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The Creation of Woman in Muslim and Jewish Interpretive Traditions

Deconstructing Patriarchy through Feminist Discourse Analysis

Katja von Schöneman

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

“My lord, increase me in my knowledge.”

~ Qur'an 20:119 ~

To Tenho & Onni – ja tälle koko Sirkusperheelleni.

Abstract

Androcentric interpretations of religious texts have accumulated in the course of time in both Islam and Judaism. Current doctrinal precepts are heavily influenced by such premodern patriarchal conceptions. In the present study, grounded in Islamic feminist hermeneutics, I investigated interpretations of one specific Qur'anic sentence in the first verse of the Chapter of Women (Q4:1), conventionally read as the creation of woman, to deconstruct the exegetic discourse prevalent in Islamic interpretive tradition. Using discourse analysis, I conducted a genealogical reading of 31 Qur'anic commentaries dating from the 2nd/8th to the 11th/17th century. Informed by comparative feminist theology, I equivalently analyzed Jewish interpretive tradition preceding Islam by focusing on passages discussing the creation of woman in 7 different rabbinic compilations.

The hermeneutical trajectory of Sunni, Shi'i, and Jewish interpretations regarding the creation of woman was demonstrated in three distinctive discursive stages giving rise to the patriarchal construct of creation-based gender hierarchy. The first discursive stage established the tradition corpus and normativized certain views regarding the creation of woman, which were also used to justify the seclusion of women. During the second stage, these presumptions were consolidated so that the obvious patriarchal ethos strengthened. For example, the rib, from which the woman was allegedly created, gained derogatory attributes which also became symbols of women's suspicious characteristics. These conceptions were further expanded during the third phase of the development by adding male-favoring notions to earlier explications, even equating the creation of woman to that of evil. The genealogical nature of the commentary literature was evident in all the traditions explored – and the woman became created not only after and from the man, but *for* the man as well.

To further evaluate the commonalities in the diachronic development of Muslim and Jewish exegetic discourses, their potential intersections were examined by comparing explications regarding the creation of woman in the flourishing scholarly atmosphere of Baghdad and other great Abbasid cities in its vicinity. This context provided an important forum for potential encounters between Muslim and Jewish scholars. Their interaction seems to have both reinforced pre-existing conceptions and urged the sages towards novel elaborations, possibly reflecting the changing political situations and societal trends.

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Baghdad and wander the paths of al-Tūsī in the shrines of Najaf, among numerous other fascinating places dating back to the Abbasid era, during the five memorable weeks in 2021 –

أشكركم على الأسابيع الخمسة التي أمضيتها في بغداد والتي ساعدتني على إكمال أطروحة
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Chiqui, has aportado una alegría y un tono sin igual a los últimos momentos de mi tesis. Solo me hace falta que estés aquí con tus ojos claros... gracias por existir.

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I dedicate this thesis to Tenho and Onni, *maailman mahtavimmille pojille*, who were earlier acknowledged in my cookbook in 2001 and my doctoral thesis in medicine in 2011. You have brought a special meaning for each moment of my life for an entire quarter of a century – and you keep on doing so.

Last but not least: الحمد لله

In the darkening nights of Finnish Lapland on October 28, 2023,

Katja von Schöneman

Transliteration

Arabic		
ء / ا	<i>alif/ hamza</i>	'/ā
ب	<i>bā'</i>	<i>b</i>
ت	<i>tā'</i>	<i>t</i>
ث	<i>thā'</i>	<i>th</i>
ج	<i>jīm</i>	<i>j</i>
ح	<i>ḥā'</i>	<i>ḥ</i>
خ	<i>khā'</i>	<i>kh</i>
د	<i>dāl</i>	<i>d</i>
ذ	<i>dhāl</i>	<i>dh</i>
ر	<i>rā'</i>	<i>r</i>
ز	<i>zāy</i>	<i>z</i>
س	<i>sīn</i>	<i>s</i>
ش	<i>shīn</i>	<i>sh</i>
ص	<i>ṣād</i>	<i>ṣ</i>
ض	<i>ḍād</i>	<i>ḍ</i>
ط	<i>ṭā'</i>	<i>ṭ</i>
ظ	<i>ẓā'</i>	<i>ẓ</i>
ع	<i>'ayn</i>	'
غ	<i>ghayn</i>	<i>gh</i>
ف	<i>fā'</i>	<i>f</i>
ق	<i>qāf</i>	<i>q</i>
ك	<i>kāf</i>	<i>k</i>
ل	<i>lām</i>	<i>l</i>
م	<i>mīm</i>	<i>m</i>
ن	<i>nūn</i>	<i>n</i>
ه	<i>hā'</i>	<i>h</i>
و	<i>wāw</i>	<i>w / ū</i>
ي	<i>yā'</i>	<i>y / ī</i>

Hebrew / Aramaic		
א	<i>alef</i>	'
ב	<i>bet, vet</i>	<i>b – v</i>
ג	<i>gimel</i>	<i>g</i>
ד	<i>dalet</i>	<i>d</i>
ה	<i>he</i>	<i>h</i>
ו	<i>vav</i>	<i>v</i>
ז	<i>zayin</i>	<i>z</i>
ח	<i>kheth</i>	<i>kh</i>
ט	<i>teth</i>	<i>t</i>
י	<i>yod</i>	<i>y</i>
כ ך	<i>kaf, khaf</i>	<i>k – kh</i>
ל	<i>lamed</i>	<i>l</i>
מ ם	<i>mem</i>	<i>m</i>
נ ן	<i>nun</i>	<i>n</i>
ס	<i>samekh</i>	<i>s</i>
ע	<i>'ayin</i>	'
פ ף	<i>pe, fe</i>	<i>p – f</i>
צ ץ	<i>ṣade</i>	<i>ṣ</i>
ק	<i>qof</i>	<i>q</i>
ר	<i>resh</i>	<i>r</i>
ש	<i>sin</i>	<i>s</i>
שׁ	<i>shin</i>	<i>sh</i>
ת	<i>tav</i>	<i>t</i>
Vowels		
אָ		<i>a</i>
אֵ		<i>e</i>
אִ		<i>i</i>
אֹ		<i>o</i>
אֻ		<i>u</i>

Abbreviations and General Notes

Ar. – Arabic (language)

b. – “son” (in names), deriving from Arabic *ibn*, Hebrew *ben*, or Aramaic *bar*

CE – Common Era

d. – “died,” indicating the year of death

Eng. – English (language)

Gen. – Genesis (the 1st book of the Hebrew Bible; in connection with a certain verse)

Hb. – Hebrew (language)

Q – Qur’an (in connection with a certain verse)

sg. – singular (grammar)

Years are given according to the Hijri (*i.e.*, Islamic) and Gregorian calendars, separated by a division slash, when applicable.

The tables below, presenting the transliteration of Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic used in the present study, are a slightly simplified version of the guidelines presented in *SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines* (Buller *et al.* 2014). In addition to the characters indicated in the tables, *dagesh forte* in the middle of a word is marked by duplication of the given consonant. If *alef* or *alif* is the first letter of the word, it is not transliterated. Arabic *ta’ marbūṭah* is transliterated as *-ah*, unless being the first part of an *idāfa* construction where it is transliterated as *-at*. *He* at the end of a Hebrew word is transliterated as *-ah*. The transliterations in the articles which this study is based on may slightly differ from this description due to the guidelines of the journals. When used as a part of the English text, the Arabic word *qur’ān* is simplified as Qur’an.

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List of Original Publications

This thesis is based on the following publications:

- I von Schöneman, Katja. (2022). ““Confine Your Women!”: Diachronic Development of Islamic Interpretive Discourse on the Creation of Woman.” *Hawwa* 20 (4), 431–475.
- II von Schöneman, Katja. (2021). “Created After, From, and For the Man? Development of Premodern Shi‘i Exegetic Discourse on the Creation of Woman.” *Al-‘Uṣūr al-Wuṣṭā* 29 (1), 81–111.
- III von Schöneman, Katja. (2022). “Establishing Gender Categories and Hierarchies: The Evolution of Rabbinic Discourse on the Creation of Woman.” *Studia Orientalia Electronica* 10 (1), 62–82.
- IV von Schöneman, Katja. “Adam’s Rib as a Shared Source of Patriarchy in Abbasid Iraq: The Interconnectedness of Jewish and Muslim Exegeses on the Creation of Woman.” *Medieval Encounters* (forthcoming).

The publications are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals. In the printed version of this thesis, the original publications are reproduced with the kind permission of their copyright holders, when applicable.

1 Introduction: The Genealogical Nature of Exegesis Constructing Patriarchy

Women have been marginalized in Islamic religious knowledge for centuries. Male-centered interpretations have evolved and strengthened in the course of time, giving rise to patriarchal conceptions still prevalent in Islam. This development is, at its worst, culminated in the everyday life of Muslim women in the form of inequality and oppression. Dismantling the male hegemony by deconstructing the patriarchal, sometimes even misogynous traits of the Islamic interpretive tradition serves as an essential basis for novel, egalitarian readings of the Qur'an, which can potentially lead to gender justice in practice. This is an essential starting point for Islamic feminism engaging with these issues from various perspectives.

The process through which the classical exegesis of the Qur'an took shape was gradual. The interpreters discussed the Qur'an from their own cultural and social standpoints which strongly reflected power relations of the context. Interpretations were built upon earlier ones, enabling shifts, augmentations, exclusion, and transformation, hence contributing to the consolidation of men's prestige over women in the course of time so that the oppression of women became supported by religious explications. Similarly in Jewish tradition, androcentric interpretations of the Bible were accumulated, probably both reflecting and affecting the status of woman.

Qur'anic interpretations can be examined by applying discourse analysis which tackles the way language use mediates different forms of power, including gender inequality. A genealogical dimension integrated to discourse analysis may sharpen this methodology in addressing the diachronic development of Muslim exegetic discourse. The present study begins with implementing such an approach, previously introduced by Omaila Abou-Bakr, to premodern Qur'anic commentaries, so-called *tafsīr* literature, regarding one sentence in verse 4:1 which is conventionally understood to comprise a reference to the creation of woman. I further develop this approach into a feminist discourse analysis which I use to assess the genealogy of exegetic discourse concerning the topic at issue in two different forums, the Sunni and the Shi'i traditions.

Gradual development of religious interpretations is not unique to Islamic textual tradition, as will be shown later in the present study. Feminist and genealogical discourse analysis may be similarly used to examine the diachronic development in Jewish exegesis of the biblical passages regarding the creation of woman, reflecting the mores of the exegetes and the social change in their contexts. This highlights the more general nature of the evolution process in interpretive traditions. It also provides an important means to critically evaluate one substantial part of the religio-cultural foundations of Muslim exegesis. Many later features of the evolving Islamic interpretive tradition may have stemmed from the coexistence of

these religions, persistent specifically in the heartlands of the Abbasid empire (132/750–656/1258), Iraq. This particular milieu illustrates the fluid boundaries of exegesis, and it also enables us to examine the mutuality of Sunni and Shi‘i traditions, as is done in the last part of the present study. Informed by comparative feminist theology, interconnections of Muslim and Jewish interpretations are analyzed in this exemplary context serving as a potential forum of interaction in a milieu where societal changes contributed, for their part, to hardening attitudes towards women.

Feminist discourse analysis contributes to the ample spectrum of Islamic feminist hermeneutics by enabling deconstruction of potentially biased structures of the interpretive tradition. My exploration will expose the genealogical features of *tafsīr* literature in connection with the creation of woman. This will be shown in studies I and II, exhibiting a hermeneutical trajectory during which the patriarchal ethos gradually deepened, concomitantly paving path to the dominant understandings of the Qur’anic message. By applying this methodology to Judaism in study III, and analyzing their interconnectedness in study IV, I tightly engage with comparative feminist theology. Such an inquiry is likely to shed light on hierarchical constructions in the exegetic discourse and enable alternative readings grounded in egalitarian worldviews.

2 Interpretive Tradition as a Reflection of Multicontextuality and Societal Change

The evolution of religious interpretive tradition can be portrayed as transformation through transmission. Novel explications are constructed on previous statements, and some elements vanish whereas others may be reshaped or generated afresh. In Islamic and Jewish interpretive traditions, this can specifically be observed within commentary texts, *tafsīr* and rabbinic literature. The biblical and Qur’anic passages discussing human creation have frequently been explained with context-dependent features, often strengthening the inequality between genders, and having an impact on the legal status of woman. During this process, women have become considered as subordinate to man based on Eve’s secondary creation from the rib of the first man, Adam.

2.1 *Tafsīr* Literature as a Potential Key to Qur’anic Ambiguity

In Islamic tradition, the Qur’an is regarded as speech of God, revealed to His last prophet and messenger, Muḥammad, during the first decades of the 7th century CE.¹ These Arabic recitations, containing prohibitions, commands, and legal and moral advice for the believers, were rather quickly compiled into a codex.² Besides passing this text, the Qur’an, to subsequent generations, Muslims transmitted lore reporting Muḥammad’s actions or words. These traditions eventually constructed the vast and authoritative corpus of *ḥadīth* literature. They were utilized to explain ambiguous verses of the Qur’an, although they only formed a part of the material used to interpret the scripture. There were diverse other sources of exegetic information on which the co-existing religious traditions, particularly Jews and Christians (*i.e.*, “people of the book”), had a remarkable influence.³ Their knowledge, the so-called *isrā’īliyyāt*, were often consulted on purpose to complement the Muslim understanding of the Qur’an.⁴

Qur’anic interpretation, *tafsīr*, gradually developed into a discipline on its own, albeit hand in hand with other areas of Islamic literary genres. The use of traditions (sg. *āthār*), as the main source for interpretation of the Qur’an served as a long-lasting basis for Sunni interpretive tradition.⁵ In Shi’i exegesis, in turn, the emphasis was in enlightening the esoteric meaning of the exoteric part of the

¹ For an encyclopedic introduction to the prophet Muḥammad, see Buhl 1993.

