{h}}, “give praise” (\textit{i.e.} glorify) to God.\textsuperscript{127} In discerning two distinct meanings to the root \textit{sbh}, an Arabian one (speed, distance) and an Aramaic one (glorifying), the Qur'\textacuted{n}ic use of the word \textit{sabbah/yusabbi Americ/subh\textoverline{a}n} most closely resembles the Aramaic usage.\textsuperscript{128} The sentence, ‘all that is in the heavens and the earth glorify God’, therefore may indeed be related to Matthew by virtue of its vocabulary and context of divine kingdom, although it is impossible to be certain in this instance. Given the evidence of the inscriptions, it may not be exclusively Christian, or even Judeo-Christian for that matter.

Elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew, we read about Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan river. Jesus looks skyward and, \textit{iptah\u0131u leh shmay\u0131}, ‘the heavens were opened up for him’.\textsuperscript{129} That the opening of the heavens relates to divine kingdom is not explicit in this verse. It seems rather to be a precursor to the next time the heavens are opened for Jesus in his second coming. This is narrated in the Gospel of John, where Jesus descends through the opened heavens amidst throngs of angels and God Himself.\textsuperscript{130} The wording (namely the passive voice of the verb \textit{ptb}, “to be opened,” + \textit{shmay\u0131}) and apocalyptic connotation of both Matthew and John is made evident in a verse of the Qur’\textacuted{n}. Correspondingly we read, \textit{futi\textoverline{h}at al-sam\u0131\textoverline{a} fak\textoverline{a}nat abw\textoverline{a}ban}, ‘the heavens were opened as doorways’.\textsuperscript{131} The first part of the verse matches Matthew’s wording precisely, the passive voice of the verb \textit{ftb} + \textit{al-sam\u0131\textoverline{a}}. In addition, the Qur’\textacuted{n} is here narrating apocalyptic events, which Lüling sees as a part of earlier Christian content. In his analysis, he deduces that Qur’\textacuted{n} 78:18-19 is part of an “original” Christian strophe.\textsuperscript{132} If indeed this is the case, this strophe may have likely originated from the Gospel of Matthew. Yet another passage in the Qur’\textacuted{n} states concerning the wretched who reject

\textsuperscript{126} Zarzüt, \textit{Mu’jam al-f\u0128\u0131z al-qiyam al-akhl\u0128\u0151y\u0131b}, p. 207.
\textsuperscript{127} al-Hasan, \textit{Qir\u0128\u0131t li kat\u0131h\u0151t l\u0128y\u0131niyy\u0131b}, p. 430.
\textsuperscript{128} Jeffery, \textit{The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur\u0128\u0131n}, pp. 161-162; Mingana, \textit{Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur\u0128\u0131n}, p. 86; Bell, \textit{The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment}, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{129} Compare with Mark 1,10; Luke 3,21. Mark’s wording is more noticeably different from that of Matthew and Luke.
\textsuperscript{130} John 1,51.
\textsuperscript{131} Qur’\textacuted{n} 78:19.
\textsuperscript{132} Lüling, \textit{A Challenge to Islam for Reformation}, pp. 419-420.
God’s signs, la tufattahlahum abwâb al-samâ’,133 ‘the doorways of heaven will not be opened for them’.134 The interpreters understood this verse to mean either, that a wretched one’s deeds would not be accepted by God, or that the soul of a wretched one does not enter paradise.135 Lüling prefers the latter interpretation and likens it to various passages of the Synoptic Gospels.136 Still we must keep in mind once again that Hebrew scripture might be ultimately responsible for this semblance.137 However, that this verse (Qur’ān 7:40) seems to emerge from a Christian background, and perhaps Matthew, is made eminently clearer by what follows it, ‘and they will not enter paradise (al-jannah) until the camel goes through the eye of a needle’.138 This is an almost word for word reproduction of its Christian counterpart, ‘…it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God’.139

One of the most salient features of divine kingdom is the notion of divine judgment. Moreover, this takes an apocalyptic form in Matthew’s yawm ad-dinā, ‘the day of judgment’.140 This notion is attested in Hebrew scripture,141 from whence it made its way into Matthew’s Gospel. Consequently, whether via Matthew or other Judeo-Christian sources, the phrase yawm al-din142 occurs in the Qur’ān 13 times as well. However, it is completely absent from the other gospels. As such, this serves as yet another reason why the content and authorship of the Qur’ān are more in line with the Gospel of Matthew, to the exclusion of the other gospels. The use of dîn, in and of itself, in the Qur’ān is rather diverse. Therefore, the Qur’ānic phrase yawm al-dîn has been interpreted differently. Some Qur’ānic inter-

