

THE *QIṢAṢ AL-ANBIYĀ'* OF IBN MUṬARRIF AL-ṬARAFĪ
(d. 454/1062):
STORIES OF THE PROPHETS FROM AL-ANDALUS

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Narratives and stories concerning the patriarchs and prophets form a substantial part of the Qur'ān and were no doubt current among Arabs during the lifetime of the prophet Muḥammad. Traditions explaining and expanding upon the Qur'ān narratives were probably being collected very soon after this time and emerged in all the genres of Muslim literature: exegesis, historiography and *ḥadīth* literature. Books dedicated to the stories of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*) had also been written since the very beginning of Muslim literary activity, and these constituted a literary genre in themselves.

This article will deal with one such work. Unpublished and almost overlooked by scholars, the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of the Andalusian Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī is a collection of stories of the prophets which was written in the fifth/eleventh century.¹ Following an introduction, in which the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* genre will be dealt with, the life of Ṭarafī, the structure, sources and contents of his work will be discussed.

The *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* genre

Ṭarafī wrote his *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection at a time when many books about prophets and the major works of the genre had already appeared.

¹ I dealt with the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī —with an introduction, a translation and an edition of the Arabic text from the two extant manuscripts— in my dissertation *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, tesi di Dottorato, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli, 1996, 735 pp. A brief description of Ṭarafī's life and work, that will be discussed here at length, is in my dissertation, at pp. 69-85. Supervisor in this research was Prof. Giuseppina Igonetti: I am grateful to her and to the Professors of the Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi for their support. I would also like to thank Prof. M. Fierro and C.S.I.C. in Madrid who provided a copy of the Escorial manuscript for me, and the Lady Davis

The first book dedicated to this topic had been written around the end of the first/seventh century by Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 113/731), a Yemenite of Persian origin who was one of the most famous authorities of Biblical history. This book is not extant, but much material attributed to Wahb is quoted by later authors.² It is said that Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) relied heavily on Wahb's work in his *Mubtada'*, which was originally the introductory part of his biography of Muḥammad and dealt with the stories of the prophets. But this *Mubtada'* has also been lost and only the part concerning the life of the Prophet remains in later recensions.³

The first extant example of the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literary genre comes from the beginning of the third/ninth century. It is the *Mubtada' al-dunyā wa-qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (The beginning of the world and the stories of the prophets) of Abū Ḥudhayfa Ishāq b. Bishr (d. 206/821). This important work had been considered lost until few years ago, but recently the existence of a manuscript of it was announced by M. J. Kister.⁴ This manuscript is not complete but, in its more than two hundred folios, it ranges from the Creation story to that of Abraham, thus demonstrating its importance for *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature. T. Nagel and other scholars who only knew Ishāq b. Bishr's compilation from excerpts in later works had

Fellowship Trust that granted me a scholarship to study at the Hebrew University in the year 1993-94, where part of the research was carried out under the guidance of Prof. M. J. Kister: to whom I am indebted for many suggestions about *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*. Finally I would also like to thank Prof. M. Fierro and Prof. M. Lecker for their comments upon a first draft of this article.

² Many studies are dedicated to Wahb b. Munabbih: see the references in R. Tottoli, *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Tarafī*, 45-49. R. G. Khoury published the papyrus text dealing with the story of David, giving also a full analysis of Wahb's life and works: R. G. Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih*, Wiesbaden, 1972.

³ The most famous recension is by Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), but there is another one, shorter but earlier, by Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 183/799); see, about the latter, M. Muranyi, «Ibn Ishāq's *kitāb al-maḡāzī* in der *riwāya* von Yūnus b. Bukayr», *JSAI*, 14 (1991), 214-275. U. Rubin has pointed out the importance of this recension in his *The Eye of the Beholder. The Life of Muḥammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*, Princeton 1995. Concerning the figure of Ibn Ishāq see the comprehensive article of R. Sellheim, «Prophet, Calif und Geschichte», *Oriens*, 18-19 (1967), 33-91. G. D. Newby tried to reconstruct the *Mubtada'* through the quotations in later sources attributed to Ibn Ishāq: see his *The Making of the Last Prophet*, Columbia 1989 (my review in *Annali di Ca' Foscari*, 22 (1991), 336-340).

⁴ Ms Oxford Bodleian, Huntingdon 388; see M. J. Kister, «Ādam: a study of some legends in *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* literature», *IOS*, 13 (1993), 113-14; but an abridged version of this article, where this manuscript was brought to the attention for the first time, had already appeared in 1988 in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. by A. Rippin, Oxford 1988, see in particular pp. 82-83. Some folios of this work are also in Damascus, Ṣāḥiriyā, see F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, I, Leiden 1967, 294.

already suggested its significance.⁵ Another compilation from the third century is the *Kitāb al-mubtada' wa-qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of 'Umāra b. Wathīma (d. 289/902), the authorship of which perhaps can be traced back to his father Wathīma (d. 237/851). The extant part of this work, i.e. from the end of the story of Moses to Jesus, was edited by R. G. Khoury.⁶

The major works concerning *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* are from the fifth/eleventh century, and they are complete collections of traditions ranging from the Creation to the time of Jesus. The first of these is the '*Arā'is al-majālis* of Tha'labī (d. 427/1035). It is probably the most comprehensive collection of stories of the prophets, and is the most widely known in the Arab world.⁷ The second work is the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Kisā'ī. Scholars suppose that it was written in the fifth/eleventh century as nothing is known about the author. The *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Kisā'ī were published by I. Eisenberg in 1922-23, but more recent studies have disputed the authorship and dating of this work, underlining the limits and the incompleteness of this printed edition.⁸

⁵ T. Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*. Ein Beitrag zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte, Bonn 1967, 113-118; see also N. Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, I. Historical Texts, Chicago 1957, 32-56; Idem, «Wahb b. Munabbih: a review article», *JNES*, 36 (1977), 103-4; Kister, «Ādam», *IOS*, 13 (1993), 114; Tottoli, *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, 50-51. A brief description of *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature is given by J. Pauliny, «Einige Bemerkungen zu den Werken 'Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' in der arabischen Literatur», *Zbornik Filozofickej Fakulty Univerzity Komenskeho. Graecolatina et Orientalia*, 1 (1969), 111-23.

⁶ R. G. Khoury, *Les légendes prophétiques dans l'Islam depuis le Ier jusqu'au IIIe siècle de l'Hégire*, Wiesbaden 1978. See also, about another manuscript of this work, M. J. Hermosilla Llisteri, «Una versión inédita del *Kitāb bad' al-jalq wa-qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* en el Ms LXIII de la Junta», *Al-Qantara*, VI (1985), 43-77.