² Ayoub 1984, 18. It is divided into 114 chapters each containing several verses.

³ Ayoub 1984, 32; Bauer 2008, 29–31; Bronson 2012; Bronson 2014, 27–61; Hassan 1985; Pregill 2018, 105–106; Rippin 2000, 85. The Qur’an itself contains stories of the prophets, having a clear confluence with the Hebrew Bible.

⁴ Bronson 2012, 124; Bronson 2014, 30–34; Pregill 2018, 104, 110.

⁵ Ayoub 1984, 22–23; Saeed 2006, 42; *i.e.*, tradition-based exegesis, *tafsīr bi-’l-ma’thūr*, as opposed to opinion-based exegesis, *tafsīr bi-’l-ra’y* (*e.g.*, Saeed 2006, 59; Pregill 2018, 108).

Qur'an, although the Twelver-Shi'i commentators later adopted the style typical of Sunni exegesis. Thus, narrations (sg. *akhbār*), transmitted from the imams became the basis of Shi'i commentaries.⁶

Dominant interpretations of the Qur'an were gradually established as an authoritative set of traditions during the early centuries of Islam, forming the core of the material that was frequently selected, adjusted, and utilized according to the needs of the context. Muslim scholars constructed their exegeses on previous interpretive notions, and the selection of explications presented in each *tafsīr* was composed under the influence of the exegete's personal context and concerns.⁷ The exegetic knowledge both accumulated and transformed in their commentaries. This *genealogical*, diachronically evolving nature of the exegetic discourse has been phrased by Walid Saleh,⁸ who suggests examining the diachronic development of *tafsīr* in a "synoptic fashion." He further explicates that comprehending the work of a certain exegete requires comparison with previous and following ones.⁹

Cross-cultural communication continued after the first centuries of Islam, and the assimilation of Jewish and Christian material to Islamic interpretive tradition probably persisted.¹⁰ Besides the Hebrew Bible, elements for Qur'anic explications were gained from rabbinic literature and the Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, a Christianized text also elaborating the Garden narrative. This extraneous material seems to have introduced the "rib story" – known from the Hebrew Bible and prospering in Jewish and Christian traditions – to Islamic thought, and it eventually became a firm part of the Muslim interpretations regarding the creation of woman.¹¹

2.2 Rabbinic Literature as Textual Reception of the Oral Torah

The basis for Islamic exegesis was laid by co-existent traditions, the Jews being visibly present in the vicinity of Muslims. The Hebrew Bible is, indeed, an essential part of the cultural heritage of the ancient Near East.¹² It was long transmitted by hand, also enabling textual changes over time. The content has been reviewed

⁶ Pregill 2018, 105–109; Rizvi 2020, 708–720; Steigerwald 2006, 372–385. The esoteric dimension in Shi'i exegesis is known as *ta'wīl*.

⁷ Pregill 2018, 108; Rippin 2000, 84–85; Saeed 2006, 10.

⁸ Saleh 2004, 14–16; Saleh 2006, 239–242. The concept of genealogy was coined by Friedrich Nietzsche, and it was subsequently elaborated by Michel Foucault in reconstructing historical processes (Gutting 2005, 50–58; Saar 2002, 231–233).

⁹ Saleh 2006, 239. This notion has provided a fruitful forum for unpacking efforts, as will be shown in the study at hand. Tackling the genealogical nature of *tafsīr* will be introduced in more detail in connection with Omaima Abou-Bakr's article (2015) which will serve as the methodological basis of the present study (see Chapter 4.3).

¹⁰ Pregill 2018, 110. For example, the famous exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) even refers to the "people of the book" in his commentary, as introduced in Study I.

¹¹ Bronson 2012, 124; Bronson 2014, 30–34; Eisenberg 1971, 295; Hassan 1985; Hassan 1991.

¹² It is composed from three sections: Torah ("law"), Nevi'im ("prophets"), and Ketuvim ("writings"); a small part of the Bible is written in Aramaic (Sarna *et al.* 2007, 574–585).

throughout the transmission process, reflecting changing contexts.¹³ This can particularly be seen in the discussions perceived as rabbinic literature comprising textual compilations of orally transmitted extrabiblical religious notions. These traditions were first gathered by consecutive generations of *tannaim* (ca. 20–200 CE).¹⁴ This heritage, often called as the “oral Torah,” became conceived as supplementary material on how to apply the written Torah to altering contexts. The first text assembled from such standpoints was Mishnah which was compiled at the end of the 2nd century.¹⁵ Rabbinic traditions containing stories, legends, and interpretations are known as the *aggadah*.¹⁶ Together with the *halakhah*, i.e., the material concentrating on commenting the legal parts of the Torah,¹⁷ it forms the bipartite basis of *midrash*, Jewish exegesis of the scripture.¹⁸

Later, the traditions of the *tannaim* were discussed by eight generations (ca. 200–500 CE) of *amoraim* in Byzantine Palestine and Sassanian Babylonia.¹⁹ During the amoraic period, biblical commentaries were constructed as midrashic assortments, two of the best known ones being Genesis Rabbah, serving as a verse-by-verse commentary of Genesis, and Leviticus Rabbah which provides long interpretive homilies based on some biblical key words.²⁰ Their aggadic material contains a broad variety of traditions, which were further elaborated in the two famous collections of traditions, Palestinian Talmud and Babylonian Talmud, the latter being often referred to as simply Bavli.²¹

The Babylonian Talmud has remained the most influential manifestation of rabbinic literature, but the interpretations of Torah did not stop to the point of its compilation. During the era of the *geonim* (ca. 700–1100 CE), sages in rabbinic academies kept on studying and explaining the Hebrew Bible and previous rabbinic writings, particularly the Talmud.²² All these texts, now known as rabbinic literature, emerged in different stages and represented diglossia of Hebrew and Aramaic.²³ Noteworthy, co-existing religious traditions may have had an influence on this development. As an illustration, the *responsa* literature produced in the Babylonian Jewish academies by the *geonim* contains Jewish reflections on Muslim

¹³ Kugel 1998, 1. For the canonization of the Hebrew Bible, see Sarna *et al.* 2007, 574–579.

¹⁴ Schiffman 2003, 293. For encyclopedic information concerning the *tannaim*, see Sperber 2007.

¹⁵ Schiffman 2003, 294. For an encyclopedic introduction to the Mishnah, see Wald 2007a.

¹⁶ Borowitz 2006, 1–5; Schiffman 2003, 300.

¹⁷ For introductions to *halakhah*, see Cohen 2007, 121–143; Stemberger 1996, 239–240.

¹⁸ Schiffman 2003, 307–308. For an introduction to *midrash*, see Fraade 2007, 99–120; Stemberger 1996, 233–246.

¹⁹ For encyclopedic information concerning the *amoraim*, see Gray 2007.

²⁰ Fonrobert & Jaffee 2007, 7. For introductions to Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah, see Stemberger 1996, 276–283, 288–291.

²¹ Fonrobert & Jaffee 2007, 7–9. For encyclopedic introductions to the former, see Rabinowitz & Wald 2007, and to the latter, see Wald 2007b. More thoroughly on the Talmuds, see Stemberger 1996, 164–224.

²² Assaf & Brand 2007, 380. These academies first occurred in Babylonia, subsequently finding their way across the Jewish world. For encyclopedic information concerning the *geonim*, see the entire chapter by Assaf & Brand.

²³ Hasan-Rokem 2003, 3; Neusner 1999, 6.

scholarly discussions of the context.²⁴ Arabic also became the language of Jewish intellectuals in many communities.

2.3 Creation of Woman as the Exegetic Basis of Patriarchy

The chronological starting point for interpretive traditions concerning the creation of woman was the Hebrew Bible, later being explicated in various ways and from different standpoints. In the first one of the two different creation narratives concerning human creation,²⁵ God decides to make humankind in His image, after His likeness, so that *they* will govern the animals on earth.²⁶ God creates the human in His image, and as male and female.²⁷ He blesses them and invites them to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth, and master it.²⁸ In the second account describing the human creation, God forms a human being from dust of the earth, blowing the breath of life into his nostrils so that the human becomes a living being.²⁹ He later observes that it is not good for the human to be alone. Thus, God makes a fitting “helper” for him.³⁰ He first forms different animals from the earth for the human to name, but the human being does not find “help” from among them.³¹ Then, God imposes a deep sleep upon the human and takes one of his “ribs,” covering its spot,³² and fashions the “rib” into a woman which He brings to the man.³³ The man recognizes the woman as being bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, hence naming her “woman” as she was taken from “man.”³⁴ The biblical depiction of human creation was later complemented by the rabbis whose explications regarding the creation of woman have fashioned the Jewish thought ever since.

Multiple Qur’anic verses refer to the creation of the primeval couple, depicting humankind as created from different materials,³⁵ and from a single soul (*nafs*).³⁶ In addition, there are five verses that mention the creation of its

²⁴ Simonsohn 2014, 121–138.

²⁵ Gen. 1:1–2:4a and Gen. 2:4b–24.

²⁶ Gen. 1:26; in this paragraph, I only recapitulate the content of the biblical narratives regarding human creation independently from the biblical phrasing.

²⁷ Gen. 1:27.

²⁸ Gen. 1:28.

²⁹ Gen. 2:7.

³⁰ Gen. 2:18. The Hebrew expression, often translated as a “fitting helper,” has been interpreted in different ways in the course of history (*e.g.*, Heger 2014, 14; Kvam *et al.* 1999, 28–29). The meaning of the Hebrew terminology is somewhat unambiguous, which has served as a fruitful basis for interpretations.

³¹ Gen. 2:19–20. Quotation marks denote the ambiguity of the words in the translations.

³² Gen. 2:21. The Hebrew word for “rib” (sg. *šela*) is generally translated as a “side” in the Hebrew Bible.

³³ Gen. 2:22. The Hebrew word is literally “built,” having provided grounds for further elaborations.

³⁴ Gen. 2:23. This female figure is named Eve in Gen 3:20.

³⁵ Q6:2 (clay); 7:12 (clay); 15:26 (clay, mud); 15:28 (clay, mud); 16:4 (sperm-drop); 22:5 (dust/drop); 23:12 (clay); 25:54 (water); 32:7 (clay); 35:11 (dust/drop); 38:71 (clay); 40:67 (dust/drop); 55:14 (clay); 76:2 (sperm-drop); 86:6 (fluid).

³⁶ Q4:1; 6:98; 7:189; 31:28; 39:6.

pair/mate/spouse (*zawj*).³⁷ Perhaps the best-known portrayal of human creation is in the first verse of the “Chapter of Women” (Ar. *Sūrat al-Nisā*’). It depicts the human creation from a single soul from which God also created its pair,³⁸ and the creation of woman is actually not *per se* described in the Qur’an. Nevertheless, the “single soul” subsequently became understood as the first man, Adam, and the “mate” created from the single soul as the first woman. She later became known by the name Eve, and the substance of her creation as Adam’s rib (Ar. *ḍil*’), and such complementary exegetic knowledge eventually found its way to the collections of *ḥadīth* and compilations of *tafsīr*, heavily influencing the status of women. Partly due to their secondary creation, women have been seen as subordinate to men, and her creation from male-dependent material has remained an essential element in the Muslim exegetic discourse. In fact, the details of Eve’s creation were utilized to explicate problematic female characteristics and her position as fundamentally inferior, ancillary being in both rabbinic writings and *tafsīr* literature.³⁹

³⁷ Q4:1; 7:189; 30:21; 39:6; 42:11.

³⁸ The Arabic word for soul (*nafs*) is grammatically feminine, whereas the word for pair (*zawj*) is masculine, which may serve as a hermeneutical tool in a feminist sense (*e.g.*, Hassan 1985).

³⁹ Baskin 2002, 44–64; Bauer 2015, 101–136.

3 Heartlands of Gendered Explications: Abbasid Iraq

3.1 Pervasive Coexistence of Muslim and Jewish Scholarships

Islam arose in a context influenced by late antique Judaism and Christianity. The encounters between Muslims and Jews were pervasive in the core area of its emergence, Arabia, and the coexistence continued during the first centuries of Islam. The flourishing intellectual atmosphere of Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid empire from 145/762 to 656/1258, provided a special forum for that.⁴⁰ The era can be defined as the Golden Age of Islam during which vibrant scholarly activity boosted novel ideas among religiously motivated scholars.⁴¹ Education was highly acknowledged in both Jewish and Islamic traditions. Gatherings among sages became the main concept of religious learning in Baghdad. The perimeters between Muslim and Jewish scholars were vague so that theories and thoughts were easily circulated.⁴²

Muslim intellectuals were acquainted with the Bible, particularly orally passed biblical tales, and such elements were frequently used in Muslim exegesis.⁴³ Likewise, the *responsa* literature generated by the *geonim* during the 3rd/9th–5th/11th centuries in the Jewish academies, which were first situated in Sura and Pumbedita and later in Baghdad, provided Jewish discussions on topical Muslim ideas.⁴⁴ In addition to the Rabbanites, *i.e.*, Jews adhering to the rabbinic tradition, interaction of Muslim and Jewish scholars also included the Karaites who rejected the rabbinic tradition.⁴⁵ The coexistence of Jews and Muslims has been famously portrayed as a “creative symbiosis” by Shelomo Dov Goitein.⁴⁶ The Jews under Abbasid rule became fluent in Arabic, the *lingua franca* of their context, to the extent that the Pentateuch, too, was translated into it by the eminent Jewish sage Saadia Gaon (d. 330/942).⁴⁷ Muslim and Jewish scholars of Baghdad strived to explain the Qur’an and the Talmud, including their passages concerning the creation of woman, clearly aware of each other’s endeavors.