133 It is interesting to note how this verse relates to Qur’ān 55:33, ‘Oh throngs of jinn and mankind… you will not penetrate [the heavens] except with authority (sulṭān)’.
134 Qur’ān 7:40.
135 Tabari, Tafsîr, Q 7:40; Qurṭubi, al-Jâmi’, Q 7:40.
137 Malachi 3,10 states, ‘See if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.’
138 Qur’ān 7:40.
140 Matthew 11,22-24; 12,36.
141 Psalms 81,4-5; Malachi 4,1-2. Cf. also indirect references in Isaiah 66,15-17.
142 Qur’ān 1:4; 15:35; 26:82; etc.
interpreters believed it to mean, ‘the day of reward (jazā’).’\textsuperscript{143} Other scholars like Gaudfroy-Demombynes define the phrase as ‘the day when God gives a direction to each human being’.\textsuperscript{144} Some claim that the word is a merging of two similar late antique terms, the Hebrew-Aramaic din, “judgment,” and the Pahlavi den, “religion”.\textsuperscript{145} Still others have traced its origin to three sources, adding the Arabic dayn, “debt”.\textsuperscript{146} That the Qur’ānic yawm al-dīn, however, was inherited from Aramaic is clear, and that it was acquired from the Syriac Gospel of Matthew, is likely.\textsuperscript{147} It may have been particularly appealing and relevant to Qur’ānic vision for its preservation of what Hodgson calls the late-antique “mercantile impulse”, that was latent in Syro-Arabia; this is namely “justice and populism”.\textsuperscript{148} There is another similarity in the way in which the day of judgment is perceived in both Matthew and the Qur’ān. Both perceive it as a day of horrific punishment, yet also a day of promise, and one in which God shows favor.\textsuperscript{149}

Divine judgment brings about the apocalypse – the end of the world. In relation to divine kingdom and the end of the world, Matthew writes, ‘this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations (li sahdātā dkulhūn ‘amme); and then the end will come’.\textsuperscript{150} Again, this passage is unique to Matthew and not present in the other Gospels. Nevertheless, once the divine kingdom has covered all the nations of the world, the end will come. In the Qur’ān we read, ‘Thus, We have made of you a balanced nation, that you might be witnesses over (all) people (li-takūnū shuhadā’ ‘alā al-nās).’\textsuperscript{151} Moreover, Ṭabarī and Qurṭubī promptly interpret this act of testimony as occurring on the day of resurrection (yawm al-qiyāmah), which represents ‘the end.’ Ubayy b. Ka’b’s (d. c. 29 AH/649 CE) Qur’ān codex makes this duality of ‘testimony’ and ‘the end’ explicit. His version states, \textit{li-takūnū shuhadā’ ‘alā al-nās yawm a-

\textsuperscript{143} Qurṭubī, \textit{al-Jāmi’}, Q 1:4.
\textsuperscript{144} L. Gardet, s.v. “Dīn”, in \textit{Encyclopaedia of Islam} (2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.); I. Hasson, s.v. “Last Judgment”, in \textit{Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān}.
\textsuperscript{145} Jeffery, \textit{The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān}, pp. 132-133; P. Brodeur, s.v. “Religion”, in \textit{Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān}.
\textsuperscript{146} Encyclopaedia of Islam (2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.).
\textsuperscript{147} Mingana, \textit{Syriac Influence on the Style of the Kur’ān}, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{148} Hodgson, \textit{The Venture of Islam}, 1, pp. 117, 130.
\textsuperscript{149} Lüling, \textit{A Challenge to Islam for Reformation}, pp. 201, 262, 323.
\textsuperscript{150} Matthew 24,24.
\textsuperscript{151} Qur’ān 2:143; 22:78.
qiyyāmah, ‘that you might be witnesses over (all) people on the day of resur-
rection’.\(^{152}\) It would seem therefore that Ṭabarī, Qurṭubī, and other Qur’ān in-
terpreters, reproduce Ubayy b. Ka‘b’s passage of the Qur’ān, which is ab-
sent from ‘Uthmān’s official codex of the Qur’ān, and which resonates most
with the Gospel of Matthew.

This is not the only place where widespread testimony occurs in both the
Gospels and the Qur’ān. In Matthew it is said,

‘Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendents of those who mur-
dered the prophets (msahdīn antūn ‘al nafšīkūn dabhīnay āntūn dəqatā lānbiyē)
… How can you escape being sentenced to hell?’\(^{153}\)

Sinaïticus has ṣawdīn antūn ‘al nafšīkūn, ‘you confess against your-
selves’.\(^{154}\) This passage is unique to Matthew, although Luke’s Gospel con-
tains oblique parallels.\(^{155}\) Two phrases in the Qur’ān appear to reproduce the
content in Matthew. One of these occurs as follows, ‘and so they testified
against themselves (šahidū ‘alā ‘ānfusihim) that they were rejecters of truth
(kāfirūn)’.\(^{156}\) The other phrase occurs in the following verse:

‘Verily, as for those who deny the signs of God, and kill the prophets (yaqtulūn
al-nabīyīn) without just cause, and kill people who command good, announce
unto them an excruciating punishment.’\(^{157}\)

In addition to the phrases šahidū ‘alā ‘ānfusihim and yaqtulūn al-nabīyīn
which clearly seem to replicate msahdīn antūn ‘al nafšīkūn dabhīnay āntūn
dāqatā lānbiyē, there is another attribute that points to an origin in Mat-
thew. This is namely the parallel at the end of Matthew 23,31, ‘how can you
escape being sentenced to hell’, and Qur’ān 3:21, ‘announce unto them an

\(^{152}\) Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur’ān*, p. 120.
\(^{155}\) Matthew 23,34-37 and par. Luke 11,49 (‘Therefore also the Wisdom of God said,
I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute’); and
13,34 (‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent
to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her
brood under her wings, and you were not willing!’).
\(^{156}\) Qur’ān 6:130; 7:37.
excruaciung punishment’. The authors of Matthew and the Qur’ān both aim to rebuke the Jews in such verses. Furthermore it is from Hebrew Scripture itself that “testifying against oneself” and “killing the prophets” conceptually first arises.158