⁷ See about him, Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 80-102; Tottoli, *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, 55-60. Tha'labī wrote also a Qur'ānic commentary; only the introduction of his *tafsīr* has been published: see I. Goldfeld, *Qur'anic Commentary in the Eastern Islamic Tradition of the First Four Centuries of the Hijra: An Annotated Edition of the Preface to al-Tha'labī's 'Kitāb al-kashf wa'l-bayān 'an tafsīr al-Qur'ān'*, Acre 1984. An English translation of this work had already been announced by W. M. Brinner in «Prophets and progenitors in the Islamic and Jewish traditions», in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions. II*, ed. by W. M. Brinner and S. D. Ricks, Atlanta 1989, 81 n. 30.â

⁸ This edition was published in Leiden 1922-23; I. Eisenberg had already dealt with the beginning of this work in his Inaugural-Dissertation: *Die Prophetenlegenden des Muhammad ben Kisā' nach den Handsschriften zu München, Bonn, Leiden, Leipzig u. Gotha*, Kirchhain N.-L. 1902. J. Pauliny wrote many fundamental contributions to the understanding of this work; see, above all, his «Kisā'īs Werk *Kitāb Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*», *Zbornik Filozofickej Fakulty Univerzity Komenskeho. Graecolatina et Orientalia*, 2 (1970), 191-282; and «Literarischer Character des Werkes Kisā'īs *Kitāb qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*», *Zbornik Filozofickej Fakulty Univerzity Komenskeho. Graecolatina et Orientalia*, 3 (1971), 107-125. See also Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 131-149; Tottoli, *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, 60-65; and A. Schussman, *Stories of the Prophets in Muslim Tradition* (PhD thesis in Heb. with an analysis of the contents of this work), Jerusalem 1981. Kisā'ī's *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* has been translated by W. M. Thackston Jr.: *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisā'ī*, Boston 1978.

Besides these major works another collection of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* was written in the fifth/eleventh century by Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī (d. 454/1062), an Andalusian expert in Qur'ānic readings (*qirā'āt*). The two manuscripts of this work can be found in the Vaticana and in the Escorial, but it has never been published. The only scholar to deal extensively with Ṭarafī was Nagel in his authoritative study dedicated to *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature. For the first time he collected information about the author and gave a description of the contents of his work, pointing out the main features of this collection.⁹ Brief mentions of Ṭarafī's work can be found in some other studies, but most of the research concerning *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections and traditions has neglected it almost completely or mentioned it only briefly.¹⁰ This article will, firstly, complete the data about Ṭarafī's life and work and, secondly, discuss at length the features of his *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* and the most interesting material included in it.¹¹

The life and work of Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī

Little is known about the life of Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muṭarrif al-Kinānī al-Ṭarafī.¹² He was born in 387/997 in Cordova¹³ and he dedicated himself to the study of religious traditions and, in particular, to variant readings of the Qur'ān (*qirā'āt*). Ṭarafī's teachers were al-Qāḍī Yūnus b. 'Abdallāh, Abū Muḥammad b. Shaqqāq and, particularly, Abū Muḥammad Makkī b. Abī Ṭālib, who was the most famous of those he came

⁹ Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 103-113.

¹⁰ Khoury in his *Wahb b. Munabbih* mentions Ṭarafī's book from the Vaticana manuscript, see pp. 222-246. Other scholars touched only briefly Ṭarafī's *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*; see H. Schwarzbaum, *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk-Literature*, Walldorf-Hessen 1982, 154 no. 152; and see also the short —and approximate— considerations of W. M. Thackston, «Islamische Mythologie», in *Orientalisches Mittelalter*, ed. by W. Heinrichs, Wiesbaden 1990, 199 n. 2.

¹¹ In the references to Ṭarafī's *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* I mention in this article, I give first the number of the tradition as it is in the edition of the Arabic text in my dissertation (Tottoli, *Le Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, pp. 87-367 §§ 1-510). Since this edition has not been published yet, we give also the foliation of the Vaticana manuscript (Ms Bibl. Vaticana Borg. ar. 125), and the pagination of the Escorial manuscript (Ms Escorial 1770).

¹² There is a variant reading: al-Kattānī, in Ibn al-Jazarī, *Kitāb ghāyat al-nihāya fī ṭabaqāt al-qurrā'*, ed. by G. Bergstraesser and O. Pretzl, Cairo 1933, II, 89 no. 2807, with the *nisba* al-Qurṭubī. See also C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, repr. Leiden 1943-49, S I, 721; 'U. R. Kaḥḥāla, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, Beirut 1993, III, 110 no. 12049. O. Prezl gives the name as al-Kisā'i, see «Die Wissenschaft der Koranlesung ('Ilm al-qirā'a). Ihre literarischen Quellen und ihre Aussprachegrundlagen (uṣūl)», *Islamica*, 6 (1934), 25.

¹³ Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Kitāb ta'rīkh 'ulamā' al-Andalus*, ed. by F. Codera, Madrid 1890 [1892], II, 114 no. 1753: *min ahl Qurṭuba*; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila*, n.p. 1955, II, 509 no. 1179.

into contact with.¹⁴ All the sources point out that he was renowned in *qirā'āt* for his skill and his memory. Some pupils and later scholars considered him a reliable scholar and transmitted traditions under his name.¹⁵ Ibn al-Jazarī is the only source to give any further information about the origin of his *nisba*: he was *imām* in the mosque of Ṭarafa in Cordova and he was thus named al-Ṭarafī.¹⁶ The final piece of information biographical sources give about Ṭarafī is that when he died in 454/1062, he was buried near the Bāb 'Āmir inside an unknown mosque.¹⁷

Two works attributed to him demonstrate his interest in *qirā'āt*: the *Sharḥ qaṣā'id fī l-qirā'āt* and a second work titled *Kitāb al-Qurṭayn*, which was published in Cairo in 1936.¹⁸ The *Kitāb al-Qurṭayn* is a digest of two books by Ibn Qutayba, the *Kitāb mushkil al-Qur'ān* and the *Kitāb gharīb al-Qur'ān*. Ṭarafī collected passages from the works and arranged them according to the order of the chapters of the Qur'ān, without adding anything to Ibn Qutayba's words.