⁴⁰ Scheiner & Janos 2014. For the early history of Baghdad in brief, see Rustow 2013a.

⁴¹ Bennison 2009, 158–202.

⁴² Rustow 2013b, 81. For “knowledge” in medieval Islam, see Rosenthal 2006, and in Judaism, see Brody 1998.

⁴³ Lazarus-Yafeh, 1992, 111–129.

⁴⁴ Simonsohn 2014, 121–138. Many topics of the *responsa* literature reflected Jewish conversations in relation to Islam (135–136).

⁴⁵ Cohen 2013, 36. For the Karaites, see Lasker *et al.* 2007.

⁴⁶ Goitein 1964. In addition, see Lewis 1984. The idea of symbiosis is further elaborated by Steven Wasserstrom who introduces the concept of “countertradition,” possibly enhancing the symbiosis between Jewish and Muslim traditions (1995, 214–216).

⁴⁷ In fact, Islamic sources may have influenced his translation, aptly named as *Tafsīr* (Freidenreich 2003). Nevertheless, Saadia’s translation regarding Gen. 2:21–22 follows the Hebrew original – and he uses *dil*, *i.e.*, the Arabic equivalent of *šela*, corresponding to the Muslim *tafsīr* of the time (Gaon 1893, 8). Interestingly, Muslims were most likely familiar with the Arabic Bible as translated from Syriac (Vollandt 2015, 90–108).

3.2 Slaving Trends of the Abbasid Era

The position of women under Abbasid caliphate has been examined addressing courtesans and slave girls as well as queens and princesses.⁴⁸ There is an obvious tendency to hardening attitudes towards women in the course of time with momentous repercussions.⁴⁹ The Abbasid system has been defined as “the trio of polygamy, concubinage, and seclusion of women” by Nabia Abbott,⁵⁰ and the meanings of “woman,” “slave,” and “object for sexual use” became nearly identical in Abbasid-time discourse, according to Leila Ahmed, who claims that this ideology also entered Islamic jurisprudence, *fiqh*.⁵¹ The status of free women impaired with the rise of slavery,⁵² and the evolving demeanors and policies regarding women strongly influenced Islamic interpretive tradition as well.⁵³ The roles of women in the Abbasid society were complex,⁵⁴ and they were able to participate in public spheres to some extent.⁵⁵ Although their complete passivity is not probable, the agency of women outside homes decreased in the course of time.⁵⁶ Specifically among the elite, it was considered a virtue to stay at home, which was possibly related to the veiling praxes.⁵⁷ These features gave space for androcentric explications on the creation of women as well.

⁴⁸ Abbott 1946; Caswell 2011; El-Azhari 2019, 75–141; Gordon 2017.

⁴⁹ Ahmed 1992, 67–69, 75; El Cheikh 2015, 11–12.

⁵⁰ Abbott 1946, 8.

⁵¹ Ahmed 1992, 67.

⁵² El Cheikh 2015, 7.

⁵³ Ahmed 1992, 69.

⁵⁴ For women’s religious education and its relationship to the social and political factors of the Abbasid context, see Sayeed 2013.

⁵⁵ Tillier 2009.

⁵⁶ Hanne 2005, 107–108.

⁵⁷ Tillier 2009, 301.

4 Islamic Feminism Challenging Muslim Misogyny

4.1 Addressing Patriarchal Traits in Interpretive Traditions

The recognition of gendered prejudice, patriarchy, and sexism are essential in feminism as a theory and practice. Feminist approach aims at deconstructing these structures in the spirit of social justice. Sue Morgan, for example, defines it as “critical transformation” of theoretical perspectives utilizing gender as a dominant analytical category so that religion, and the continuation of unjust practices justifying male dominance associated with it, are critically tackled. Feminism naturally encompasses a wide set of perspectives, however, sharing the critique of patriarchy which can be defined as institutionalized systems of male supremacy.⁵⁸

Religious traditions are commonly claimed to be, for the most part, patriarchal, and men have been the main producers and subjects of knowledge in studies concerning religion. However, patriarchal elements of religious traditions have been pointed out in world religions in a growing manner. The trend of such analysis started in Christianity, and it quickly penetrated Muslim and Jewish discourses as well. In addition, novel hermeneutics have been applied to reading the Qur’an and the Bible in a gender-sensitive way. Such perspectives have become a burgeoning field in both Islamic and Jewish studies so that varying feminist approaches have been applied to nearly all disciplines within them.

The increasingly used feminist perspective has also entered Islamic studies during the past decades. This has given rise to Islamic feminism, an inquiry concentrating on critical knowledge building within the tradition. The scholarship aims at dismantling and engaging with dominant views present in the interpretive tradition, many of which seem to exhibit gender inequality, and providing new readings of the authoritative sources. The general goal is to promote gender justice in different fields, on the one hand, and reassess the methodology, on the other.⁵⁹

Islamic feminism evolved gradually during the last decades of the 20th century. Some of the most influential scholars representing the first generation of this novel inquiry are Riffat Hassan, Leila Ahmed, Fatima Mernissi, Azizah al-Hibri, and amina wadud, who challenged many of the beliefs and practices of classical and contemporary Islam from different perspectives. Mernissi’s *Beyond the Veil: Male–Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society* was already published in 1974, whereas Ahmed’s bestseller *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a*

⁵⁸ Morgan 1999, 42–43. For feminist perspectives in the study of religion, see Sue Morgan’s thorough review on the topic.

⁵⁹ Al-Sharmani 2014, 83. The author provides a concise introduction to the history and goals of Islamic feminism. For a fine example of the knowledge building aspect of the inquiry, see the edited volume by Ziba Mir-Hosseini *et al.* (2022).

Modern Debate emerged in 1992.⁶⁰ Amina Wadud's dissertation *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (1992) promoted the blooming of Islamic feminist hermeneutics, which has since become a prospering field of scholarly activity.⁶¹

Towards the turn of the millennium, Islamic feminism clearly represented a new epistemological framework within Islamic studies. Muslim scholars adhering to it continued to advocate for egalitarian religious knowledge – and some have engaged in activism in Muslim societies. The second generation of Islamic feminists increasingly contributed to diverse applications of the inquiry, both individually and collectively.⁶² Asma Barlas' ground-breaking *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (2002), an important input to Islamic feminist hermeneutics, paved the path to more systematic approaches introduced below.⁶³ Pioneering work in this sense was also done by Ziba Mir-Hosseini,⁶⁴ Kecia Ali,⁶⁵ and Aisha Chaudhry,⁶⁶ among many others clearly engaging with the flourishing knowledge building project, in addition to the ones referred to below.

In an illuminating introduction into Islamic Feminism, Mulki Al-Sharmani classifies the intellectual side of Islamic feminism as “transnational” or “national,”

⁶⁰ For Mernissi's other well-known vindication of Muslim women's rights, see *Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry* published in English in 1991. For an example of al-Hibri's work, see her article on domestic violence (2003).

⁶¹ For a long time, Wadud referred to her work as “pro-feminist” (Wadud 2006, 79–80), only later adhering namely to “Islamic feminism.” The use of the word pair was, in fact, by no means established as a self-evident concept, but many rejected or even opposed one of the two words in this equation. For feminism in Islam at the turn of the millennium, see Riffat Hassan's (1999) and Omaima Abou-Bakr's (2001) articles. For the complexity of the feminism(s) in connection with Islam, see Kynsilehto 2008.

⁶² For four essential edited volumes, see *Feminist & Islamic Perspectives: New Horizons of Knowledge and Reform* (2013, ed. Omaima Abou-Bakr), *Men in Charge? Rethinking Authority in Muslim Legal Tradition* (2015, eds. Mulki Al-Sharmani et al.), *Islamic Interpretive Tradition and Gender Justice: Processes of Canonization, Subversion, and Change* (2020, eds. Nevin Reda & Jasmin Amin), and *Justice and Beauty in Muslim Marriage: Towards Egalitarian Ethics and Laws* (2022, eds. Ziba Mir-Hosseini et al.). It is noteworthy that women are not the only representatives of feminist interpretation in Islam. As an illustration, see Khaled Abou El Fadl's *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority, and Women* (2001) as a manifestation of his extensive engagement with gender issues within Islam – in addition, Faqihuddin Abdul Kodir's work clearly represents this kind of perspective, as can be already read, e.g., in his *Hadith and Gender Justice: Understanding the Prophetic Traditions*, translated into English in 2007. Moreover, gender-sensitive perspectives in Islamic studies are not restricted to Muslim scholars exclusively: Karen Bauer, for example, has taken part in Muslim feminists' conversations (e.g., Bauer 2016) due to her extensive knowledge of the exegetic tradition regarding gender verses of the Qur'an.

⁶³ Barlas, reflecting the interpretability of the terminology and the desecration associated with its use, did not originally position herself within “feminism,” but primarily intended to produce gender-sensitive religious information out of her duty to God.

⁶⁴ Ziba Mir-Hosseini has plentifully engaged with Muslim legal tradition, *fiqh*, from a gender perspective (e.g., Mir-Hosseini 2003). In addition, see her recently published *Journeys Toward Gender Equality in Islam* (2022).

⁶⁵ One of her most important contributions is *Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* (2006).

⁶⁶ See *Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition* (2013), in particular.

depending on the language and the audience.⁶⁷ In their chapter on Islamic feminist exegesis and Qur'anic ethics, later concentrating on the theme of divorce, Omaima Abou-Bakr and Al-Sharmani divide the scholarship into four categories based on the focus either at the Qur'an and exegetical tradition, Islamic jurisprudence, *ḥadīth*, or Sufism with its potential implications in feminist theology.⁶⁸ My project will focus on the first one, *i.e.*, unpacking the exegetic discourse among premodern Muslim scholars. Due to the limited extent of the present study, my introduction of the Islamic feminist hermeneutics will concentrate more on the deconstructive methodology, focusing specifically on earlier studies addressing the diachronic change of exegetic discourses over time. I am fully aware that this selection is by no means comprehensive, nor does it pay tribute to many scholarly endeavors that importantly contribute to Islamic feminist hermeneutics.

4.2 Islamic Feminist Hermeneutics

Feminist hermeneutics can be broadly characterized as establishing feminist theology through interpretation of traditional texts from a gender-sensitive perspective.⁶⁹ Qur'anic commentary literature, *tafsīr*, provides a fruitful forum for feminist deconstruction – *i.e.*, tracing, evaluating, and questioning patriarchal deductions in the Islamic exegetic discourse. The need for the *deconstruction* of such layers in Islamic interpretive tradition first stemmed from contemporary Muslim family laws, in particular,⁷⁰ but the necessity of deconstructive efforts is by no means limited to social grievances. The general goal of pinpointing the epistemological and ethical disparities in Islamic interpretive tradition can be achieved by unpacking interpretations concerning gender issues in premodern religious literature, particularly *tafsīr*, containing androcentric, even misogynous explications of the Qur'an.⁷¹ This has been done in a synchronic way as well as by showing the diachronic evolution of the interpretive tradition. Of these dimensions, the present study concentrates on the diachronic development of Islamic exegetic discourse concerning the creation of woman.

⁶⁷ Al-Sharmani 2014, 84.

⁶⁸ Abou-Bakr & Al-Sharmani 2020, 26; in accordance with Al-Sharmani's earlier introduction to the topic (2014, 86–87).

⁶⁹ Al-Sharmani 2018, 77–78. Noteworthy, such efforts have also been questioned from within the tradition; see particularly the analytic work *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an* (2014) by Aiysha Hidayatullah, which sparked a booming scholarly response among Islamic feminists.

⁷⁰ Al-Sharmani 2018.

⁷¹ Duderija refers to this as interpreter-centered hermeneutics (2015, 49–52). In his article, Duderija also identifies other categories for scriptural hermeneutics commonly used in Islamic feminism and he further evaluates their value within the scholarship.

Nevin Reda acknowledges the genealogical nature, introduced by Walid Saleh, of *tafsīr* in her exploration of polygamy related premodern exegetic discourse.⁷² She examines the linguistic features and the historical context of Q4:3, then analyzes the interpretive choices made by the famous exegete al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). In comparison, she provides an Islamic feminist interpretation of the matter. In the same volume, Asma Afsaruddin revisits one of the most puzzling Qur’anic verses tackled by Islamic feminists, Q9:71, also basing her excursion on genealogical features of the interpretive tradition.⁷³ She identifies shifts in exegesis in relation to changes in socio-historical circumstances. In a more general level, the author concludes that premodern explications are context-dependent – and unpacking such trajectories allows feminists to engage with hermeneutics informed by the fundamental Qur’anic worldview of justice and equality. In addition, gender construction in premodern *tafsīr* is addressed by Ash Geissinger examining the attribution of exegetical material to female figures, also identifying the hermeneutical foundation upon which *tafsīr* was constructed.⁷⁴ Again, these examples provide only a glimpse to the rapidly growing knowledge informed by Islamic feminist hermeneutics.