Apocalyptic imagery is part of divine kingdom, insofar as it ushers it in. Such imagery and language is common to the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and the Qur’ān. Consequently, the final moment of earthly existence is sometimes called “the last day”, “the day” or “the hour”. In Matthew we read: ‘al yauymā dəyn hu w’al sha’tā hay anāsh lā ʿidaʿ āplā malāke dashmayā elā ābā bḥāyd, ‘but about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven,’159 but only the Father’.160 The verse is unique to Matthew amongst the Gospels, save another oblique reference in Luke.161 Likewise in the Qur’ān, it states: yasʿaluk al-nās ‘an al-sāʾah qul innamā ‘ilmuhā ‘ind ‘allāh, ‘they ask you about the hour, say verily its knowledge is with God’.162 Aside from the apparent parallels in the texts, three more subtle relationships can be noted. One is that Matthew’s passage reveals that the angels lack the knowledge of the hour. This seems to be related to the Qur’ānic passage elsewhere that emphasizes the limited knowledge of angels.163 Secondly the use of deyn in Aramaic as a particle of contrast meaning “but,” “however”, is preserved in Arabic innamā. Thirdly, the Qur’ān’s verse follows the pattern found elsewhere, ‘they will ask you about… Say…’ Such verses are traditionally questions people asked Muhammad, to which he responded to via these Qur’ānic passages.164 However, Qur’ān 33:63 seems more likely to have been a reproduction of Matthew 24,36. Given that the verses of both texts seem to be written in the style of didactic Jewish tales like the haggadah,165 the knowledge of the final hour seems likely to preserve a topos of Jewish-style wisdom.

158 Deuteronomy 31,19; Nehemiah 9,26.
159 The NRSV adds ‘nor the Son’ which is not present in the Syriac versions.
160 Matthew 24,36.
161 Cf. Luke 12,46, ‘The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and put him with the unfaithful’.
162 Qur’ān 33:63.
163 Qur’ān 2:30-31.
164 Tabari, Tafsīr, Q 2:215; Q 33:63.
165 Katsh, Judaism in Islam, p. 28.
The last hour, or kingdom of heaven for that matter, are not the only things ushered in once Jesus appears and is killed; so too is the apocalypse. Therefore, in the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus dies on the cross, devastation of apocalyptic magnitude takes place.

‘At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.’

Parts of this scene are replicated in the apocalyptic imagery of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān’s chapter 101, entitled al-qārī’ah, was understood by the Qur’ān interpreters generally to connote the upheaval of the apocalypse. It is commonly translated as “the calamity” (Pickthall), “the day of noise and clamor” (Yusuf Ali), and other similar epithets. But the root qr’ may well indeed be understood as the Aramaic word, “to rend, to tear in two”. This would allow us to translate al-qārī’ah as “the rending one”, an image that corresponds to the scene in Matthew. Other apocalyptic verses of the Qur'ān correspond to this scene as well, such as those that mention the sky and moon being torn/split in two. Yet other passages state, ‘when the earth is shaken its (final) quake’, and ‘when the graves are overturned’. This is aside from the numerous references the Qur’ān makes to the resurrection of the dead. In general, Lüling makes a compelling case when suggesting that such verses are related to the Gospel of Matthew. However, references to the quaking of the earth, splitting of the sky, and resurrecting of those in the grave do occur in the Hebrew Bible as well. Thus it remains a possibility that such apocalyptic language made its way into the Qur’ān without passing through Matthew at all, but through a different source.

166 Matthew 27,51-52. In comparison, Luke 23,45 reads, ‘While the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two’.
167 Tabari, Taftīr, Q 101:1; Qurtubi, al-Jāmi’, Q 101:1.
169 Qur’ān 19:90; 54:1; 84:1.
170 Qur’ān 99:1.
171 Qur’ān 82:4.
172 Qur’ān 17:49-50, 98; 23:16; etc.
174 Job 26,11; Psalms 75,3; Isaiah 62,4; Nahum 1,5; Isaiah 24,19; 1 Samuel 2,6; etc.
Lastly, in Matthew we find another reference to the nature of divine kingdom, also mentioned in the other Synoptic Gospels. Jesus says,

‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed (fardā’ dkhardāle) ... it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’ 175

Later in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus similarly says,

‘For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed (fardā’ dkhardāle), you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.’ 176

In the former example, clearly the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual, non-physical entity. In conjunction with the latter example, the kingdom of heaven represents a party of the faithful. The mustard seed in Matthew therefore, embodies the crux of faith and membership in the divine kingdom. In the Qur'an however, the mustard seed is used to exhibit the absolute microscopic reach of God. This phrase occurs twice in the Qur'an.

‘We shall set up the just scales for the day of judgment, and no soul will be prejudiced at all, and if there were the weight of a mustard seed (mithqāl ḥabbah min khardal), We would extract it; and enough are We as a jury.’ 177

The second occurrence of the phrase follows.

‘If there be the weight of a mustard seed (mithqāl ḥabbah min khardal) found within in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth, God would extract it; verily God knows secrets and is well-informed.’ 178

The use of mithqāl ḥabbah min khardal, ‘the weight of a mustard seed’ matches that of mithqāl dharrab, ‘the weight of an atom/particle’, which is

176 Matthew 17,20. Cf. Luke 17,6, where one commands a tree (not this mountain) to move.
177 Qur’an 21:47.
178 Qur’an 31:16.
used elsewhere in the Qur’ān most often signifying God’s equitable justice.\textsuperscript{179} There exists a one to one correspondence of \textit{fardtā dkhardlā} and \textit{ḥabbah min khardal}, both of which literally mean, ‘a seed/grain of mustard’. And other than the parallels in the Synoptics, this phrase is not explicitly attested in earlier Hebrew Scripture. Nonetheless, certain passages of Hebrew Scripture speak of planting seeds and bearing great fruit.\textsuperscript{180} If the mustard seed is indeed a Jewish concept that was incorporated into the Gospels, then it is most likely to have originally come from the most “Jewish” Gospel – Matthew. Jeffery seems to agree with this derivation.\textsuperscript{181}

Several other common passages, too numerous and less relevant for the present discussion of divine kingdom, exist between Syriac Matthew and the Qur’ān. Along with the passages discussed above a complete glossary of such phrases, in Syriac and Arabic script, are appended at the end of this text (Appendices C and D).