Biographical sources do not quote either of these works, as is the case with his *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*. Further, his *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* are not mentioned nor quoted in later books. In spite of this, there is no reason to doubt the two extant manuscripts, both of which contain clear and explicit indications that the author was Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī.¹⁹ Moreover, the discussion of variant readings in some passages constitutes evidence that the author of this *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection was, like Ṭarafī, an expert in questions of *qirā'āt*.²⁰ It

¹⁴ Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Kitāb ta'rīkh*, II, 114; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila*, II, 509; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Kitāb ghāya*, II, 89; see also Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 103. Concerning Makkī, see *EF*, s.v. (A. Neuwirth).

¹⁵ See the names in Ibn al-Jazarī, *Kitāb ghāya*, II, 89.

¹⁶ Ibn al-Jazarī, *Kitāb ghāya*, II, 89; see also Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, Beirut 1990, IV, 35.

¹⁷ Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Kitāb ta'rīkh*, II, 114; Ibn Bashkuwāl, *Kitāb al-ṣila*, II, 509: then this mosque was destroyed. See also other descriptions of the life of Ṭarafī in Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 103-4; G. Levi della Vida, «Manoscritti arabi di origine spagnola nella Biblioteca Vaticana», in *Collectanea Vaticana in honorem Anselmi M. Card. Albareda*, Città del Vaticano 1962, 153-54; Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, Cairo 1955, III, 206.

¹⁸ Ed. by 'Abd al-Ḥafīz Sa'd 'Aṭīyya, Cairo, al-Khānjī, 1936 and recently reprinted in Beirut, Dār al-Ma'rifa, n.d. Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 104 n. 4, and Levi Della Vida, «Manoscritti arabi di origine spagnola», 154, did not have the possibility to consult this edition. In particular Levi Della Vida, who had a description of this book from another source, regretted he could not read Ṭarafī's biography included in the introduction by the editor. As a matter of fact he would have had nothing new, because 'Abd al-Ḥafīz Sa'd 'Aṭīyya reproduced here the biographical description of Ibn al-Jazarī's *Kitāb ghāya*.

¹⁹ See our edition of the Arabic text, p. 89 before § 1 (Ms Vat., 47a, 47b; Ms Esc., 1).

²⁰ See § 84 (Ms Vat., 58b; Ms Esc., 35), § 105 (Ms Vat., 61b; Ms Esc., 44), § 174 (Ms Vat., 72b; Ms Esc., 66-67), § 344 (Ms Vat., 104a; Ms Esc., 170). See also the considerations by Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, *supra*.

should also be remembered that Makkī was one of Ṭarafī's masters, that Makkī reputedly wrote a *tafsīr*, and that *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literature is strictly connected to Qur'ānic exegesis.²¹

Further information can be added to what Nagel collected and to what has been mentioned above. Yāqūt states, in a passage in his *Mu'jam al-buldān*,²² that, in addition to the *Kitāb al-Qurṭayn*, Ṭarafī wrote an abridged version of Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* (*la-hu ikhtisār min kitāb tafsīr al-Qur'ān li-l-Ṭabarī*). This statement is very important, because Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* is the principal source of the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī, and sometimes this collection resembles an abridgement of Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*. Yāqūt's statement could thus be an allusion to the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī. Further evidence also points to a connection between Ṭarafī and the traditions concerning the prophets and, in particular, with one of the major authorities in the field, i.e. Wāḥb b. Munabbih. As Ibn Khayr states,²³ Ṭarafī was one of the transmitters of Wāḥb's translation of the *Kitāb zabūr Dāwūd* (The Book of the Psalms of David). Ibn Khayr provides another interesting piece of information, when he quotes a *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection written by Aḥmad b. Khālīd and transmitted by his son Muḥammad.²⁴ Nothing further is known about this *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection. What is relevant for this research is that the transmitter of this work from Aḥmad b. Khālīd's son Muḥammad was al-Qāḍī Yūnus b. 'Abdallāh, one of Ṭarafī's teachers who is also mentioned in relation to the transmission of the *Kitāb zabūr Dāwūd*.²⁵ Despite the lack of information concerning the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī, the above mentioned facts constitute evidence that he had been in contact with scholars and works dealing with Qur'ānic exegesis and with the stories of the prophets.

Some words are now needed concerning Derenbourg's peculiar description of the work in the Escorial manuscripts catalogue. Both the manuscripts of Ṭarafī's *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* contain an introduction giving a clear indication of the nature of the work and stating clearly that it is a

²¹ See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Kitāb ghāya*, II, 310. Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 104, quotes another exegetical work by another of his masters, Abū l-'Abbās al-Mahdawī.

²² Beirut 1990, IV, 35; I am indebted to Prof. M. Fierro for this indication.

²³ *Fahrāsa*, ed. by F. Codera and J. Ribera Torrago, Damascus 1963², 295; I am indebted to Prof. M. Fierro for this indication.

²⁴ *Fahrāsa*, 291.

²⁵ See, for instance, Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Kitāb ta'rīkh*, I, 31 no. 94, and about his son Muḥammad, see I, 327 no. 1302; the name given here, Aḥmad b. Kh.l.d, is a misreading of the editors. On him see also Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, Beirut 1984, XV, 240-1; 'Iyād, *Tarīf al-madārik wa-taqrīb al-masālik*, n.p. n.d., V, 174-76; Ibn Ḥārith al-Khushanī, *Akhbār al-fuqahā' wa-l-muḥaddithīn*, Madrid 1992, 17-19; none of these sources mention the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* written by him. I am indebted to Prof. M. Fierro for these references.

qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā' collection. In spite of this, Derenbourg described the manuscript of Ṭarafī's work as a «premier tome d'une histoire universelle sans titre»;²⁶ Levi Della Vida was the first to note this strange statement.²⁷ The Escorial manuscript gives no indication of the title of the work, neither at the beginning nor at the end, but there can be no doubt that it is a *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection. Derenbourg's statement can be traced back to the old catalogue by Casiri, where the Escorial manuscript is described as «codex... in quo primus Tomus occurrit Historiae universalis, titulum... *Mundi Annales*». ²⁸ It thus seems that Derenbourg took his description from Casiri without further investigation.

Structure and sources of the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī

Nagel dealt at length with the structure and sources of the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī in his comprehensive study, and identified the main features of the work.²⁹ In this chapter the same questions that Nagel discussed will be looked at with the intention of completing his portrait of Ṭarafī.