Deconstructive methodology can be applied to *ḥadīth* literature alike, but this has only been done to a limited extent possibly due to the more authoritative status of this genre. However, Sa’diyya Shaikh addresses some prophetic traditions, first categorizing them as religio-cultural texts exhibiting “dominant conceptions of gender and the category of woman.” She analyzes how these traditions become convenient in an ideological way, also regulating religious standards of gender.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Riffat Hassan has convincingly challenged six traditions according to which the woman was created from the man’s rib. This detail has strongly marked the subsequent Islamic view of women’s secondary nature in relation to the male sex, potentially on a false basis, as they may well contain inauthentic material, Hassan claims.⁷⁶ Hassan’s contribution plays an important role in the present study which explores the integration of the “rib” into the Muslim exegetic discourse.

The abundant deconstructive work lately performed in Islamic studies has revealed that atomistic readings and interpretations of the Qur’an, in particular, have led to the evident oblivion of fundamental Qur’anic concepts in the history of exegesis. Islamic feminists have therefore increasingly promoted a reconstructive perspective in which ethical principles should, they argue, guide all reading of the Qur’an. amina wadud’s long-time method has been to apply the Qur’anic worldview

⁷² Reda 2020, 69. For some of Reda’s other impressive contributions, see her articles 2010 and 2013.
⁷³ Afsaruddin 2020.

⁷⁴ Geissinger 2015, 30–65.

⁷⁵ Shaikh 2004, 99–108. For Sa’diyya Shaikh’s other important contribution, see *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy Ibn ‘Arabī, Gender, and Sexuality* (2012),

⁷⁶ Hassan 1985. In addition, Fatima Mernissi has tackled misogynous *ḥadīth* material in her works (e.g., 1991, 49–81). Furthermore, Nimat Barazangi has approach the *ḥadīths* emphasizing that they should not set aside the message of the Qur’an (2017, 1–31).

– particularly the concept of *tawhīd*, *i.e.*, oneness and unity of God – in reading the Qur’an.⁷⁷ The famous *tawhīdic* paradigm refined by wadud has been important in Islamic feminist hermeneutics, as the concept explicitly opposes potential subordination and inequality.⁷⁸ Scholars have vastly drawn upon this concept, and wadud, too, has further elaborated it. This trajectory is culminated in wadud’s latest production *Once in a Lifetime* (2022) where she reflects on her scholarly output through her own life.⁷⁹

In addition to the famous *tawhīdic* paradigm, wadud has utilized the Qur’anic concept of *taqwā* in her search for sustainable readings of the scripture. Barlas, too, engages with the term and characterizes it as “unique balance for integrative moral action.”⁸⁰ Barlas’ method is specifically based on Qur’anic ethics, *i.e.*, reading the Qur’an guided by its fundamental principles. She advocates for reading the Qur’an holistically. Likewise, *taqwā* has been used to guide rereading of the Qur’an, in the spirit of Jerusha Rhodes’ characterization of the term: It is an orientation towards God, which colors everything in the way a person acts in the world.⁸¹

Ethically oriented reading has become increasingly prominent in Islamic feminist hermeneutics, and the different aspects can also be combined, as is done by Abou-Bakr and Al-Sharmani in their extensive study regarding divorce verses in the Qur’an.⁸² The authors first tackle the interpretive tradition, well-known premodern *tafsīr* works, then reread the Qur’anic verses in question with an ethically positioned approach. The deconstruction which the authors perform provides grounds for novel hermeneutics regarding the Qur’anic passages at issue, succeeding to produce alternative and egalitarian readings within the faith-based Islamic framework.

Abou-Bakr, Al-Sharmani, and Asma Lamrabet shed light on premodern exegesis concerning the theme of marriage in their recent co-authored chapter on the topic.⁸³ They criticize the exegetic corpus by pinpointing gaps caused by the lack of ethical framework in premodern exegesis. The authors emphasize Qur’anic ethics as the most fundamental basis for interpretation and present their own interpretive

⁷⁷ *Tawhīd* can be conceived as “the operating principle of equilibrium and cosmic harmony” (wadud 2006, 28). For her *tawhīdic* paradigm, see wadud 1999, xii, 25–26; 2006, 24–32; 2015. For a brief discussion on wadud’s hermeneutics, and a comparison with Kecia Ali’s methodology, see Esack 2012, also providing a critique of their work from a postcolonial standpoint.

⁷⁸ For one example of its implications in Islamic feminist hermeneutics, see wadud 2015, in which she tackles the interpretation of Q4:34 in this light.

⁷⁹ wadud 2022. Other scholars’ reflections of her work can be found in the edited volume *A Jihad for Justice: Honoring the Work and Life of Amina Wadud* (2012).

⁸⁰ Barlas 2002, 14.

⁸¹ Rhodes 2014, 146. In addition, see Rhodes 2014, 182–240; 2018, 176–189.

⁸² Abou-Bakr & Al-Sharmani 2020.

⁸³ Abou-Bakr *et al.* 2022. Abou-Bakr (2015) has earlier unpacked the genealogical trajectory of interpretations regarding Q4:34, which will be thoroughly introduced in the next chapter of this thesis named accordingly. Moreover, Abou-Bakr’s article serves as the methodological foundation of the entire doctoral project at hand. For an individual contribution of Asma Lamrabet, see, *e.g.*, *Women in the Qur’an: An Emancipatory Reading*, translated into English in 2016.

methodology based on several aspects, of which holistic and ethically oriented approaches pave the path for a reconstructive turn. They further visualize this approach by identifying distinct discursive cycles. Importantly, Abou-Bakr, Al-Sharmani, and Lamrabet use a multi-dimensional methodology which is holistic, thematic, historical, linguistic, as well as intra-textual, and it also pays close attention to the ethical concepts and principles of the text.

4.3 Abou-Bakr's Genealogical Excursion to *Tafsīr*

Omaima Abou-Bakr provides an illuminating and impressive example of the academic contribution informed by Islamic feminism in her article "The Interpretive Legacy of Qiwamah as Exegetical Construct" published in 2015. She addresses the accumulation of gender views in interpretations regarding the first part of the Qur'anic verse 4:34, reviewing material from both the *tafsīr* literature itself and the context of its production. She detects the development of interpretive tradition and the way it evolved in the course of history, and how the concept of *qawwāmūn* in Q4:34 became interpreted as universal superiority of men, expressed with a concept of *qiwāma*. Abou-Bakr detects changes and shifts in the interpretations of the verse and further categorizes them into four distinctive discursive stages, hence performing a genealogical investigation of Muslim exegetic discourse.

The first one of the discursive stages described in Abou-Bakr's study begins with the famous Muslim exegete al-Ṭabarī. One of the scholars' tasks at the time was to maintain general morality in the midst of social change in the crumbling Abbasid caliphate. Thus, al-Ṭabarī explained the original concept of *qawwāmūn* as a collective duty of men to keep women under control, *i.e.*, *qiyām*. Furthermore, he understood the second part of the verse as providing a reason why men, in particular, were chosen by God to maintain order. Al-Ṭabarī introduced the idea of gender hierarchy and the moral superiority of men – he even turned the divine concept of sustenance into a justification for gender hierarchy and male privilege. Abou-Bakr shows that the exegete established a certain kind of understanding over the meaning of this particular Qur'anic passage, reflecting the political situation of his context, hence normativizing the essential concepts.

According to Abou-Bakr's study, the second stage in the development of the interpretive tradition strengthened the nascent concept of *qiwāma* by gathering reasons and arguments for it. She gives evidence, for example, from the famous Persian exegete al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144) who picked up the term *qiwāma*, and the gender hierarchy built into it, ignoring the Qur'anic responsibility for maintenance, ascribed to men. The exegete compared the relationship between a man and a woman to that of a ruler and his servant, cementing the understanding of *qawwāmūn* as a hierarchical arrangement. In addition, al-Zamakhsharī presented a long list of justifications for the divine order of male superiority – they

were, according to Abou-Bakr, an arbitrary mixture of innate characteristics, social customs, and assumptions based on *fiqh*, obviously drawn from the exegete's own ambience.

The third stratification of the interpretive material in Abou-Bakr's article begins with the well-known conservative exegete Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373). The stage is characterized by expansion of evidence for male superiority in all fields of life. Ibn Kathīr, for his part, deprecated the education of women, which had become widespread during the Mamluk era, as it enabled women, for example, to teach and to move widely outside their homes. He wanted to limit the visibility of women in public places, and in his *tafsīr*, he extended the dominance of men to not only private space but also public forums. The exegete added that the wife should not even leave her home without her husband's consent. Thus, the influence of the societal context was evident in the way Ibn Kathīr contributed to the evolution of interpretive tradition.

The fourth and final phase examined in Abou-Bakr's study is associated with the so-called 20th-century "modernists" (e.g., Muhammad Abduh and Sayyid Qutb), who added biological and essentialism-based arguments in favor of male dominance to the interpretations of Q4:34. These exegetes vindicated the "divine" predetermined gender roles, both at home and more broadly in the society, by the inherent characteristics of women and men, while relying on medieval attitudes concerning the psychological differences between the genders. It was, after all, the female *fitra*, inborn nature, that ultimately dictated her seclusion. The scientific atmosphere where the modern scholars worked obviously affected their input to the exegetic discourse.

Through her comprehensive analysis of Muslim exegetic corpus, of which only one key figure from each discursive stage is mentioned above, Abou-Bakr tackles the Qur'anic verse 4:34 and the evolution of its interpretations through discursive strategies. The duty of maintenance, ascribed to men as revealed in the Qur'an, turned into a biology-based divine and unquestionable right of men to rule over women both at home and outside it. The interpreters' justifications were built mainly on previous explanations most likely resulting from circular arguments, Abou-Bakr claims. As a part of this, they were influenced by cultural expectations reflecting highly patriarchal norms. Abou-Bakr highlights the historical and cultural nature of this process by identifying shifts at different junctures, noting how the exegetes would simultaneously build on previous interpretations.⁸⁴ The study at hand will apply this genealogical methodology in assessing the evolution of interpretations regarding another theme and in distinct religious traditions.

⁸⁴ Moreover, in the second part of her article, Abou-Bakr gives a brief overview of recent Muslim feminists' and reformists' strategies for reconstructing the concepts previously addressed in pre-modern *tafsīr*.

4.4 Deconstructing the Rib

The effect of the six traditions according to which the woman was created from the man's rib, which Riffat Hassan convincingly challenged already in the 1980's, and the concomitant integration of the "rib" into Islamic interpretive tradition, have been studied by Catherine Bronson examining Muslim discourse on Eve during the formative period of Islam. The author tackles the evolution of the explications regarding the creation of woman, also noting the potential biblical impact on the content, in her dissertation *Imagining the Primal Woman: Islamic Selves of Eve* (2012). Several other scholars have also noticed that Jews and Christians have had an influence on the content of the interpretations.⁸⁵ In addition, Ash Geissinger suggests that the Muslim interpreters basically reaffirmed late antique concepts of gender into the dominant discourses in which the rib narrative fitted well.⁸⁶

Several scholars have examined *tafsīr* associated with the creation of woman,⁸⁷ and the primeval woman Eve in premodern Muslim interpretations has been addressed in various ways.⁸⁸ Perhaps most extensively, Karen Bauer traces the diachronic development of premodern Muslim exegesis regarding gender relations in her dissertation *Room for Interpretation: Qur'anic Exegesis and Gender* (2008). The study provides a well-founded selection of gender-related verses used for a thorough introduction into the interpretive tradition, also examining the Qur'anic verse 4:1, often understood as the creation of woman. The outcome of her analysis is that the patriarchal way of reading the Qur'anic verses is evident in almost all premodern commentary passages examined.⁸⁹ Bauer importantly notes that individual and contemporary perceptions played an essential role in the exegesis on the creation of the first woman.⁹⁰ Although Bauer does not specify her methodology as drawing from the genealogical nature of *tafsīr*, it is evident in the trajectory the author presents.

⁸⁵ *E.g.*, Arpaguş 2013, 131–132.

⁸⁶ Geissinger 2015, 38–41.

⁸⁷ Arpaguş 2015, 39–41; Bauer 2012, 29–46; Bronson 2014; Dhala 2019; Geissinger 2015, 39–41; Hadromi-Allouche 2013; Hassan 1985; Hasyim 2006; Kister 1988, 110–114; Kister, 1993, 143–147; Kueny 2012, 235–260; Osman 2015, 15–42; Ramli *et al.* 2013, 41–44; Shamsudin & Baharudin 2018; Smith & Haddad 1992; Wheeler 2002, 15–35.

⁸⁸ Abugideiri 1996, 518–536; Anwar 2014; Inloes 2019, 57–136; Jardim 2014; Khan 2016, 11–25; Kvam *et al.* 1999; Roded 2012; Ruffle 2013, 791–819; Spellberg 1996, 305–324; Stowasser 1994, 25–38.

⁸⁹ Bauer 2008, 182.

⁹⁰ Bauer 2008, iii.