4. CONCLUSION

This essay has focused on discussing the relationship of the Qur’ān to the Syriac Gospel of Matthew, specifically under the over-arching guise of divine kingdom. It is impossible to speak of the Qur’ān’s audience specifically or the setting of the pre-Islamic \textit{jāhiliyyah} generally without addressing Matthew’s Gospel, especially insofar as Matthew represents a “Christian” Mosaic or even Judeo-Christian presence. I hope to research this matter further in forthcoming studies.

The implications of our present research, nonetheless, demand some manner of conjecture regarding Qur’ānic origins. Consequently, the spectrum of scholars who have theorized the impact of Christianity on the Qur’ān is sizeable. Lüling’s claim that pre-Islamic central Arabians of the Peninsula were Christians and that ancient Arabian Christian hymns made up the core of original Arabic scripture – the \textit{Ur-Qur’ān} – represents one extreme in such a spectrum. It is certainly clear that several Arabian tribes did profess Christianity, at least nominally, but to say with complete certainty that Muhammad or his tribe were formally Christians seems to be far

\textsuperscript{179} Qur’ān 4:40; 34:22.
\textsuperscript{180} Daniel 4,10-12.20-22; Ezekiel 17,22-23; 31,1-9.
\textsuperscript{181} Jeffery, \textit{The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’ān}, p.122.
fetched, at least unless further evidence comes to light. For precisely this reason other scholars who verged on agreeing with Lüling’s radical views, most notably Gerald Hawting, never explicitly did so. 182 That Muhammad was a *hanīf* or of Arabian pagan origin is much more likely. 183 Bell makes no single conclusive statement about the Qurʾān and its relationship to Christianity in his study. However, he notes that Arabian tribes, indeed those that were nominally Christian, had only a loose grasp of Christianity. 184 His subsequent downplaying of the Christian content in Arabian Christian odes and poetry further contrasts Lüling’s reliance on them as the fundamental Christian source of the Qurʾān. 185 Luxenberg, through his primarily philological study, concludes that the abundance of Aramaic loanwords (which he ultimately attributes to Christian prayer lectionaries) in the Qurʾān exhibits the mixed Aramaic-Arabic dialect (*Mischprache*) of the Hijaz. 186 This statement seems somewhat too simplistic. Perhaps a more likely statement would posit the following: in view of the sizable Christian audience of the Qurʾān, the long-standing ancient relationships between the Aramaean and Arabian people of Syro-Arabia, and the later influx of ambient Judeo-Christian expressions enriched the vocabulary of the Qurʾān with technical-religious terminology which was mainly Aramaic. Thus Mingana estimates that about 70% of the Qurʾān’s foreign vocabulary is Aramaic. 187 Although given the long history of Aramaic in Arabia, from the earliest Nabataean age till the revelation of the Qurʾān (approximately 1000 years), one could scarcely call Aramaic “foreign” to Arabia at all. Furthermore, it would behoove many an academic to posit more accurately that the Aramaic and Arabic served as grades of dialects (Appendix E), open to cultural-linguistic free-flowing exchanges between communities. This interpretation need not be problematic in the least. 188 That being said, the case is put forth that between the Aramaic and Arabian continuum, there existed ever-more degrees

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185 Ibid., pp. 46-51, 53.
of transitional dialects. One need not strain oneself to find examples of this phenomenon, such as the common development of ā to ō vowels, or even sporadic ı to ę changes in North-West Semitic (Hebrew, Aramaic, etc) and Arabian dialects like that of Kalb as well.\(^\text{189}\) This, of course, is an innately linguistic phenomenon, and not dictated solely by the presence of Jewish or Christian sources. This too should be considered. Trimingham, aside from enumerating several Arab-speaking tribes that adopted Aramaic upon resettling elsewhere, generally believes that Muhammad was influenced by Christians in writing the Qur’ān in the Medinan period.\(^\text{190}\) However, to think of Muhammad as intimately familiar with Christian sources and subsequently authoring the Qur’ān would appear both simplistic and erroneous. It is David Cook who shows convincingly that the Arabian environment, even as late as the first two centuries after the *hijrah*, was overwhelmingly Christian. But he adds that in the Hijaz, ‘Christianity was known by repute, but not intimately’.\(^\text{191}\) It is ultimately this position, that Christianity in north Arabia was ambient but not dominant, that is most realistic.