Ṭarafī states clearly his reason for writing a *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection at the beginning of his work: «Prophets and messengers are the best of Adam's offspring, upon them be peace, they were singled out with excellent virtues and amazing miracles (...). Their stories, their narratives and their traditions are the best one can collect and summarize and the most wonderful one can study or tell (...). I decided to gather the stories of those quoted in the Qur'ān, from the best material the transmitters related and the authorities reported, to copy in this book what happened to them with their peoples at the time of their mission, and to present what every high-minded person should desire to know and be enthusiastic to read and to learn by heart (...). Moreover, I found in the Book of God, to Him glory and greatness, what He related to the Prophet Muḥammad, God bless him and grant him salvation, for he copied it and followed its example». ³⁰ It was not unusual for such statements to be written when introducing the biographies of the prophets. Also Tha'labī included a similar introduction in his work, so that he could

²⁶ H. Derenbourg, *Les manuscrits arabes de l'Escorial*, III, Paris 1928, 215-16.

²⁷ «Manoscritti arabi di origine spagnola», 155.

²⁸ M. Casiri, *Bibliotheca Arabico-hispana escurialensis*, Madrid 1770, II, 155: the title in the footnote is given as *Ta' rīkh al-'ālam*.

²⁹ Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 105-113.

³⁰ § 1 (Ms Vat., 47b; Ms Esc., 1-2).

set out his purpose. However, as Nagel has already pointed out, Ṭarafī's predominant edifying purpose is not evident in the stories of the individual prophets, where the usual *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* traditions can be found along with exegetical explanations. Ṭarafī's work does not differ from the other *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections.³¹

Besides this gap between the introduction and contents of the work, the structure of the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī shows some other peculiarities. The order of the biographies of the prophets is very unusual: Hūd and Ṣāliḥ's biographies do not occur between those of Noah and Abraham and, what is even stranger, Ṭarafī deals with David and Solomon before Moses. This structure indicates that a historical reconstruction of the past from the beginning of the world onwards was not Ṭarafī's purpose in writing his *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection. Instead, his intent was exegetical, i.e. to provide further material describing the prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān. This is the reason why Ṭarafī collected, firstly, the biographies of the twenty four prophets mentioned in the Qur'ān, and then, at the end of the work, the seven prophets who were only alluded to, without paying attention to historical sequence.³² Ṭarafī announced the exegetical character of his work at the beginning when he stated that he had decided «to collect stories of those mentioned in the Qur'ān», and also, when he stated that «there are thirty-one prophets: the Qur'ān mentions twenty four of them by name and alludes to seven others».³³ The same exegetical considerations also led Ṭarafī to exclude other characters usually found in *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections, e.g. Hārūt and Mārūt, Alexander (Dhū l-Qarnayn), Luqmān or Jirjis. The Qur'ān does not assert their prophecy and so Ṭarafī does not deal with them in his work.³⁴

It should be pointed out however that, as well as excluding these characters, Ṭarafī omits other stories that are usually included in *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections, some of which are even mentioned in the Qur'ān. This is the case, for instance, with the traditions dealing with the plagues, the stories of Korah and Balaam and the story of Jesus's miracles. Moreover, the

³¹ Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 106; Ṭarafī's introduction misled Thackston, *Tales of the Prophets of al-Kīṣa'i*, xvi, who wrote that Ṭarafī «concentrated on the exemplary moral character of the prophets and stressed prophetic admonitions and moral counsels rather than the historical and legendary sides to their careers»; see also Thackston, «Islamische Mythologie», 199 n. 2. Levi Della Vida, «Manoscritti arabi di origine spagnola», 154, had already pointed out that Ṭarafī's work is not different from the other *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections.

³² See already the considerations by Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 106-7.

³³ In § 1 (Ms Vat., 47b; Ms Esc., 2) and § 2 (Ms Vat., 47b-48a; Ms Esc., 2).

³⁴ See also Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 107.

legends connected to Seth, the *waṣīyya* from Adam, the story of Abraham's visit to Ishmael, the building of the Temple in Jerusalem by Solomon and the traditions concerning Solomon's death are not mentioned in his work. Ṭarafī does not relate the story of the *aṣḥāb al-kaḥf* either, but whereas this might be unusual in a *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collection, it is not strange here, because the *aṣḥāb al-kaḥf* were not prophets. These omissions and the strange sequence adopted might suggest that the work was unfinished, or that the two extant manuscripts are incomplete, but this is not the case. There are clear references within the text to the internal cohesion of the work and so the suggestion of incompleteness can be rejected. Two sections, one at the beginning and one at the end, are almost identical,³⁵ and in the final chapter direct references are made to the structure and contents of the work. Another interesting passage points to the internal cohesion of the work: Ṭarafī says, before dealing with the story of Jeremias, that as he has already dealt with the events of the lives of David and Goliath, there is no reason to repeat them.³⁶

As regards the structure of the work, Nagel³⁷ has already indicated that at the beginning of every biography there is a short summary of the contents, then the Qur'ān verses dealing with the subject are quoted, followed by traditions that explain and elucidate them. Although the genealogy of the prophets can usually be found at the beginning, this is not a rule. The Qur'ān verses and traditions from different sources (or attributed to transmitters or to the Prophet himself) are followed by brief descriptions of the appearance and age of the prophets. Ṭarafī respects this fixed structure in most of the chapters of his work. The striking point is that this close adherence to the order in the biographies contrasts with the absolute indifference towards *isnāds*. A word must also be said about the apparent randomness of some of the paragraph divisions in the manuscripts, which were apparently made with no attention to the meaning.³⁸ While not being able to account for this phenomenon with complete certainty, it is probable that it can be attributed to mistakes made during transcription.

As regards the questions of Ṭarafī's sources it must first be noted that Ṭarafī does not give *isnāds* for references for most of the material he quotes, and only occasionally includes the name of the first transmitter. But when

³⁵ § 2 (Ms Vat., 47b-48a; Ms Esc., 2-3) e § 507 (Ms Vat., 132a; Ms Esc., 262).

³⁶ § 473 (Ms Vat., 127a-127b; Ms Esc., 249).

³⁷ Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 107-9.