5 Feminist Dismantling of Rabbinic Legacy

5.1 Towards Jewish Feminism

The Hebrew Bible, too, has been increasingly studied from a feminist perspective, challenging the previous androcentric readings of the Bible and highlighting their thoroughly patriarchal contexts. Moreover, scholars, as well as ordinary Jews and Christians alike, have urged for new readings of the millennia-old text. The creation of woman in the Bible has been approached accordingly. A fundamental commencement to this direction was provided by Phyllis Tribble who attempted to depatriarchalize the exegesis of the Bible by addressing the creation narratives from the standpoint of feminist cultural criticism in her *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (1978).⁹¹ Eve, the primeval woman, was then progressively studied, for example, by David Clines,⁹² Ilana Pardes,⁹³ and Phyllis Bird.⁹⁴

In addition to the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic literature has also been addressed from a feminist perspective.⁹⁵ One of the earliest inputs was *Women and Jewish Law: An Exploration of Women's Issues in Halakhic Sources* (1984) by Rachel Biale. Moreover, Judith Baskin's *The Separation of Women in Rabbinic Judaism* (1985), and Nehama Aschkenasy's *Eve's Journey: Feminine Images in Hebraic Literary Tradition* (1986) paved the path for a gender-sensitive perspective in rabbinic studies. Aschkenasy, for example, follows an archetypal feminine figure in the course of history,⁹⁶ and aims at tracing the evolving cultural concepts of women. Furthermore, Judith Wegner's *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah* (1988) shows that the position of women in the first known rabbinic compilation was multidimensional, not only about their subjugation and men's superiority.⁹⁷

Feminist perspective in rabbinic studies expanded during the 1990's, concentrating on the way rabbinic culture structured gender. Daniel Boyarin's *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (1993) addressed Jewish women's persistent subordination, concomitantly encouraging a hermeneutical shift in rabbinic studies.⁹⁸ Boyarin interestingly notes that openly misogynous views of women are

⁹¹ Tribble 1978.

⁹² Clines 1990, 25–65.

⁹³ Pardes 1992, 13–38.

⁹⁴ Bird 1997, 183–196. One of the most influential contributions to Jewish feminism, in particular, was Judith Plaskow's *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* published in 1991. Regarding the biblical creation narrative from a Jewish feminist perspective, see Roded 2012.

⁹⁵ See, e.g., Alexander 2000, 101–118. For the creation of woman in biblical studies, see, e.g., Pardes 1992, 13–38.

⁹⁶ Aschkenasy 1986, 5.

⁹⁷ Wegner 1988, 182–198.

⁹⁸ Secunda 2012, 60–61. For Boyarin's subsequent contributions to rabbinic studies, see Wimpfheimer 2011.

rare in rabbinic literature.⁹⁹ This is in line with Judith Hauptman's observation in *Rereading the Rabbis: A Woman's Voice* (1998) that misogynous perceptions are balanced by benevolent notions regarding women.¹⁰⁰ However, Tal Ilan uses traditional methods to construct the concept of women in rabbinic literature in her *Mine and Yours are Hers: Retrieving Women's History from Rabbinic Literature* (1997), demonstrating a misogynous development in rabbinic writings over time.¹⁰¹

5.2 Deconstructing the Rabbinic Conceptions of Eve

Different rabbinic explications regarding the creation of woman have been investigated during the past decades. For example, Leila Bronner tackles the story of Eve in rabbinic literature in *From Eve to Esther: Rabbinic Reconstructions of Biblical Women* (1994) by discussing attitudes towards women in Genesis Rabbah and the Bavli.¹⁰² Bronner discovered that rabbinic traditions concerning Eve were utilized to construct the category of woman, her ritual duties, and her modesty. She shows that rabbinic hermeneutics was used in harmonizing the two creation narratives and simultaneously promoting the subordination of women.¹⁰³

Many authors have since examined rabbinic interpretations regarding Eve. In her ground-breaking work *Midrashic Women: Formations of the Feminine in Rabbinic Literature* (2002), Judith Baskin investigates *midrash* and femininity in it, addressing various themes associated with women in rabbinic literature, specifically Genesis Rabbah and the Bavli. The author notes that rabbinic rationales for the subordinate status of women are constructed on the basis of their inferior nature in creation, leading to marginalization of women and privileging of men.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, Inbar Raveh claims in *Feminist Rereadings of Rabbinic Literature* (2014) that the Jewish image of femininity was created along the development of rabbinic legends. The author importantly notes that two parallel versions of one story, employed to explain details related to the creation of woman, was found in both Genesis Rabbah and the Bavli, their slight differences most likely reflecting a change in the contexts.¹⁰⁵ Thus, it appears evident that rabbinic writings are related to the circumstances in which they were produced and cultivated. Nevertheless, this

⁹⁹ Boyarin 1995, 88–90. The author compares the rabbinic material to Philo and patristic culture in noting this (p. 90).

¹⁰⁰ Hauptman 1998, 9.

¹⁰¹ Ilan 1997, 292–293. Later in the 1990's, feminist perspective in rabbinic studies expanded towards critical reading of rabbinic literature.

¹⁰² Bronner 1994, 1–21.

¹⁰³ Bronner 1994, 22–41.

¹⁰⁴ Baskin 2002, 44–64.

¹⁰⁵ Raveh 2014, 145–156. Rabbinic elaborations concerning the creation of woman are also briefly discussed in various other studies, such as Anderson 1992, 50–54; 2001; Arbel 2005; Brower 2018, 184–187; Fike 2015, 7–8; Flood 2010, 39–45; Hasan-Rokem & Yuval 2017, 250–270; Heger 2014, 11–45; Ilan 1997, 292–293; Kvam *et al.* 1999, 54–79; Meyers 2012, 59–80; Secunda 2012, 62–67; Segal 2005, 21–27; Teugels 2000, 108–119; Townsend 1994; Zevit 2013, 101–109.

literature has been influential in rabbinic Judaism ever since. Such a phenomenon seems nearly universal, as it clearly resembles the formation and development of Islamic interpretive tradition in the above-mentioned Omaima Abou-Bakr's genealogical exploration of Muslim exegesis on the gender-related verse 4:34, for example.

6 Layout for Deconstructing Patriarchy

6.1 Aims and Execution: Towards Understanding Diachronic Development

The general purpose of this study is to demonstrate the androcentric, context-dependent evolution of Muslim exegetic discourse. I first shed light on the content and philological aspects of the interpretations regarding the creation of woman, which represent and further develop gender-based inequality. Second, I examine the elements which the exegetes utilized in relation to earlier exegeses, also acknowledging their distinctive ideas. Third, the accumulation of androcentric details in the evolving exegetic discourse is pointed out.

To evaluate the more general nature of the diachronic development in exegetic discourses, I equivalently examine the Jewish interpretive tradition preceding Islam, which may have offered both a firm basis and many concrete elements to Muslim exegesis. Last, the potential intersections of the exegetic traditions are addressed by comparing Islamic and Jewish explications regarding the creation of woman in the flourishing scholarly atmosphere of Baghdad and other near-by cities of the Abbasid era. This context is introduced as one potential forum for interconnections of Muslim and Jewish interpretations, in which societal changes contributed, for their part, to hardening attitudes towards women.

Importantly, the present study aims to gestate the earlier appliance of discourse-analytic and genealogical methodology in Omaima Abou-Bakr's article examining explications of another gender-related Qur'anic verse, introduced above. I illustrate the relevance of this methodology in featuring the genealogical nature of the exegetic discourse as expanded to different religious traditions and in connection with a different Qur'anic concept, the creation of woman. This is done by exhibiting how interpretive strata are gradually constructed and transformed within each tradition as well as in communication with adjacent ones.

In concise, the present study was designed ...

1. ... to demonstrate the all-embracing patriarchal ethos in the interpretations regarding the creation of woman in premodern Islamic and Jewish exegetic discourses,
2. ... to examine the diachronic development of these discourses in premodern Islamic and Jewish exegetic literature, and
3. ... to elucidate the potential interdependence of these exegeses in a context which enabled vivid encounters between the traditions.

6.2 Feminist Discourse Analysis in Deconstructing Textual Misogyny

In examining the diachronic development of the interpretive traditions, this study utilizes a genealogical perspective. As genealogy examines how power fashions human understanding, it enhances the discourse analysis regarding historical sources,¹⁰⁶ also noting that novel texts are affected by others produced earlier. Importantly, *tafsīr* literature has been described as intrinsically genealogical so that genealogy is likely to benefit the analysis regarding the development of religious discourse on the creation of woman.¹⁰⁷ Appropriately, genealogical discourse analysis has earlier been used in Omaima Abou-Bakr's article examining the evolution of exegesis regarding Q4:34, as introduced above, also serving as an important methodological basis for the study at hand. Interestingly, Jacob Neusner describes a somewhat equivalent phenomenon in rabbinic literature, albeit not naming it "genealogy."¹⁰⁸ What differs from the genealogical approach described by Omaima Abou-Bakr is that Neusner does not explicitly juncture the stages as hermeneutical shifts drawing upon previous explications.

As the present study illustrates the genealogical features of exegetic *discourse*, it is tackled with a discourse-analytic approach. Discourse analysis has currently become a widely used framework in humanities and social studies. It is influenced by both social constructionist and poststructuralist theories. In the former, socially constructed cultural contexts are thought to determine the way in which people comprehend the categories of the world.¹⁰⁹ Gender, too, can be seen as a social construct which is produced by means of, among other things, written or spoken discourse.¹¹⁰ Assertive gender conceptions are constructed and preserved in each community, such as premodern Muslim and Jewish societies.¹¹¹ According to poststructuralist theory, in turn, meanings articulated by language are indecisive and they may be remodeled in relation to the context of their usage.¹¹² Representations of power – such as asymmetry of gender – are constructed, sustained, and shaped by meaning-making.¹¹³ This kind of plasticity is an important feature in studies analyzing gradually evolving centuries-old literature of particular religious communities. Similarly, the texts examined in this study were assembled in an environment influenced both by lived religion and interpretive tradition.

Discourse can be delineated in numerous different ways, such as a means to recognize the (re)construction of the world through language.¹¹⁴ By producing and

¹⁰⁶ Anaïs 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Saleh 2004, 14–16; Saleh 2006, 239–242.

¹⁰⁸ Neusner 1999; see the "Preface," in particular.

¹⁰⁹ Burr 2015, 1–4.

¹¹⁰ Sunderland 2004, 11.

¹¹¹ Lazar 2007, 147.

¹¹² Burr 2015, 61–63; Fairclough 1995, 189.

¹¹³ Fairclough 2004, 9.

¹¹⁴ Sunderland 2004, 6–7.

maintaining inequality or advocating biased categorizations, it can normalize certain ideas of gender.¹¹⁵ Language usage takes place in a context, hence making discourse historically rendered.¹¹⁶ Noteworthy, discourse is intertextual so that each discourse is instinctively related to others.¹¹⁷ This study tackles these features by pinpointing the development of exegetic discourse which, for its part, creates, exhibits, and preserves gender hierarchy in the premodern religious texts.

Instead of providing firmly established analytical tools, discourse analysis combines textual analysis with other forms of social studies. Thus, it may be defined as a multidisciplinary framework to address discursive conventions which affect social architecture.¹¹⁸ Discourse analysis targets to determine how power structures are constituted and illustrated by the discourse of each context so that it can work as a utensil in pointing out harmful rhetoric regarding gender affairs.¹¹⁹ In this study, I aim at determining the exegetic traits used to retain gender-based asymmetry in religious discourse so that power, the very basis of critical discourse analysis, is a substantial factor here as well.

Many scholarly fields, including the study of religion, have recently utilized discourse analysis to examine power structures in language use.¹²⁰ It has also been applied to biblical studies to assess, for example, the way interpretations are created and negotiated in a particular context, and to address the subjectiveness of each interpreter.¹²¹ Likewise, discourse analysis has served as a tool in comparing Qur'anic translations, mainly regarded as interpretations of the translators.¹²² *Tafsīr* can, in fact, be described as discourse analysis *per se*.¹²³ Above all, *tafsīr* literature constructs an exegetic discourse representing power structures and hierarchies so that its gender issues can be meaningfully tackled by feminist discourse-analytic methodology.

6.3 Addressing the Interconnectedness of Exegesis

Many scholars have previously addressed the interdependency of the interpretive traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.¹²⁴ Reuven Firestone and Shari

¹¹⁵ Butler 1993, 1.

¹¹⁶ Wodak 2001, 3.

¹¹⁷ Wodak 1997, 6.

¹¹⁸ Fairclough 1992, 12–36.

¹¹⁹ Sunderland 2004, 11.

¹²⁰ Hjelm 2021.

¹²¹ Warhol 2007, 51–52.

¹²² *E.g.*, Bazargani 2015; Sideeg 2015.

¹²³ Nordin 2015, 129–142.

¹²⁴ *E.g.*, Goldstein 2012, 1–10.

Lowin, for example, have published comparative studies examining premodern Islamic and Jewish explications on Abraham,¹²⁵ the character on which such comparisons have mainly focused. In addition, the potential interconnectedness of the interpretive traditions has been addressed in some previous studies.¹²⁶ Quite a few earlier studies have premised one primary tradition, strongly concentrating on finding the “original” narrative from the abundant exegetic compositions.¹²⁷ Thus, it is well possible that the complex relationship of the traditions has been misconstrued along such attempts.¹²⁸ The interdependency of premodern exegetic narratives of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity has, nevertheless, been illustrated in some recent studies.¹²⁹ The present study, too, aiming at deconstructing the patriarchal layers of religious traditions regarding the theme of Eve’s creation, draws upon the assumption that the scholarly encounters of premodern Muslims and Jews contribute to the development of the traditions. Likewise, the methodology used for reconstructive efforts, *i.e.*, providing alternative readings of the religious sources, seems to be remarkably similar between Muslim and Jewish feminists, as suggested by Ruth Roded.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ *E.g.*, Bakhos 2014; Firestone 1993; Firestone 2008; Lowin 2006; Lowin 2011.