The diverse scholarly perspectives, nevertheless, complement one another to some degree insofar as they emphasize the different historic, linguistic, and other dimensions pertaining to the discourse of Christian influences and the Qur’ān. We should refrain, however, from making radical conclusions. We should also distinguish between Christianity, as a native Syro-Arabian phenomenon, from the Hellenistic\(^\text{192}\) or at least “Orthodox” brand. Orthodox Christianity was composed of those churches and sects that accepted the creeds of the church councils under the Roman Empire: Nicaea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE), both geographically estranged from the Syro-Arabian populace of which Jesus was part of centuries earlier. For he was an “Aramaean peasant”, whose Galilean ministry involved, above all, Arab peasantry rather than Hellenized elites.\(^\text{193}\) The clear and prominent doctrine of divine kingdom in Matthew reflects the reformist inclinations

\(^{190}\) Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, p. 259.
\(^{192}\) Unlike many areas of the Mediterranean, Hellenism had extremely little effect on most of classical Syro-Arabia. For more on this see Teixidor, *The Pantheon of Palmyra*, p. 79; Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans*, p. 71.
\(^{193}\) Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, pp. 8, 42.
of Jesus that were explicitly antithetical to worldly empire, wealth, and oppressive administration. Divine kingdom represented one of many Semitic cultural symbols implemented by Jesus that, above all, extricated the populace from the repression of the physical world to a world of religious and spiritual authority. This produced varying theologies in the Near East and, by extension, Syro-Arabia. Such theologies not only included varieties of Christology, but also ones of stern monotheism styled after Hebrew Scripture adopted by Matthew and the Qur’an, where God was ‘the Lord of the heavens and the earth.’

Yet Matthew’s Gospel is quite unique in another respect. For it was both widespread in Syro-Arabia and the Mediterranean, and (ironically for that precise reason) firmly established in the earliest Canons of the Greek Church. This is most exceptional. Most of the Christian literature that influenced critical passages of the Qur’an were not the celebrated letters of Paul, Clement, or Ignatius, but rather apocryphal, heretical, if not altogether obscure Syro-Arabian sources that were marginal in the Greco-Roman world. These include the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Protovangelium of James, the Apocalypse of Peter, local Arabic Christian traditions, and other such modest sources. If we are to call this myriad of non-canonical, non-Orthodox, apocryphal, and local Syro-Arabian sources “Christian”, then indeed the Qur’an was part and parcel of a Christian milieu. However, the more “orthodox” doctrines of Christianity, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, dictated primarily by the councils of Nicea and Chalcedon, severely repulsed Muhammad and furthermore did not fit within the Qur’anic vision of strict monotheism, which clearly preferred various ambivalent “un-orthodox” alternative Christian positions regarding Jesus’ nature and being. The peasant and nomadic Syro-Arabian culture, and even that

194 Matthew 19,23.  
195 Mark 12,17.  
196 Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, p. 346.  
197 Ibid.  
201 Several unorthodox Christian doctrines are manifested in the Qur’an, such as Jesus’ infancy traditions (19:29-31), Doceticism (3:55; 4:157), Christ’s sole human nature (3:59; 5:116), Christ styled as a Hebrew prophet (2:87), and a pronounced anti-Trinitarian stance (4:171; 5:73). Therefore it is little surprise that some seventh-century
of Egypt in great measure,\textsuperscript{202} was simply incompatible with the imported Hellenistic one,\textsuperscript{203} especially once it dominated all of Christian doctrine and canon. In addition, what would become Orthodox Christianity was predominantly limited to select urban centers of Syro-Arabia, such as Antioch, Jerusalem and some coastal cities of Palestine\textsuperscript{204} – major Mediterranean metropolises nearer to Constantinople and Rome. Non-Orthodox Christian groups like the Monophysites were far more widespread in the deserts and countryside of Syro-Arabia. Their literature consisted of more reticent Syriac writing, not the more fashionable Greek. Their ecclesiastical organization was weaker and fragmented, as would be probably be most conducive to Arabian tribes and nations. The Qur’an’s audience, and Muhammad himself, may have been most familiar with this branch of Christianity.\textsuperscript{205}

Still, even Syro-Arabian Christianity was not the single or dominant component of the Qur’an. The Qur’an was as inclined, if not more so, to incorporate expressions from Jewish sources and laws into the Qur’an as Christian ones, especially during the Medinan period. These too represent a myriad of sources, and perhaps Judaism\textsuperscript{s}. Not least amongst such sources that influenced the Qur’an are canonical works of the Hebrew Bible (especially the legal books of the Torah, the Psalms, and the Prophets) and the Talmudic literature. Still other, lesser, apocryphal Jewish sources that are find echoes in the Qur’an are \textit{Enoch},\textsuperscript{206} \textit{Jubilees},\textsuperscript{207} and sources from Qumran.\textsuperscript{208} Far beyond the reach of Constantinople and Rome, it was almost exclusively the Ethiopians of Axum (who were evangelizing Arabia as late as the fifth century\textsuperscript{209}), Essenes of Qumran, and pre-Islamic Syro-

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\textsuperscript{202}  The theological and even commonplace scuffles between the Coptic populace and Greek Orthodox colonials is most evident in Severus b. al-Muqaffa’, \textit{History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria}, ed. B. Evetts (Paris, 1903).

\textsuperscript{203}  Trimmingham, \textit{Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times}, pp. 21-22.

\textsuperscript{204}  Cook, \textit{The Beginnings of Islam in Syria during the Umayyad Period}, p. 69.

\textsuperscript{205}  Ibid., pp. 73-74.

\textsuperscript{206}  Cf. Qur’an 15:39; 38:82.


\textsuperscript{208}  Rabin, ‘Islam and the Qumran Sect’, p. 200.

Arabians who were familiar with these texts. This may in turn explain why the Gospel of Matthew, with its clearly Mosaic and Rabbinical style, from all the books of the New Testament, most resembles the Qur’ān.