³⁸ See especially § 127-128 (Ms Vat., 64b; Ms Esc., 51), and § 67-70 (Ms Vat., 57a; Ms Esc., 31-32), § 144-145 (Ms Vat., 66b; Ms Esc., 58), 405-413 (Ms Vat., 118b-119a; Ms Esc., 212-213), § 429-430 (Ms Esc., 222), § 480-490 (Ms Vat., 129b-130a; Ms Esc., 256-257).

names are given, they are the most important names of Sunnite tradition, like Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687 *ca.*), who is quoted most often, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Mujaḥid (d. 104/722) and Qatāda (d. 117/735). To a lesser extent the customary names of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* collections, such as Ka‘b al-Aḥbār (d. 35/656 *ca.*) and Waḥb b. Munabbih (d. 110/728 *ca.*), can be found. It is perhaps surprising that Ka‘b is quoted only three times. It is also remarkable that the name of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), so often mentioned by Tha‘labī, occurs only four times in Ṭarafī’s work.³⁹ Ṭarafī’s lack of concern for *isnāds* is evident in his use of expressions like *ākharūn* (others) or *qawm*, *ba‘ḍ* and *ghayr* (for ex. *ba‘ḍuhum* and *ghayruhu*), instead of a list of all the transmitters.⁴⁰ Along with this attitude it must be pointed out that only in two places does Ṭarafī show any concern about the formal criticism of his material. In one of these instances Ṭarafī says he is quoting «from Ibn al-Kalbī, regarding the pictures of the prophets which in his view were reliable»⁴¹ while in the other he states he is quoting the tradition with the best *isnād*.⁴²

In addition to the names of the transmitters, Ṭarafī provides some further indications, and the most interesting of these are the quotations of his main sources, i.e. Ṭabarī (d. 311/923) and Ishāq b. Bishr. In fact, Ṭarafī relied mostly upon one source, Ṭabarī’s *tafsīr*, and complete chapters in his *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, like the story of Abraham, are word for word quotations or abridged versions of it. It can be affirmed that more than half of this work is taken from Ṭabarī’s Qur’ānic commentary, but in spite of this strong dependence Ṭarafī mentions the name of Ṭabarī only four times.⁴³ Instead of mentioning Ṭabarī’s name, Ṭarafī usually mentions only the names of the

³⁹ § 67 (Ms Vat., 57a; Ms Esc., 31), § 84 (Ms Vat., 58b; Ms Esc., 35), § 95 (Ms Vat., 60a; Ms Esc., 40), § 220 (Ms Vat., 81a; Ms Esc., 96); See also Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, 109-110, and in particular p. 110, where he stated that ‘Alī is mentioned only twice. About the tendency of Andalusī Mālikīs to avoid references to ‘Alī, see I. Fierro, «The introduction of ḥadīth in al-Andalus», *Der Islam*, 66 (1989), 87.

⁴⁰ § 13 (Ms Vat., 49b; Ms Esc., 8); § 59 (Ms Vat., 55b; Ms Esc., 26); § 137 (Ms Vat., 65b; Ms Esc., 55); § 140 (Ms Vat., 66a; Ms Esc., 56); § 173 (Ms Vat., 72b; Ms Esc., 66); § 193 (Ms Vat., 76a; Ms Esc., 78); § 194 (Ms Vat., 76b; Ms Esc., 79); § 219 (Ms Vat., 81a; Ms Esc., 96); § 297 (Ms Vat., 97a; Ms Esc., 150); § 415 (Ms Vat., 119b; Ms Esc., 215); § 424 (Ms Esc., 219); § 473 (Ms Vat., 127b; Ms Esc., 249); § 508 (Ms Vat., 132b).

⁴¹ § 277 (Ms Vat., 92b; Ms Esc., 138): *wa-dhakara Ibn al-Kalbī fī-mā ṣaḥḥa ‘indahū min...*

⁴² § 468 (Ms Vat., 127a; Ms Esc., 247).

⁴³ § 74 (Ms Vat., 57b; Ms Esc., 33): *qāla Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī*; § 89 (Ms Vat., 59a; Ms Esc., 37): *qāla Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī wa-jamā‘a min ahl al-‘ilm*; § 163 (Ms Vat., 68b; Ms Esc., 63): *qāla Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī wa-ghayruhu min ahl al-tafsīr*; § 182 (Ms Vat., 73b; Ms Esc., 69): *qāla Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭabarī*. See also Nagel, *Die Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*; 110-111, who translates and discusses these passages.

Companions and the Successors who originated the traditions.⁴⁴ Finally, again Ṭabarī is the source of some other traditions which contain introductory expressions like *jā'a fi l-tafsīr...*, *wa-yudhkar fi l-tafsīr...*, *fi ba'd al-tafsīr...*⁴⁵

Strangely enough, these vague expressions are not always connected to Ṭabarī, because Ṭarafī uses them to introduce some reports and traditions from various other sources. On a number of occasions, when mentioning an indefinite *tafsīr*, Ṭarafī relates traditions similar to those reported in Muqātil b. Sulaymān's (d. 150/767) *tafsīr*, with some slight differences.⁴⁶ Some other material, which is introduced with the same expressions, is taken neither from Ṭabarī nor from Muqātil, but from an unknown source, i.e. an unknown *tafsīr*.⁴⁷ This inconsistency in Ṭarafī's references is evident in two reports where a tradition taken from the *Mubtada'* of Ishāq b. Bishr comes after the following introductory phrases: *wa-jā'a fi l-tafsīr* and *jā'a fi l-tafsīr 'an Ishāq b. Bishr*.⁴⁸ It is known that Ṭabarī did not make use of the works of Muqātil and Ishāq b. Bishr, nor did he quote from them, and this '*tafsīr*' cannot be a reference to Ṭabarī. Undoubtedly by referring to an indefinite *tafsīr*, Ṭarafī is also indicating a different, unknown commentary and not simply that of Ṭabarī.

The other main source is the *Mubtada'* of Ishāq b. Bishr. Ṭarafī mentions the name Ishāq b. Bishr twelve times, but, as was the case with Ṭabarī, some other traditions originating in his *Mubtada'* occur in the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī without an indication of the source. A comparison between this material and the extant manuscript of the *Mubtada'* shows that Ṭarafī abridged the

⁴⁴ See also Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 111-113; for a comprehensive analysis of the question of Ṭarafī's dependence on Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* see my notes to the Arabic text, where, for each tradition, I give the source: Tottoli, *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, 369-507.