¹²⁶ For a highly reductionist perspective, see Katsh 1962. Catherine Bronson (2012), for example, has thoroughly examined the origins of the Islamic conceptions of the primal woman in the light of Jewish and Christian sources.

¹²⁷ Firestone 2008, 108–109; Lowin 2006, 1–2. For comparative approaches to Jewish and Islamic exegesis, see Lowin 2011.

¹²⁸ Lowin 2006, 1.

¹²⁹ See, *e.g.*, Brodeur *et al.* (eds.), 2017; Szpiech 2015. For the interrelation of Jewish and Islamic exegesis, see Bakhos 2007; Poorthuis 2013.

¹³⁰ Roded 2012, 279–285.

7 Genealogical and Discursive Foundation of Patriarchy

In terms of Muslim exegesis, the diachronic development of the interpretive tradition was evaluated by examining explications concerning a part of the first verse in the fourth chapter of the Qur'an, *i.e.*, *Sūrat al-Nisā'*. Its sentence *khalaqakum min nafsin wāḥidatin wa-khalaqa minhā zawjahā* is conventionally understood as the creation of man, then the woman.¹³¹ The elaborations by the premodern exegetes relate to many contextual factors so that the political, sectarian, and societal circumstances naturally contributed to the explications and deductions. It is also well known that premodern Muslim commentators had various sources for their exegetic works. For example, they utilized *ḥadīth* literature, jurisprudence, poetry, theology, and philology for their interpretations. As they also explicitly referred to the Jews as a source in explicating the sometimes-equivocal Qur'anic verses, this study also addressed the same theme, the creation of woman, in late antique rabbinic literature commenting human creation in Gen. 1:26–28, Gen. 2:7, and Gen. 2:20–23.

7.1 Male-Privileging Traits of Muslim Exegesis (Study I and II)

The first study examined the evolution of the exegetic discourse discussing the creation of woman among Muslims scholars, as it appeared in ten premodern verse-by-verse Sunni commentaries. The timeframe of the study was from the late 3rd/9th to the 9th/15th century. To study the evolving nature of exegetic information, it was justifiable to focus on one specific branch of Islam so that the exegetes were chosen within the Sunni sect which has been dominant among the varieties of Islam. Wide circulation of literature between scholars was expected, but the commentators were chosen to represent a wide spectrum of juristic orientations, geographical locations, and methods of exegesis. Admittedly, however, it was possible to include only a part of the surviving premodern Sunni commentary material due to the limited extent of this study, hereby focusing on the ones that are most abundantly cited and discussed in modern Muslim scholarship.¹³² The ten Sunni commentators selected for the study are Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Ibn Abī Ḥātim 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Rāzī (d. 327/938), Abū al-Layth Naṣr b. Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (d. 373/983), Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Naysābūrī al-Wāḥidī (d. 460/1076), Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Umar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurtubī (d. 671/1273), Abū Ḥayyān Athīr al-Dīn al-Gharnāṭī al-Andalusī (d. 745/1344), Abū al-Fidā' 'Imād ad-Dīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr

¹³¹ Eng. "created you from a single soul and from it created its mate" (translation according to *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, eds. Nasr *et al.*, 2015).

¹³² Especially the summaries of premodern commentary accounts provided by Nasr *et al.* 2015.

al-Qurashī al-Dimashqī (d. 774/1373), and Abū al-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505, two different commentaries).

Next, thirteen premodern verse-by-verse Twelver-Shi‘i commentaries were chosen for the second study examining the development of the exegetic discourse regarding the creation of woman within Shi‘i Islam. The timeframe of the search was from the 3rd/9th century, coinciding from the formative period of Shi‘ism, until the modern era, 11th/17th century. Due to the discursive nature of *tafsīr*, I found it reasonable to concentrate on exegeses in one language so that Persian commentaries were excluded, albeit some do exist in verse-by-verse format.¹³³ Despite my efforts, no verse-by-verse Arabic commentaries from other branches of Shi‘i Islam were identified from this time period.¹³⁴ The selection comprises twelve premodern Twelver-Shi‘i scholars as follows: Abū al-Qāsim Furāt al-Kūfī (d. early 4th/10th century), ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. after 307/919), Muḥammad b. Mas‘ūd al-‘Ayyāshī (d. 319/932), Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), Abū ‘Alī al-Faḍl al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1153, two different commentaries), Muḥammad al-Shaybānī (d. 7th/13th century), Abū al-Fayḍ al-Nākūrī (d. 1004/1595), ‘Abd ‘Alī b. Jum‘a al-‘Arūsī al-Ḥuwayzī (d. 1080/1669–1105/1693),¹³⁵ Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (d. 1091/1680), Hāshim b. Sulaymān al-Tūbilī al-Baḥrānī (d. 1107/1696), Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn al-Kāshānī (d. 1115/1703), and Mīrzā Muḥammad al-Mashhadī (d. 1125/1713). Biographical information and the commentaries of these Muslim exegetes are presented in Appendix 2.

In the two studies, discourse analysis of premodern Sunni and Shi‘i *tafsīr* literature on the creation of woman revealed that the premodern interpretations were dividable into three successive discursive stages with divergent features. This diachronic development represents a comparable genealogical trajectory in both Sunni and Shi‘i interpretive traditions so that the body of conventional exegesis on the creation of woman was first established and then intensified, after which it got embellished with novel, extravagant elements. The creation of woman was first described as having taken place after and from the man – and finally *for* the man as well.

The first discursive stage in the evolution of Muslim exegetic discourse, roughly dating to 3rd/9th–4th/10th centuries, appeared as normativization of the ideas concerning the creation of woman. In Sunni interpretive tradition, it became established that *nafs wāḥida*, the “single soul” of Q4:1, means Adam, whereas the

¹³³ Of the Persian commentaries, *Rawḍ al-jinān wa-rawḥ al-janān* by Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (d. 6th/12th century) and *Manḥaj al-ṣādiqīn fī ilzām al-mukhālīfīn* by Mullā Faṭḥ Allāh Kāshānī (d. 988/1580) were briefly reviewed, with the help of Dr. Ilkka Lindstedt, but they do not add to the narrative regarding the creation of woman.

¹³⁴ Human creation has also been addressed in thematic commentaries to some extent.

¹³⁵ Bauer and Osman mention a later date for his death. My approximate is based on Todd Lawson’s thorough investigation (1993), and the matter is substantial when examining the interconnectedness of the exegesis. I also believe that Bauer erroneously ascribes many traditions, most likely first presented by al-Ḥuwayzī, to Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī.

companion created from this soul, *zawj*, means Eve. The first woman was portrayed, with details quite similar to the biblical Garden narrative, as extracted from Adam's back and a tiny left-side rib, hence attributing dismissive features to the event. Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī's extensive commentary, which remained influential ever since, enumerates these presumptive principles regarding the creation of woman, which then firmly entrenched in Sunni exegesis.

The first stage of Shi'ī exegesis, coinciding with the formation of a nascent Twelver-Shi'ī identity, established the corpus of traditions regarding the creation of woman based on narrations ascribed to the Imams, as elaborately cited by Muḥammad al-'Ayyāshī. He described Eve being created either from the clay which was left over from Adam's creation – or alternatively from his smallest and lowest rib, equivalent to the Sunni tradition. Quite strikingly, both sects concluded that based on the derivative creation of woman, she is profligate to an extent that she must be imprisoned at home. This male-favoring, deeply patriarchal ethos was further consolidated throughout the development of the Muslim exegetic discourse, resonating with Oaima Abou-Bakr's previous findings in connection with Sunni exegesis on Q4:34.

The second stage in the evolution of exegesis regarding the creation of woman, dating to 5th/11th–7th/13th centuries, consolidated the concepts formed during the first phase. Interpretive discourse was shaped so that earlier notions were taken for granted and intertextual references were used in a selective way. For example, the rib, characterized as the substance used in the creation of woman, became crooked along Abū al-Ḥasan al-Wāḥidī's explications, possibly entailing dubious female characteristics. This detail was taken from the *ḥadīth* collections, hence increasing the authority of the *tafsīr* produced in verse-by-verse format.

The second discursive stage of Shi'ī exegesis was a period of flourishing sectarian thought. Despite the environment enabling distinct interpretations, the normativized views on Eve were consolidated, and the depiction of the claimed substance of her creation, Adam's rib, became even more insignificant: sinister and farthest. In addition, Amīn al-Dīn al-Ṭabrisī introduced a detail from the Sunni traditions so that the crooked rib became an inherent feature among the Shi'ī exegetic discourse as well. This shift, the genealogical element traced in Abou-Bakr's study, reinforced the highly patriarchal notions, which preserved, promoted, and further generated gender hierarchy.

The third discursive stage of Muslim explications, dating to 8th/14th–9th/15th centuries in Sunni exegesis and 10th/16th–11th/17th centuries among the Shi'a, can be characterized by expanding the concepts regarding the creation of woman, which had already been normativized and strengthened during the earlier phases of the evolving exegetic discourse. It correlates with Abou-Bakr's findings from this phase of the development in that the scholars expanded the evidence for male superiority in all fields of life. In Sunni interpretations, male-favoring notions were added to

preceding explications. As an illustration, Abū Ḥayyān gave credit to earlier exegetes, but as citing them, his own terminology encompassed negative connotations regarding women. In Ibn Kathīr's interpretations, in turn, *ḥadīth* material was used selectively according to the needs, concomitantly disparaging women. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, for his part, even juxtaposed the creation of the first woman with the birth of evilness.

In Shi'ī exegesis of the third discursive stage, taking place under the blooming Safavid dynasty which may have led to emphasizing sectarian elements, the pejorative attributes of the rib from which Eve had been created were elaborated upon. The narratives were expanded to attest the weakness of women, prone to material and corporal things – she is fundamentally different, as suggested by Muḥsin al-Fayḍ, for example. In addition, the woman was understood as created to satisfy the man in diverse ways. The creation-based, explicitly encouraged seclusion of women, already introduced during the first discursive stage, was repeated in both Sunni and Shi'ī narrations.

The content of Sunni exegesis concerning the creation of woman differs from the Shi'ī exegetic discourse to some extent, but the Muslim commentaries examined in Study I and II largely attest that there were obvious encounters between the scholars and their works. The Shi'a would frequently refer to Sunni ideas and accounts or to a presumed cross-dogmatic consensus.¹³⁶ As an illustration, Shi'ī commentators note that most scholars prefer Adam's rib as the material from which the first woman was created, and many of these exegetes even seem to acknowledge this apparently Sunni concept accurate. Nevertheless, nearly every Shi'ī commentator introduces an alternative account based on which the substance of Eve's creation was not a rib but the excess clay from Adam's creation. Another tradition among the Shi'a presents such material of even lesser worth, suggesting that Eve might have been created from the surplus of the creation of Adam's rib. Despite the details used to fortify male privilege, the implications of the Muslim exegetic discourse for the status of women seem ubiquitous: Women are portrayed as subsidiary, hazardous, and subservient.

Admittedly, Studies I and II are based on explications regarding a short expression in a Qur'anic verse without examining their larger literary contexts, *i.e.*, surrounding exegetic passages. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, for example, begins his somewhat philosophical exegesis of Q4:1 by referring to the importance of caring and kindness for weaker members of the community, including women. Al-Rāzī also emphasizes *taqwā*, the Qur'anic concept of God-consciousness also tackled in many of the Islamic feminist works introduced above, making a link to the creation from *nafs wāḥida* and the concomitant kinship of all humanity.¹³⁷ In this study, I have selected passages clearly commenting the creation of woman, or noted their absence, so that my approach

¹³⁶ Of the Sunni exegetes, particularly Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's thoughts can be found in Shi'ī exegesis regarding the creation of woman.

¹³⁷ al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 9:163–166.

may have disregarded some aspects, potentially favorable towards women, of the exegeses examined. There were a few sympathetic notions by the exegetes, which I have mentioned in the analyses, but they have received little space. Moreover, my reading of the exegeses may have been atomistic even though I simultaneously resist the exegetes' tendency to such reading of the Qur'an. In addition, I must admit that it could be possible to interpret the creation from the man's rib so that the woman is therefore by the man's side, or united with the man, potentially even alluding to equality among human beings. The premodern Muslim exegetes, nevertheless, nearly unanimously made deductions which are demeaning towards women, constantly building on one another's explications concerning the adverse aspects of the woman's creation, so that I find it reasonable to consider their mindset deeply patriarchal, partly even misogynous.

7.2 Rabbinic Basis of Jewish Patriarchy (Study III)

For the third study, I examined a great number of rabbinic texts regarding the creation of human to find the passages specifically dealing with the creation of woman. I read the texts in their original languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, or mixtures of the two. I focused on the time of most abundant rabbinic literature, based on the estimated dating of each compilation,¹³⁸ so that the search spanned from the 5th to the 9th century CE, hence not reaching the time of the great medieval Jewish commentaries. Noteworthy, while most of the traditions in the rabbinic compilations are ascribed to rabbis by name, some of whom may have even been historical figures, it is impossible to confirm their factual contribution. Historical references to the rabbis barely exist, and the scattered hagiographical pieces of knowledge are somewhat conflicting with parallel sources. In fact, the traditions most likely had a long path as orally transmitted narrations.¹³⁹ Moreover, rabbinic literature serves as statements of consensus, in a sense,¹⁴⁰ and the editorial contribution present in it relates to the context of each compilation.