The notions of divine kingdom, particularly the Qur’ānic phraseology and references to ‘[X] of the heavens and the earth’, the keys of the heavens, divine inheritance, divine authority, and divine judgment, are indirect echoes of passages in Matthew that the Qur’ān picked up, most likely over centuries of proselytizing by Syriac speaking churches and groups. In employing such verses the Qur’ān was implementing the technical and religious terminology of its day and locality, which was principally Aramaic. Therefore, this Aramaic vocabulary, and Matthew’s notions of divine kingdom, had seeped into the Qur’ānic milieu and Muhammad’s community long before either of them existed.\textsuperscript{210} As a result, it becomes hard to avoid the fact that not just Aramaic, but Syro-Arabian Christianity too was a phenomenon local to late antique, pre-Islamic Hijaz. Muhammad was in all probability not a Christian, but rather, as other Arab nobles, knowledgeable of Syro-Arabian Christianity, which in contrast to the Orthodox Christianity of his day, emanated principally from Syriac sources and was closely tied to Hebrew scripture. In the final analysis, it is in the Syriac Gospel of Matthew, accordingly, that this confluence of Syro-Arabian features became enmeshed, and from which the Qur’ān realized critical notions of divine kingdom.

\textsuperscript{210} Bell, \textit{The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment}, pp. 52-53.
## APPENDIX A