⁴⁵ § 94 (Ms Vat., 60a; Ms Esc., 39); § 103 (Ms Vat., 61a-61b; Ms Esc., 43); § 114 (Ms Vat., 62b; Ms Esc., 47); § 115 (Ms Vat., 62b-63a; Ms Esc., 47); § 120 (Ms Vat., 63b; Ms Esc., 49); § 121 (Ms Vat., 63b-64a; Ms Esc., 49-50); § 129 (Ms Vat., 64b; Ms Esc., 52); § 136 (Ms Vat., 65b; Ms Esc., 55); § 198 (Ms Vat., 77a-77b; Ms Esc., 82-83); § 232 (Ms Vat., 82b; Ms Esc., 102); § 261 (Ms Vat., 90b; Ms Esc., 130); § 292 (Ms Vat., 95b-96a; Ms Esc., 147); § 293 (Ms Vat., 96a; Ms Esc., 148); § 311 (Ms Vat., 99b; Ms Esc., 158); § 319 (Ms Vat., 100b; Ms Esc., 161); § 344 (Ms Vat., 104a; Ms Esc., 171); § 351 (Ms Vat., 105a-105b; Ms Esc., 174); § 372 (Ms Vat., 110a; Ms Esc., 187); § 398 (Ms Vat., 116b; Ms Esc., 204); § 403 (Ms Vat., 117a; Ms Esc., 206-7); § 426 (Ms Esc., 221); 441 (Ms Vat., 121b; Ms Esc., 231); § 442 (Ms Vat., 122a; Ms Esc., 232); § 462 (Ms Vat., 126a; Ms Esc., 244-45); § 474 (Ms Vat., 127b; Ms Esc., 249-50); § 475 (Ms Vat., 128a; Ms Esc., 251); § 430 (Ms Vat., 129a-129b; Ms Esc., 254-55).

⁴⁶ See § 64 (Ms Vat., 56a; Ms Esc., 29), which is partially taken from Ṭabarī and partially from Muqātil; § 204 (Ms Vat., 78a-78b; Ms Esc., 85); § 389 (Ms Vat., 114a; Ms Esc., 197); § 442 (2nd) (Ms Vat., 122a; Ms Esc., 233).

⁴⁷ § 84 (Ms Vat., 58b; Ms Esc., 35-36); § 330 (Ms Vat., 102a; Ms Esc., 165); § 334 (Ms Vat., 102b; Ms Esc., 166); § 427 (Ms Esc., 222); § 477 (Ms Vat., 128b; Ms Esc., 252).

⁴⁸ § 153 (Ms Vat., 67b; Ms Esc., 60); § 258 (Ms Vat., 89a; Ms Esc., 125).

original version, taking sections from longer traditions. It is difficult to state whether Ṭarafi himself abridged this material or whether he relied upon an intermediary, and already abridged, version. The expression *wa-dhakara Ishāq b. Bishr 'an jamā'a asnada al-khabar ilayhim*⁴⁹ suggests that Ṭarafi took his material directly from Ishāq b. Bishr's work. At the same time, as has been stated above, the two references to a *tafsīr 'an Ishāq b. Bishr*, alert us to the fact, that, in all likelihood, there was an intermediary source.

At one point Ṭarafi mentions another third century author, Bukhārī (d. 256/870), who compiled the most important *ḥadīth* collection.⁵⁰ This reference is quite strange, since it is the only one related to *ḥadīths*, whereas Ṭarafi includes many traditions attributed to the Prophet in his work. This inconsistency cannot be explained, unless we assume that this was the only tradition Ṭarafi took directly from a *ḥadīth* collection, while the others were taken from other sources.

Even without Ṭarafi's indication, some of the other sources of this work can be identified, such as the *Muḥabbar* of Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 345/859) which was the source of the tradition about the sons of Iblīs.⁵¹ In some other places, e.g. the tradition about the sons of Abraham, the source could perhaps be Ibn Ḥabīb, but, given the slight differences, it seems probable that Ṭarafi took this material from another intermediary source who had, in turn, depended on Ibn Ḥabīb.⁵² The same can be said for the *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh* of the Andalusian 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (m. 238/852), recently published and edited by J. Aguadé (Madrid, 1991). Ṭarafi related a few traditions which are similar to those 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb included at the beginning of his work dealing with prophets. These common traditions are already attested in Ishāq b. Bishr's *Mubtada'*, which was probably a source for both. Only one of Ṭarafi's passages bears more resemblance to 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb's version than to that of Ishāq b. Bishr, but this is not sufficient to indicate that his *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh* was one of Ṭarafi's sources.⁵³ 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb's

⁴⁹ § 48 (Ms Vat., 53b; Ms Esc., 20).

⁵⁰ § 452 (Ms Vat., 124b; Ms Esc., 24).

⁵¹ § 23-25 (Ms Vat., 50b; Ms Esc., 11).

⁵² § 170 (Ms Vat., 72b; Ms Esc., 66). This is also true of the two chronologies given at the end of Ṭarafi's work: § 508 (Ms Vat., 132a-132b); the two traditions, in the same order and with some slight variations given by Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. by M. A. al-F. Ibrāhīm, Cairo 1960-67, II, 238 [=ed. M. J. de Goeje *et al.*, Leiden 1879-1901, I, 1072], and Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar* (ripr. ed. I. Lichtenstadter, Hyderabad 1942), Beirut n.d., 1-2, but since the final *hijrī* date is different in all the three versions, Ṭarafi could have taken these reports from another source.

⁵³ 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*, 41-42 no. 83 (=Ṭarafi, § 186 [Ms Vat., 74a; Ms Esc., 70]; cf. Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 150b-151a).

dependence upon Ishāq b. Bishr, while requiring further investigation, is relevant for another reason: it demonstrates the diffusion of his *Mubtada'* in al-Andalus.⁵⁴

Moreover, some further traditions quoted by Ṭarafī can be found in other works which may have served as sources. Indeed it seems unlikely that Ṭarafī would have depended on Ṭabarī and Ishāq b. Bishr's writings for the greater part of this work and then have used so many different sources for a few remaining traditions. It is much more probable that he took all of this material from one or two intermediary sources.⁵⁵

Ṭarafī does mention other indefinite sources. At the beginning of certain traditions, without giving any name of transmitter, he states he is quoting *mufasssirūn wa-aṣḥāb al-akḥbār*,⁵⁶ or other exegetical material traced back to *jamā'a min ahl al-tafsīr*,⁵⁷ *ba'd al-mufasssirīn*,⁵⁸ *qawm min ahl al-tafsīr*,⁵⁹ and *ahl al-tafsīr*.⁶⁰ In another place Ṭarafī states he is citing Ṭabarī and from *jamā'a min ahl al-'ilm*.⁶¹ This last expression clearly indicates transmitters and not other authors, since he later writes: *wa-qāla jamā'a min ahl al-'ilm min al-ṣaḥāba wa-l-tābi'in*.⁶² The same can be said for the