The first stage (5th century) in the evolution of rabbinic discourse was addressed through two famous collections of *midrash*, Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah. The next phase (6th century) comprises a great number of traditions, attributable to both *tannaim* and *amoraim*, which have been compiled into the enormous treasury of the Babylonian Talmud. The third stage (7th–9th centuries) was examined through four different rabbinic texts: Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Avot de-

¹³⁸ It only seems to be possible to trace the timing of certain passages based on tradition-critical and redactional-critical methodology (Fonrobert & Jaffee 2007, 2). It should be noted that the estimations are rough and constantly contested. As an illustration, the dating of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has varied widely: In his encyclopedic article, Martin McNamara presents studies referring to as early as pre-Christian time (2003, 761), whereas Gavin McDowell has recently argued for a very late dating (2021).

¹³⁹ Fonrobert & Jaffee 2007, 2.

¹⁴⁰ Neusner 1995, 110–111.

Rabbi Nathan, Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer, and Alphabet of Ben Sira, representing the time of the *geonim*.

The selected texts were assembled in one of the two Jewish clusters, Palestine or Babylonia, although the traditions seem to have circulated quite freely between the two locations. Genesis Rabbah, Leviticus Rabbah, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and presumably Avot de-Rabbi Nathan and Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer, were compiled in Palestine. The Babylonian Talmud and Alphabet of Ben Sira, instead, were products of the Babylonian Jewry. Except for Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Alphabet of Ben Sira, the accounts analyzed in the study follow the most typical form of rabbinic traditions, *i.e.*, dialectically discussing a biblical verse or a certain theme. The rabbinic text and their estimated time and place of compilation are given in Appendix 1.

Examining the creation of woman in rabbinic texts revealed that the development of Jewish exegetic discourse exhibited a genealogical pattern already detected in Muslim exegetic discourse (Study I and II). Similarly, the diachronic development appeared in three distinct discursive stages which exhibit shifts in explications concerning the biblical depiction of the woman's creation. Comparison of rabbinic traditions indicated that religious writings circulated widely during the half-millennium-long period addressed in the study. Although there was a presupposed Palestinian preponderance in Genesis Rabbah, this also applied to the accounts from the Babylonian Talmud. This implies that the primary corpus of narrations regarding the creation of woman was constituted promptly as its main features were already present in the *midrash* from the 5th century CE.

In the aggadic traditions of Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah, the rabbis attempted to harmonize the two somewhat different creation accounts introducing, for example, the concept of a primal androgyne, which ultimately remained a minority view. Likewise, the potential non-conventional translation for the Hebrew *šela* ' as "side" was brought up but forgotten in the course of time. The sages explained the intrinsic precarious characteristics of women being due to her creation. The exegetic discourse substantiated the position of woman as ornamental – Genesis Rabbah 18:1 even suggests that women should stay at home. Interestingly, this element is in line with Muslim exegesis at an equivalent discursive stage.

During the second discursive stage, roughly 6th century CE, reinforcing efforts regarding the creation of woman took place in the rabbinic discussions, mediated by the explications compiled into the monumental collection of traditions, the Babylonian Talmud. The rabbis would advocate marriage and emphasize the disparity of women based on details related to the creation. The difference between the two biblical creation accounts continued to bother the sages, but regarding the creation of woman, the discussion had a dismissive tone – the rabbis even suggested that the female motive in the primal human being might have been just a tail, as preserved in Berakhot 61a. The Jewish exegetic discourse also presented the woman as created for the man in many ways. For instance, she was needed to serve as a

handmaid, as explicated in Sanhedrin 39a. The rabbis built on previous traditions, excluding the earlier speculations with a more egalitarian tone.

Finally, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Avot de-Rabbi Nathan, Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, and Alphabet of Ben Sira provided abundant elaborations to the rabbinic discourse during the 7th–9th centuries CE. This discursive stage cemented the substance of Eve's creation as Adam's tiny bone, perhaps the thirteenth rib. The traditions also present women as objects of desire and sexual acts on the one hand – and as subjects of promiscuity, on the other. Adam, in fact, had two wives, according to Alphabet of Ben Sira, and the first one of them, Lilith, taught the readers that claiming egalitarian status can have devastating consequences. Lilith, herself, became a she-devil who loses a hundred children every day. Not only did this offer a convenient means to reconcile the two biblical creation narratives, but it also demonstrates the characteristics of the hermeneutical trajectory originally introduced by Omaina Abou-Bakr: The third discursive stage remarkably expanded the earlier concepts.

7.3 Intersections of Exegesis: From Appropriations to Demarcations (Study IV)

In studies I–III, I demonstrated that the genealogy of patriarchy in Muslim and Jewish interpretive traditions can be detected with discourse analysis, tracking the beginning, alterations, and evolution of the exegetic discourse. The discursive stages I identified were neither straightforwardly reliant on the religious tradition, creed, nor the Qur'anic verse in question, although the characteristics of dominant explications appear to reflect the variable circumstances in the exegetes' contexts. This provoked an interest to examine the Muslim and Jewish interpretations in a limited time and space. Thus, the fourth study was designed to evaluate the interdependence of interpretations regarding the creation of woman between Sunni, Shi'i, and Jewish exegeses. This was done by addressing the scholarly discussions of one specific era and location, Abbasid Iraq. The time frame of the examined exegeses begins from the formative period of Islamic interpretive tradition, *i.e.*, from the 2nd/8th century, reaching close to the decline of the Abbasid caliphate, 6th/12th century.

In terms of Jewish explications regarding the creation of woman, I examined the rabbinic texts that were most likely affluently discussed in the Babylonian Jewish academies. The main emphasis was therefore in the Babylonian Talmud, occasionally considering rabbinic traditions preserved in Genesis Rabbah, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and Alphabet of Ben Sira, which the Babylonian *geonim* presumably studied to some extent. To address the Abbasid-era Muslim interpretations of the Qur'anic passage at issue, I analyzed *tafsīr* material from nine Sunni and four Shi'i exegetes who operated in or in close contact with the Iraqi centers of Baghdad, Kufa, and Basra. The Sunni exegetes included are Muqātil b. Sulaymān al-Balkhī (d. 150/767), Abū 'Abd Allāh Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/777), Abū Zakarīyā' Yahyā

al-Farrā' (d. 207/822), Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Zajjāj (d. 311/923), Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), Abū Ja'far al-Naḥḥās (d. 338/949), Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058), Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), and Ibn al-Jawzī al-Baghdādī (d. 597/1200). The Shi'i commentators of the same context are Furāt al-Kūfī (d. early 4th/10th century), Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd al-'Ayyāshī (d. 319/932), Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), and Abū 'Alī al-Faḍl al-Ṭabrisī (d. 548/1153). The rabbinic texts and their estimated time and place of compilation as well as the biographical information and commentaries of the Muslim exegetes are given in Appendices 1 and 2, respectively.

There were obvious similarities, potentially strengthening one another, between the Sunni, Shi'i, and rabbinic explications, which probably illustrated as well as intensified the patriarchal mindset of the exegetic discourse. The gender-related reasonings occurred quite comparable in the dominant interpretations of the context. These patriarchal conjectures were premised on the material and manner of Eve's creation. Eve's origin was portrayed as Adam's body part, presumably one of his ribs, so that the creation of woman appeared essentially dependent and derivative of the man. Thus, her creation indicated ancillarity, inferiority, and allegiance to the man, which the scholars utilized to discursively justify gender hierarchy. Furthermore, they associated the creation of woman with women's allegedly problematic aspects due to which women even were to be secluded. In addition to Eve's creation after and from the man, it occurred *for* the man: to serve as his entertainer, servant, and satisfier.

Besides the similarities, there were also inverse connections between the Muslim and Jewish exegeses. For example, some details in Muslim interpretations may echo a general desire to dissociate from previous exegeses. The exegetes seem to have attempted to distinguish their individual judgement from others', hence bolstering one's own Muslim or sectarian status. The characteristics of the "rib" as taken from the left side or being crooked may have, in fact, been used for such disengagement. Instead of simply replicating previous interpretations, the frequent interaction of the exegetic discourses probably promoted innovative elaborations which further consolidated distinct Sunni and Shi'i identities.

The religiously motivated scholarly endeavors of Abbasid Iraq were naturally not restricted to Muslims and Jews. Christians, too, were visibly present in this context,¹⁴¹ possibly even contributing to the prevalent exegetic discourses in the course of time.¹⁴² There already seems to have been commonalities between Christian and

¹⁴¹ See Scheiner & Janos 2014, in particular. Noteworthy, the Christians comprised several denominations and they seem to have been quite a heterogeneous group in Baghdad (Scheiner & Janos 2014, 26–27).

¹⁴² On the potential exegetic encounters, see *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule: Church Life and Scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq* (2003) edited by David Thomas. The East Syrian patriarchs, for example, played an influential role in the caliph's administration (Wilmshurst 2018, 189). The Christian contribution to the intellectual life of the Abbasid Iraq seems to have focused on translations from Greek to Syriac and from Syriac to Arabic as well as teaching (Scheiner & Janos 2014, 36).

Jewish explications regarding the first woman's creation in Late antiquity.¹⁴³ As an illustration, the main Syriac commentary, possibly known and discussed among the Abbasid-context Christians, was that of Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373 CE), which refers to the adornment of the woman along her creation equivalently to three Talmudic accounts found in Berakhot 61a, Shabbat 95a, and Niddah 45b.¹⁴⁴ In addition, Bar Hebraeus' (d. 685/1286) commentary, which was written at the end of the Abbasid period possibly reflecting the Christian exegetic discourse of the context, mainly speculates on the part of Adam from which the woman was created, resembling a rabbinic passage in Genesis Rabbah 18:2.¹⁴⁵ A potential confluence between Christian and Muslim exegeses can be found in *Book of the Bee*, written by the bishop Solomon of Akhlata in Basra during the early 7th/13th century, which contains a noteworthy detail: The rib of Adam, from which the first woman was created, is specified as one from Adam's *left* side,¹⁴⁶ which might have been a Muslim innovation. Apart from these scarce examples, however, the role of Christianity is not separately discussed, as this clearly exceeds the bounds of my study.

¹⁴³ For the encounters between Christian and Jewish exegeses, see, *e.g.*, Brock 1979; Zoref 2016. In addition, see *Jews and Syriac Christians: Intersections across the First Millennium* (2020) edited by Aaron M. Butts & Simcha Gross.

¹⁴⁴ St Ephrem the Syrian, 104–106. From patristic literature, the apparently well-known writers Origen (d. 253 CE) and Eusebius of Emesa (d. c. 360 CE) do not specifically seem to deal with the creation of woman. John Chrysostom's (d. 407 CE) Homily 15 on Genesis, instead, links the event to Christian doctrine without adding any details or deductions connected with the status of women (Saint John Chrysostom Homilies on Genesis 1–17, 191–206). The Syriac commentaries were accessed in English translations.

¹⁴⁵ Barhebraeus' Scholia on the Old Testament, 23–25.

¹⁴⁶ *Book of the Bee*, 18.

8 Conclusions: Towards Applied Feminist Hermeneutics

The purpose of this study was to make transparent the gender ideology of premodern exegetic discourse and thereby contribute to feminist hermeneutics. Given the genealogical nature of *tafsīr* and rabbinic literature, I aimed at tracing and deconstructing manifestations of patriarchy in religious texts by exploring exegetic discourses used to construct, embody, and sustain gender hierarchy. My discourse analysis enabled identifying shifts – citations, rearrangements, augmentations, transformations, deselections, and other reformations – in the late antique and medieval discursive trajectories.

My study shows that the methodological foundation, previously presented by Omaila Abou-Bakr in connection with Sunni explications regarding Q4:34, appeared as an advantageous tool in assessing premodern Sunni interpretations regarding the Qur'anic verse 4:1, generally understood to contain a description of Eve's creation. The method was then applied to Shi'ī material where the diachronic development could be similarly divided into three distinctive discursive stages with equivalent features. Third, the evolution of exegetic discourse regarding the same topic, the creation of woman, appeared comparable in Jewish interpretive tradition, when the late antique rabbinic discourse was addressed from a genealogical perspective. Interestingly, the Islamic feminist hermeneutical framework also offered a salutary tool applicable to religious discourse outside the from-within position. These findings develop and expand the genealogical strategy previously presented by Abou-Bakr and later utilized, *e.g.*, by Nevin Reda and Asma Afsaruddin.¹⁴⁷

The analysis of Muslim and Jewish exegetic discourse regarding the creation of woman showed that women were perceived as subsidiary to men due to their claimed derivative creation. The fashion and substance of Eve's creation was used to illustrate alleged unfavorable features of women and to rationalize their treatment as secondary beings. Such traits in the premodern exegetic discourses evolved gradually, in three distinctive discursive stages, engendering a patriarchal construct of creation-based gender hierarchy. My findings are in line with Abou-Bakr's notions concerning another female-related topic – even the details seem to overlap to some extent. This naturally provokes the question of whether the development of premodern exegesis is similar, unfavorable to women, regardless of the theme, creed, or the era. Perhaps my analyses could next be complemented by addressing the universality of the phenomenon, in which comparative feminist theology might be at its best.