### ARAMAIC-ARABIC PHRASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases in the Gospel of Matthew</th>
<th>Phrases in the Qur’an</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>yawm ḏīnā</strong> (Day of Judgment (Matthew 11:22-24; 12:36))</td>
<td><strong>yawm al-dīn</strong> (Day of Judgment (Qur’an 1:3))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>dīn</strong> (Judgment, sentence,…) (Matthew 5:21-22)</td>
<td><strong>nūr al-samāwāt wa l-ʿārḍ</strong> (Light of the Heavens and the Earth (Qur’an 24:35))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>nūḥrā</strong> (Light of the World (Matthew 5:14))</td>
<td><strong>nūḥrā</strong> (Light (shine before others) (Matthew 5:16))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shūlāhā</strong> (They praised God who gave authority like this to mankind (Matthew 9:8))</td>
<td><strong>shībāhīyya wa ʿanāsīyya</strong> (Oh throngs of jinn and mankind… you will not penetrate [the Heavens] except with authority (Qur’an 55:33))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>shūlāhā</strong> (Authority)</td>
<td><strong>shūlāhā</strong> (Authority)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taʿbūn qadām bniʿ anāshā ak ṭārīḥūn lḥūn</strong> (You (pl) do it before people in order to be seem by them (Matthew 6:1; 23:5))</td>
<td><strong>aladhīn ʾaṭṭāʾu ʾamānātihim raʿa l-nās</strong> (Those who donate their wealth showing-off to people (Qur’an 4:38))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>qashyāt labkūn</strong> (Hardness of your hearts (Matthew 19:8))</td>
<td><strong>qasat qulābikum</strong> (Your hearts hardened (Qur’an 2:74; see also 4:155))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases in the Gospel of Matthew</td>
<td>Phrases in the Qur’an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td> mihd in antân ‘al nafshkân</td>
<td> shhâdû ‘ala ‘anfusîhûm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You (pl) bear witness against yourselves (Matthew 23:31)</td>
<td>Bore witness against themselves (Qur’ân 6:130; 7:37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(tîdnyâhûn yaqîrayît sham’û wa ‘înmâyûn ‘âmsû) They hear with heaviness in their ears and their eyes are shut (Matthew 13:15 + see 13,16)</td>
<td>(fî âdânîhim waqr wa hu ’alamîhim ‘âmsâ) There is deafness in their ears and it is a blindness over them (Qur’ân 41:44 + see 7:179, 195)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iptâhû leh shmayâ) The sky was opened up for him (Matthew 3:16)</td>
<td>(lâ tûfîtht al-wâbûh al-samâ’) The doors/gates of heaven will not be opened for them (Qur’ân 7:40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(nitâsh lâkûn) Will be opened for you (pl) (Matthew 7:7)</td>
<td>(fûtht al-samâ’) Sky opened up (Qur’ân 78:19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(lak etal qîtidâ dalmûtâ dashmâyâ) For you I will give the keys of the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 16:19)</td>
<td>(lâ hu maqâlitid al-sâmâwât wa al-ârd) He possesses the keys of the Heavens and the Earth (Qur’ân 39:63; 42:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases in the Gospel of Matthew</td>
<td>Phrases in the Qurʾān</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>مَلكَتُاهُ الدَّالِحَةُ (malḵūṭā dalāḥā) Kingdom of God (Matthew 19,24 par. Mark, Luke)</td>
<td>مَلكَتُهُ (malakūṭ) Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مَلكَتُاهُ الدَّاشِمْيَةُ (malḵūṭā dashmīyā) Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew only)</td>
<td>مَلكَتُ السَّمَاءَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (malakūṭ al-samāwāt wa al-ard) Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth (Qurʾān 6:75; 7:185)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مَلكَتُاهُ الدَّالِحَةُ (malḵūṭā dalāḥā) Kingdom of God (Matthew 19,24 par. Mark, Luke)</td>
<td>مَلكَتُهُ (malakūṭ) Kingdom</td>
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<td>مَلكَتُاهُ الدَّاشِمْيَةُ (malḵūṭā dashmīyā) Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew only)</td>
<td>مَلكَتُ السَّمَاءَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ (malakūṭ al-samāwāt wa al-ard) Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth (Qurʾān 6:75; 7:185)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يَرْتُ مَلكَتُ دَائِتِدَ (yartu malkūt daʿtidā) They will Inherit the kingdom prepared (Matthew 25,34)</td>
<td>الْأَرْضَ بَيْنَهَا عِبَادُ الصَّالِحِنَ (al-ard yarishubhā ʿibādi al-sāliḥān) The earth will be inherited by My good slaves (Qurʾān 21:105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(تُبَاحِنُونَ لَمْكَيْكَ دَحْنُونِ نِرْتُنِ لَارْدا) Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth (Matthew 5,5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>شَبِحَ لُكَ خَلَاكَيْكَ (shbihin lak khāhayk) Your sins have been forgiven (Matthew 9,2.6; 12,31)</td>
<td>نَغْفِر لُكُمْ خَطَائَتَكُمْ (naghfir lakum khatīʿatikum) We will forgive your sins (Qurʾān 7:161)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>شَبَحَ لِلَّهِ (shbah lālahā) They glorified God (Matthew 9,8; 15,31)</td>
<td>سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ (subḥān allāh) Glorified is God (Qurʾān 30:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سُبْحَ (sabbah) Glory</td>
<td>سُبْحَ (sabbah) Glorified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases in the Gospel of Matthew</td>
<td>Phrases in the Qur’an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(‘al yaumā deyn hu w’al sha’ta hay anash lā īda’…elā ābā blahūd) As for the day and the hour no man knows …except the Father alone (Matthew 24,36)</td>
<td>(yas’aluk al-nās ‘an al-sā’ah qu’l īnāmā ‘ilma hu ‘in allāh) They ask you about the Hour, say verily its knowledge is with God (Qur’ān 33:63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(li sahdītā dīkubīn ‘amme) As a testimony to all nations (Matthew 24,14)</td>
<td>(litakūnī shubādā ‘alā al-nās) That you may be witnesses over all people (Qur’ān 2:143)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(shalī shlāmē dbyātā) Greet the House (Matthew 10,12)</td>
<td>(fā’idhā dakhalta buyūt(ā) fa sallīmū ‘alā ‘anfusīkum) And if you enter a house greet yourselves (Qur’ān 24:61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(shlām lakīn) Peace be upon you (fpl) (Matthew 28,9)</td>
<td>(salām ‘alaykum) Peace be upon you (Qur’ān 28:55; 39:73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hab lan) Give us (Matthew 6,11)</td>
<td>(hab lanā) Give us (Qur’ān 25:74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(fardā dkhardlā) Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31)</td>
<td>(hab ah min khardal) Mustard Seed (Qur’ān 21:47; 31:16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words in the Gospel of Matthew</td>
<td>Words in the Qur'an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala nahr) The righteous will shine like the sun (Matthew 13,43)</td>
<td>صادق (sādīq) Promise filler (Qur'an 19:54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) The Righteous/faithful (coupled with prophets) (Matthew 13,17)</td>
<td>الصادقين (al-sādiqīn) The sincere (coupled with prophets) (Qur'an 4:69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) Peace-Makers (Matthew 5,9)</td>
<td>مسلم (muslim) Submitters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) Pure in Heart (Matthew 5,8)</td>
<td>زكّي (zakiyy) Pure (Qur'an 19:19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) He showed them compassion (Matthew 14,14)</td>
<td>الرحمين (al-rāhimīn) Those who show mercy (Qur'an 12:64, 92; 23:109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) Lamp/candle (Matthew 5,15)</td>
<td>سراج (sirāj) Lamp (Qur'an 25:61; 33:46; 78:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) Maker/doer (Matthew 6,24)</td>
<td>عبد ('abd) Slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) Poor (Matthew 5,3)</td>
<td>مسكين (miskīn) Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) Temptation/Trial (Matthew 6,13; 4,1)</td>
<td>نسي (nasī) Forgot/went astray (Qur'an 20:115)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) Son of Man/Mankind (Matthew 8,20)</td>
<td>بني آدم (bani 'adam) Son of Adam (Qur'an 17:70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حسن (ziala) People (Qur'an 7:82)</td>
<td>بني آدم (bani 'adam) Son of Adam (Qur'an 17:70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words in the Gospel of Matthew</td>
<td>Words in the Qurʾān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ميلك (t’ā) Astray (Matthew 18,12; 24,4.11.24)</td>
<td>طُفِّيّي Gone astray (Qurʾān 79:37) طَأْوَعُت (tābūt) Evil/Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ماتم (qarbat ← qrb) Has come near (Matthew 3,2; 4,17; 10,9; 12,9)</td>
<td>الْقَرَابَةُ الْقُرْبِ (iqtarabat ← qrb) Has come near (Qurʾān 54:1) قرِبًا (qarib) Near (Qurʾān 33:63; 34:50; 17:51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مهَّم (ghenā) Hell (Matthew 5,29-30 + see 25,41b.46)</td>
<td>جَهَنَّمَ جَهَنَّمَ (jahannam) Hell-fire (39:70-75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>متحت (yatā) Sign (Matthew 12,38-39; 16,3-4; 24,24)</td>
<td>أَيَّةٌ (āyah) Sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>يمينه (ymīneh) His Right Hand (Matthew 25,34)</td>
<td>أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ (‘ashāb) Companions of the Right Hand al-yamān (Qurʾān 56:8, 26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>شماله (semāleb) His Left Hand (Matthew 25,41)</td>
<td>أَصْحَابُ الشَّمَالِ (‘ashāb al-shimāl) Companions of the Left Hand (Qurʾān 56:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>سبارة (sbartā) Good news (Matthew 4,23; 9,35; 23,31; 26,13)</td>
<td>بَشْرُ (bashrā) Good news (Qurʾān 7:57; 12:19) بَشْرَ (bashir) Give good news بَشَيد (bashir) Bringer of good news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>كُرْسِيَّةُ الدالِّحَةِ (kursiyā dalāhā) Throne of God (Matthew 23,22)</td>
<td>كُرْسِيْيَهُ (kursiyuh) His Throne (Qurʾān 2:155)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>نذال (glayt ← gla) Revealed (Matthew 11,25)</td>
<td>نَذَالُ (tajallā ← jī) Revealed oneself (Qurʾān 7:143) نَذَيُّ النِّجَالَ (dhī al-jalāl) The Bountiful (God) (Qurʾān 55:78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Divine Kingdom in Syriac Matthew and the Qurʾān