⁵⁴ See 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*, 39 no. 75 end: after the quotation of Qur.40:11 it is said that *wa-badat al-bad'a (?) fī l-samā' wa-baqiya qaws quzaḥ wa-kānat āyat al-amān min al-gharq wa-taṭalla'a Nūḥ fa-ra'ā l-shams (al-nad'a/al-nud'a* appeared in the sky and it was the rainbow, the sign of safety from the flood; Noah raised his eyes and he saw the sun). This tradition is a verbatim quotation from Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada' al-dunyā*, Ms Huntingdon 388, 103b-104a. The word *al-bad'a* makes no sense, it should be corrected in *al-nad'a* or *al-nud'a* that means arch/bow (I am indebted to Prof. Kister for this reading). The manuscript of the *Mubtada'* by Ishāq b. Bishr is not very clear: it has الباء and then it gives *al-nad al-qaws*. Even if 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb does not mention the name of Ishāq b. Bishr, all the later sources trace back this report to him, but failing to read the word *al-nad'a* in the right way. See Ṭarafī, § 77 (Ms Vat., 58a; Ms Esc., 33-34): *al-naz'a*; Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr al-ma'thūr*, Beirut 1983, IV, 426: *al-yad*; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, fac. ed., Amman n.d., XVII, 662; *al-badhdh*. These are the other passages in 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, and mentioned also by Ṭarafī, probably taken from Ishāq b. Bishr: *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*, p. 39 no. 75 (= *Mubtada'*, 103b; Ṭarafī, § 85 [Ms Vat., 58b; Ms Esc., 36]; 41 no. 83 (*Mubtada'*, 116a; Ṭarafī 179 [Ms Vat., 73a; Ms Esc., 68])).

⁵⁵ See, for instance § 334, 335, 338 (Ms Vat., 102b-103a; Ms Esc., 166-167) which are similar to traditions in the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa'd; some material could instead have been taken from 'Umāra b. Wathīma; see for instance § 445-446 (Ms Vat., 122b-123a; Ms Esc., 233-236).

⁵⁶ § 63 (Ms Vat., 56a; Ms Esc., 28).

⁵⁷ § 213 (Ms Vat., 80a; Ms Esc., 93); § 246 (Ms Vat., 84b; Ms Esc., 111).

⁵⁸ § 214 (Ms Vat., 80b; Ms Esc., 94); § 263 (Ms Vat., 90b; Ms Esc., 131); § 354 (Ms Vat., 106a; Ms Esc., 176); § 440 (Ms Vat., 120b; Ms Esc., 228).

⁵⁹ § 352 (Ms Vat., 105b; Ms Esc., 175).

⁶⁰ § 299 (Ms Vat., 97b; Ms Esc., 152); § 376 (Ms Vat., 110b; Ms Esc., 189); § 417 (Ms Vat., 119b; Ms Esc., 215); § 473 (Ms Vat., 127b; Ms Esc., 249).

⁶¹ § 89 (Ms Vat., 59a; Ms Esc., 37).

⁶² § 133 (Ms Vat., 65b; Ms Esc., 54).

expression *ba'd al-'ulamā'*.⁶³ As well as exegetical works, mention is made also of historical works: *naqalat al-akhbār wa-jumlat al-mufasssīrīn*⁶⁴ or *jā'a fī l-khabar/al-akhbār*⁶⁵ or *qāla ba'd naqalat al-akhbār*.⁶⁶ Finally there is evidence that Ṭarafī also made use of traditions going back to experts in genealogy: *dhakara al-nassābūn*.⁶⁷

The preceding description of the structure and sources is sufficient to enable a preliminary evaluation of the work to be made. It can be inferred that the *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* literary genre had reached a wide diffusion in al-Andalus where many important manuscripts dealing with the topic had been copied and circulated widely. This was the case with the *Kitāb bad' al-khalq* of 'Umarā b. Wathīma and the works of his father Wathīma,⁶⁸ as well as some other collections dealing with the prophets, such as the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Hījri.⁶⁹ Works such as these and the *Mubtada'* of Ishāq b. Bishr probably prompted the diffusion of popular traditions and legends in connection with the stories of the prophets, with the typical influence of Shī'ite and Ismā'īlite beliefs.⁷⁰

The *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī take a different direction: his work gives a sacred history of the prophets which adheres closely to Sunnite exegetical tradition. With this purpose Ṭarafī relied upon the best Sunnite exegetical source, the *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī, and on the *Mubtada'* of Ishāq b. Bishr, whose diffusion and authority made this an essential reference work when dealing with *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, even though there may have been doubts about some of its contents. Notwithstanding Ṭarafī's purpose, the use of this material from Ishāq b. Bishr, together with other traditions from unknown sources and Ṭarafī's interest in onomastics,⁷¹ shows that legends of popular origin

⁶³ § 308 (Ms Vat., 98b; Ms Esc., 155).

⁶⁴ § 187 (Ms Vat., 74a; Ms Esc., 71).

⁶⁵ § 264 (Ms Vat., 91a; Ms Esc., 133); § 326 (Ms Vat., 102a; Ms Esc., 164).

⁶⁶ § 392 (Ms Vat., 114b; Ms Esc., 199); § 490 (Ms Vat., 130a; Ms Esc., 257).

⁶⁷ § 151 (Ms Vat., 67a; Ms Esc., 60); § 160 (Ms Vat., 68b; Ms Esc., 63); see also § 177 (Ms Vat., 73a; Ms Esc., 6): *qawm min al-nassābīn*.

⁶⁸ See Levi Della Vida, «Manoscritti arabi di origine spagnola», 163 n. 1: Borgian manuscripts show the diffusion of the works of 'Umāra ad his father Wathīma in Spain.

⁶⁹ Al-Hījri (Ps-Wahb), *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, Alexandria, Ms Baladiyya B 1249; about this work see Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 149-54, 168-69; and J. Pauliny, «Ein Werk *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* von Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd al-Hijrī al-Aḥbārī», *Asian and African Studies*, 6 (1970), 87-91; see also the anonymous *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' (Kitāb al-majālis 'alā 'ilm al-ta'rīkh)*, Berlin, Ms Staatsbibliothek, or. quart. 1171, 137b-188b.

⁷⁰ See Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 161.

⁷¹ Interest in onomastics and in assigning names was a characteristic of popular reports; see Goldziher, I., *Muslim Studies*, Eng. ed. by S. M. Stern, II, London 1971, 156-57; Nagel, *Die Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* 126; A. Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition, A Source-Critical Study*, Eng. ed. by L. I. Conrad, Princeton 1994, 128.

about the prophets could not be completely omitted from *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā*' collections.