The comparative aspect of the present study was most evident in assessing the potential encounters between the Islamic and Jewish traditions in the scholarly atmosphere of Abbasid Iraq during the 2nd/8th–6th/12th centuries. These encounters may have both strengthened pre-existing conjectures and pushed the sages towards

¹⁴⁷ Afsaruddin 2020; Reda 2020.

novel elaborations that possibly reflected their societal and sectarian circumstances. These innovations may have been used to further consolidate distinct Sunni and Shi'i identities. In accordance with Jerusha Rhodes' concept of comparative feminist theology, such findings provide a forum for theological reflections.¹⁴⁸ Critical reflection of the exegetic discourses may promote deeper understanding of both traditions, not only the one of primary interest. In addition to gaining better awareness concerning the evolution of the Islamic interpretive tradition, Muslim scholars might benefit from a comparative approach that applies close reading of the scripture in the light of the perspectives brought forth within the "other."

Hibba Abugideiri, among others, has justifiably pointed out that the emphasis of Islamic feminist hermeneutics has been on deconstructive efforts during the past decades.¹⁴⁹ The present study, too, has *deconstructed* some aspects of the Islamic and Jewish interpretive traditions in connection with one theme, the creation of woman. Deconstructive findings have, however, led scholars to progressively challenge the potentially biased premodern conventions and *reconstruct* interpretations of the religious texts. Islamic feminist hermeneutics, in particular, has advocated egalitarian, ethically sustainable readings of the Qur'an which all-embracingly guide the believers in diverse sectors of their lives, and called for implementing its message without the ballast of the past, for instance, to Muslim family laws. Such efforts can, at their best, contribute to the well-being of women.

The epistemological framework of feminist hermeneutics may, in fact, be utilized to promote other dimensions of equality and sustainability. Ethically oriented reconstructive approach in reading the scripture can, for example, be applied to ecological issues, which could potentially have enormous impact on the planet. I have recently applied fundamental Jewish principles promoting all-encompassing justice to ethical reading of human creation in the Bible, concomitantly questioning the hierarchical interpretations regarding the creation of woman and the rest of God's creation specifically in rabbinic explications.¹⁵⁰ This systematic *ecofeminist* close reading of the biblical narrative yielded a meaningful, sustainable message promoting egalitarian and ecological aspects. Thus, the Islamic feminist inquiry may also have broader implications, perhaps next applied as an ecofeminist hermeneutical tool within Muslims' exegetic endeavors. This would meet the challenges of the near future in an even more comprehensive way.

¹⁴⁸ Rhodes 2018, 24.

¹⁴⁹ Abugideiri 2010.

¹⁵⁰ von Schöneman 2022.

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Appendix 1. Rabbinic Text and their Estimated Time and Place of Compilation.

The table presents the estimated time and place of the rabbinic compilations and their editions used in the study. The information is given in a chronological order. The last column indicates the studies in which the edition has been used.

Compilation	Tractate/ Chapter	Century	Place	Edition	Study
Genesis Rabbah	8, 14	early 5 th	Palestine	<i>Bereschit Rabba mit kritischen Apparat und Kommentar.</i> Parascha I-XLVII. ed. J. Theodor. Berlin: [unknown], 1912.	III
	17, 18				III, IV
Leviticus Rabbah	14, 29	5 th	Palestine	<i>Leviticus Rabbah.</i> ed. C. Milikowsky. https://www.biu.ac.il/JS/midrash/VR/editionData.htm	III
Babylonian Talmud	Berakhot 61a	6 th	Babylonia	<i>Talmud Bavli. 'Im kol ha-mefarshim ka-asher nidpas mi-qedem ve-'im hosafot khadashot ki-mvo 'ar basha' ar ha-sheni.</i> Jerusalem: Hotsa' at ha-talmud, 195-.	III, IV
	Shabbat 95a				III, IV
	Eruvin 18a–b				III, IV
	Megillah 9a				III, IV
	Yevamot 62b–63a, 65b, 103b				III, IV
	Ketubbot 8a				III, IV
	Sanhedrin 38a–39b, 107a				III, IV
	Niddah 31b, 45b				III, IV
Targum Pseudo-Jonathan	2:7, 2:21	>6 th	Palestine	<i>The Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel.</i> London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862.	III, IV
Avot de-Rabbi Nathan	8, 42	6 th –8 th	Palestine	<i>Abot de-Rabbi Natan.</i> ed. Shlomo Schechter. Vienna: [unknown], 1887.	III
Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer	12	early 8 th	Palestine	<i>Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer. The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great According to the Text of the Manuscript Belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna.</i> ed. Gerald Friedlander. New York: Sopher Hermon, 1981.	III
Alphabet of Ben Sira	34	8 th –10 th	Babylonia	Alpha Beta Ben Sira. <i>Otsar Midrashim</i> , vol. 1. ed. J. D. Eisenstein. New York: [unknown], 1915.	III, IV

Appendix 2. Biographical Information and Commentaries of the Muslim Exegetes.

The table presents biographical information (names, years death, places of birth, and primary *fiqh* affiliations, when applicable) and the commentary editions used in the study. The information is given in a chronological order. The last column indicates the studies in which the edition has been used.

Name	Edition	Death	Place of Birth	Fiqh	Study
al-Balkhī Muqātil b. Sulaymān	<i>Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān</i> . Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Tārikh al- 'Arabī, 2002.	150/767	Khurasan		IV
al-Thawrī Abū 'Abd Allāh Sufyān	<i>Tafsīr Sufyān al-Thawrī</i> . Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiyya, 1983.	161/777	Khurasan		IV
al-Farrā' Abū Zakariyā' Yahyā	<i>Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān</i> . Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1983.	207/822	Kufa, Iraq		IV
al-Kūfī Abū al-Qāsim Furāt	<i>Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī</i> . ed. M. al-Kāzim. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Tārikh al- 'Arabī, 2011.	300/913	Kufa?	Shi'i	II, IV
al-Qummī 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm	<i>Tafsīr al-Qummī</i> . ed. T. al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī. Najaf: Maṭba'at al-Najaf, 1966.	> 307/919	Kufa, Iraq	Shi'i	II, IV
al-Zajjāj Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm	<i>Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān wa-i'rābuh</i> . Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1988.	310/922	Basra, Iraq	Shi'i	IV
al-Ṭabarī Abū Ja'far Muḥammad	<i>Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al- Qur'ān</i> . Cairo: Dār Hijr, 2001.	310/923	Ṭabaristan	Shāfi'i	I, II, IV
al-'Ayyāshī Muḥammad b. Mas'ūd	<i>Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī</i> ed. Hāshim Rasūlī Maḥallātī. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-'Ālamī, 1991.	319/932	Samarqand	Shi'i	II, IV
al-Rāzī Ibn Abī Ḥātim 'Abd al-Rahmān	<i>Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm</i> . ed. A. M. al-Tayyib. Mecca: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al- Bāz, 1999.	327/938	Ray, Iran	Shāfi'i	I, II
al-Nahhās Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	<i>Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān al-karīm</i> . Saudi Arabia: Jāmi'at Umm al- Qur'ān, 1980.	338/949	Fustat Egypt		IV
al-Samarqandī Abū al-Layth Naṣr	<i>Baḥr al-'ulūm</i> . ed. A. M. Mu'awwad et al. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiyya, 1993.	373/983	Samarqand	Ḥanafi	I, II
al-Māwardī Abū al-Hasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad	<i>Al-nukat wa-l-'uyūn</i> . ed. Sayyid b. 'Abd al-Maqṣūr b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1992.	450/1058	Basra, Iraq	Shāfi'i	IV
al-Ṭūsī Abū Ja'far Muḥammad	<i>Al-tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān</i> . ed. Aḥmad Shawqī al-Amīn & Aḥmad Ḥabīb Qaṣīr. Al-Najaf al-Ashraf: Maktabat al-Amīn, 1989.	460/1067	Khurasan	Shi'i	II, IV
al-Wāhidī Abū al-Hasan 'Alī al-Naysābūrī	<i>Tafsīr al-basīṭ</i> . Riyadh: Wizārat al-Ta'līm al- 'Ālī, 2010	468/1076	Khurasan	Shāfi'i	I, II
al-Zamakhsharī Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd	<i>Al-kashshāf 'an ghawāmiḍ ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl wa-'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl</i> . Riyadh: Maktabat al-'Ubaykān, 1998.	538/1144	Khwarazm	Ḥanafi	I, IV

al-Tabrisī Abū 'Alī al-Faḍl b. al-Ḥasan	<i>Jawāmi' al-jāmi' fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-majīd.</i> Qum: Mu' assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 2003. <i>Majma' al-bayān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān.</i> Beirut: Dar al-Murtaḍa, 2006.	548/1153	Mashhad Iraq	Shi' i	II, IV
al-Baghdādī Ibn al-Jawzī 'Abd al-Rahmān	<i>Zād al-masīr fi 'ilm al-tafsīr.</i> Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1974.	597/1200	Baghdad	Ḥanbali	IV
al-Rāzī Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Umar Fakhr al-Dīn	<i>Al-tafsīr al-kabīr wa-mafātīḥ al-ghayb.</i> Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981.	606/1210	Ray, Iran	Shāfi' i	I, II
al-Shaybānī Muḥammad b. Hasan	<i>Nahj al-bayān 'an kashf ma'ānī al-Qur'ān.</i> ed. H. Dargāhī. Qum: Nashr al- Hādī, 1958–99.	7 th /13 th century	?	Shi' i	II
al-Qurtubī Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad	<i>Al-jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān.</i> Beirut: al-Risāla, 2000.	671/1273	Cordoba	Māliki	I, II
al-Andalusī Abū Hayyān Athīr al- Dīn al-Gharnāṭī	<i>Tafsīr al-baḥr al-muḥīṭ.</i> ed. A. 'Abd al-Mawjūd <i>et al.</i> Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al- 'Ilmiyya, 2001	745/1344	Granada	Zāhiri	I, II
al-Dimashqī Abū al-Fidā' 'Imād ad-Dīn Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr	<i>Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm.</i> ed. M. S. Muḥammad <i>et al.</i> Cairo: Mu' assasat Qurtuba, 2000.	774/1373	Busra, Syria	Shāfi' i	I, II
al-Suyūṭī Abū al-Faḍl 'Abd al-Rahmān Jalāl al-Dīn	<i>Al-durr al-manthūr fi tafsīr al- ma'thūr</i> , ed. A. M. al-Turkī. Cairo: Markaz al-Hajr, 2003. <i>Tafsīr al-jalālayn</i> (with Jalāl al-Dīn al-Mahallī). Saudi Arabia: Maktabat Madīnah, 2006.	911/1505	Cairo	Shāfi' i	I, II
al-Nākūrī Abū al-Fayḍ	<i>Sawāṭī' al-ilhām fi tafsīr kalām al-malik al-'allām.</i> ed. M. al-Shirāzī. Iran: n.d., 1996.	1004/1595	?	Shi' i	II
al-Ḥuwayzī 'Abd 'Alī b. Jum' a al-'Arūsī	<i>Tafsīr nūr al-thaqalayn.</i> ed. H. al-Rasūli al-Mahallāti. Qum: Maṭba'at al-'Ilmiyya, 1980.	1080/1669 – 1105/1693	Khuzestan Iran	Shi' i	II
al-Kāshānī Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Fayḍ	<i>Kitāb al-ṣaḥī fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān.</i> ed. M. al-Ḥusaynī al-Amīnī. Teh- ran: Dār al-Kutub al- Islāmīyya, 1998.	1091/1680	Kashan Iran	Shi' i	II
al-Baḥrani Hāshim b. Sulaymān al-Tūbīlī	<i>Al-burhān fi tafsīr al-Qur'ān.</i> Beirut: Mu' assasat al-'A'lamī, 2006.	1107/1696	Tubli Bahrain	Shi' i	II
al-Kāshānī Muḥammad Nūr al-Dīn	<i>Tafsīr al-mu'īn.</i> ed. H. Dargāhī. Qum: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-'Uzmā al- Mar'ashī, n.d.	1115/1703	?	Shi' i	II
al-Mashhadī Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī	<i>Tafsīr kanz al-daqa'iq wa-baḥr al-gharā'ib.</i> ed. H. Dargāhī. Tehran: Shams al-Duḥā, 1968.	1125/1713	?	Shi' i	II

Original Publications

Errata / Study I

The article ““Confine Your Women!”: Diachronic Development of Islamic Interpretive Discourse on the Creation of Woman,” published in *Hawwa* (2022), has errors and inaccuracies in the following pages, and they should be corrected or clarified as indicated:

- pp. 446, 450, and 456: Ray is an old city located in the modern province of Tehran, Iran; *i.e.*,
 - “He [al-Ṭabarī] first studied in Ray, Iran, and continued to the intellectual centre of the Islamic world, Baghdad.”
 - “Ibn Abī Ḥātim was born in Ray, located in the province of Tehran, Iran.”
 - “Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was from Ray, Iran.”
- p. 454: The exegete meant here is al-Tha‘labī, not al-Tha‘alabī.
- p. 458: Should read as “not due to any of her characteristics.”
- p. 458: The “Judge” al-Rāzī refers to may be the famous Mu‘tazilī scholar ‘Abd al-Jabbār (d. 415/1025), even though al-Rāzī ascribes the beginning of the narration to Abū Muslim al-Iṣfahānī (d. 322/934) by name. Karen Bauer (2015, 131), however, suggests that the “Judge” is the theologian and jurist Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) who affiliated to Ash‘arī theology like al-Rāzī did.