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words in the Gospel of Matthew</th>
<th>Words in the Qurʾān</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ܢܹܪܐ ܡܹܐ (bar alāhā) Son of God (Matthew 4,3)</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ܒܢܹܐ ܕܐܠܹܗ (banibā dalāhā) Sons of God (Matthew 5,9)</td>
<td>ܐܒܢܢ ܐܠܗ (abnāʾ allāh) Sons of God (pejorative) (Qurʾān 5:18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ܬܘܒ (tūbu) Repent (pl) (Matthew 3,2)</td>
<td>ܬܘܒ (tūb) Repent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ܒܪKi (brk) Blessed (Matthew 14,19)</td>
<td>ܬܒܪKi (tabārak) Blessed is (Qurʾān 25:1; 37:113; 55:78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ܬܘܒKi ܠܗKi (tūbayhūn) Blessed are they (Matthew 5,3ff)</td>
<td>ܬܘܒKi ܠܗKi (tūbā lahūm) Blessed are they (Qurʾān 13:29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ܢܒKi (nabīyā) Prophet (Matthew 1,22)</td>
<td>ܢܒKi (nabi) Prophet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ܡܠKi (matlā) Parable (Matthew 13,18)</td>
<td>ܡܠKi (mathal) Example/likeness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX C

**OTHER RELATED PARALLELS IN QUR’ĀN/HADITH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Gospel of Matthew</th>
<th>The Qur’ān and Hadith Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>谎言 (daglūtā ← dgl)</td>
<td>虚假的救世主 (al-masīḥ al-dajjāl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lie/False teaching (Matthew 5,11; 24,24)</td>
<td>False Messiah (Muslim, Bukhari, Abū-Ḍāwūd, Malik, …)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away (Matthew 5,29)</td>
<td>Say to the believing men [and women] that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty … (Qur’ān 24:30-31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5,28)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 19,24)</td>
<td>To those who reject Our signs and treat them with arrogance, no opening will there be of the gates of heaven, nor will they enter the garden, until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle… (Qur’ān 7:40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom (Matthew 21,43)</td>
<td>…If you turn back [from the Path], He will substitute in your stead another people; then they would not be like you (Qur’ān 47:38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave…</td>
<td>…O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I feed You when You are the Lord of the</td>
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you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” (Matthew 25,26-39)

worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant So-and-so asked you for food and you fed him not? Did you not know that had you fed him you would surely have found that (the reward for doing so) with Me? O son of Adam, I asked you to give Me to drink and you gave Me not to drink. He will say: O Lord, how should I give You to drink when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: My servant So-and-so asked you to give him to drink and you gave him not to drink. Had you given him to drink you would have surely found that with Me. (Muslim 32:6232 – Hadith Qudsi)
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APPENDIX D

LANGUAGE MAP OF THE LATE ANTIQUE NEAR EAST
APPENDIX E

ARAB SETTLEMENTS ATTESTED IN ANTIQUITY

APPENDIX F

RAQUSH INSCRIPTION DEMONSTRATING MIXED DIALECT

ABSTRACT

The terminology of the Qur’an regarding certain key religious aspects demonstrates an intimate relationship with the Syriac translation of the Gospel of Matthew. This paper’s discussion focuses on perhaps the most salient of these religious aspects shared by both texts, namely ‘divine kingdom.’ By studying and comparing both the Syriac and Arabic texts firsthand, examining old Syriac and Arabian inscriptions, and reflecting upon the theories of previous scholars who addressed the Christian or Syriac influences upon the Qur’an, I come to a preliminary conclusion as to how and why such a relationship exists. Based on the gathered evidence, the paper argues that within the realm dubbed ‘Syro-Arabia,’ intimate socio-cultural-religious interaction and continuity persisted between Syriac/Aramaic and Arabic speakers from the early first millennium BCE through the period of late antiquity (4th-7th century CE). This resulted in the Qur’an addressing an audience that was part of the Syro-Arabian milieu, and that was familiar with the Syriac Gospel of Matthew.

212 Healey and Smith, ‘Jaussen-Savignac 17 — The Earliest Dated Arabic Document (A.D. 267)’, Atal, 12 (1989), pl. 46. The inscription reads, ‘This is a grave K b. H has taken care of for his mother, Raqush bint ‘A. She died in al-Hijr in the year 162 in the month of Tammuz. May the Lord of the World curse anyone who desecrates this grave and opens it up, except his offspring! May he [also] curse anyone who buries [someone in the grave] and [then] removes [him] from it! May who buries….be cursed!’