Contents of the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*' of Ṭarafī

Most of the contents of the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*' of Ṭarafī are word for word quotations from Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* and some other material is taken from the *Mubtada*' of Ishāq b. Bishr. A full description of these parts of Ṭarafī's work is given in the notes to the text in my dissertation and so will be not dealt with here.⁷² But apart from the main body of the work, Ṭarafī also borrowed some significant traditions from other sources. The following pages will be dedicated to a discussion of this material because of its contribution to a clearer understanding of this *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā*' collection. There is an inevitable element of arbitrariness in any such selection but, nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that some of the traditions in Ṭarafī's work contain important particulars or rare versions. This is particularly the case for the following material, which has been arranged in three different groups and is discussed below in the following order: onomastics, reports about the physical appearance of the prophets and various individual traditions.

Onomastics is the first subject to be discussed. Ṭarafī displays a particular interest in names and he mentions the names of most of the characters quoted in his work, even if they are only of secondary importance, often providing rare versions. It must be noted that these versions are merely orthographical variants, but, nevertheless, they can be very useful for gaining a better understanding of Ṭarafī's sources in particular, and for the history of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā*' genre in al-Andalus in general. The names discussed here will be given in the vocalization as preserved in the manuscripts, and mainly that of the Vaticana.⁷³

The names of Iblīs's sons are the first notable ones given in the work of Ṭarafī; the five sons are al-Tubuww, Zalfiyūn, Dāmis,⁷⁴ al-A'war and

⁷² See Tottoli, *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, in particular 369-507.

⁷³ We shall not discuss here, for instance, the name of the father of David (§ 197 (Ms Vat., 77a; Ms Esc., 81), the name of the Queen of Sheba (§ 227: Ms Vat., 32a; Ms Esc., 100) or the names of the sons of Joseph (§ 294: Ms Vat., 96a; Ms Esc., 149). The versions given by Ṭarafī are also attested in other sources and all the variants of these names are discussed at length in my dissertation *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*.

⁷⁴ Later, but in the same line, called Dāsīm (as in Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, 395).

Miswaṭ.⁷⁵ This tradition goes back to the *Muḥabbar* of Ibn Ḥabīb with al-Tubuww instead of Ibn Ḥabīb's al-Thubar, which is evidently an ortographical variant.⁷⁶ This same name is usually given in other sources in the form *th.b.r* with different vocalizations.⁷⁷ Ṭarafī quotes some other names in connection with the fall of Adam, as is usual in all *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections: Adam was cast down to earth on a mountain called Rāsim, Eve in Jiddah, the serpent in Iṣfahān and Iblīs near al-Ubulla.⁷⁸ The only significant name from this list is the mountain (in India) where Adam fell down, Rāsim; other sources contain many variations of this name, even with ortographical versions similar to Rāsim —e.g. Wāsim in Ṭabarī and others—, but no other source gives the same name as Ṭarafī.⁷⁹ In the story of Adam, Ṭarafī also quotes the names of the wives of Cain and

⁷⁵ § 23-25 (Ms Vat., 50b; Ms Esc., 11).

⁷⁶ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, 395. See the list of names given by Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, Cairo 1968, XV,262; Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, V,403; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-a'yān*, I, ed. by I. 'Abbās, Beirut 1985, 133; see also Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, Cairo 1939, III,37. Also the name Zalfiyūn instead of Zalanbūr is particularly relevant, but it is already attested in the *Muḥabbar* by Ibn Ḥabīb.

⁷⁷ See the sources quoted above and Iṣḥāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 53b: he gives the name with no diacritical point, so it is not possible to read it; see other variants in Ibn al-Dawāsārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar*, I, ed. by B. Radtke, Wiesbaden 1982, 248: *th.y.r*; Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*, Cairo 1978, I,298: *b.'r*; Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta'wīl fī ma'ānī l-tanzīl*, Cairo 1955, IV,217: *b.t.r*; Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-tanzīl*, Cairo 1955 (on margin of *Lubāb al-ta'wīl* by Khāzin), IV,217: *b.t.r*; Qazwīnī, *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt*, Cairo 1966, 212: *b.y.r.h*; but see the translation from Qazwīnī in *L'Abrégé des merveilles*, ed. by Carra de Vaux, Paris 1984 (1st ed. 1897), 349 n. 42; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī ta'rīkh al-mulūk wa-l-unam*, Beirut 1992, I,178; *b.t.r.w*; but see Id., *Zād al-masīr fī 'ilm al-tafsīr*, Damascus 1965, V,154, and Id., *Talbīs Iblīs*, Beirut 1983, 42: *th.b.r*.

⁷⁸ § 38 (Ms Vat., 52a; Ms Esc., 16).

⁷⁹ See Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul*, I,122 [=I,121]: Wāsim; Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' al-musammā 'arā'is al-majālis*, Cairo 1954, 32: Wāsim; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Tabṣira*, Cairo 1970, I,16, and Idem, *al-Muntaẓam*, I,208: Wāsim; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, V,407; al-Hayṣam b. Muḥammad, *Qīṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, Princeton, Ms Yahuda 49, 16b: Wāsim; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, ed. by T. 'Ukāsha, Cairo 1960, 15: Wāsim; *Siyar al-anbiyā'* (Anonymous), London, Ms British Library or. 1510, 16a: Wāsim/Wāshim; Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, Beirut n.d. (an. repr. ed. C. Huart, Paris 1899-1919), II,85: Wāsim; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 200: Wāshim; Diyārbakrī, *Ta'rīkh al-khamīs fī aḥwāl anfas nafīs*, Beirut n.d., I,54: Wāshim, or Wāsh or Bāshim; Ps-Aṣma'ī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī akhbār al-Furs wa-l-'Arab*, Ms Gotha A1741, 4a: Wāshim (see also in M. Grignaschi, «La Nihāyatu-l-'arab fī alḥbār-l-Furs wa-l-'Arab et les Siyar mulūki-l-'Aḡam du Ps. Ibn-al-Muqaffa'», *BEO* 26, 1973, 167); Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār al-jāmi'a li-durar akhbār al-a'imma al-aḥḥār*, Beirut 1983, XI,211: Bāsim; Ibn Abī 'Udhayba, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, Jerusalem, Ms Khālidīyya, 23 *Sira*, 4b: Wāshim. Concerning the names of the places where Adam, Eve and the others fell down, see also Tottoli, *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, 380-81; Idem, «A proposito di un recente studio su Adamo nell'Islam», *AIUON*, 55 (1995), 443 n. 27; and also C. Schöck, *Adam im Islam*, Berlin 1993, 117.

Abel: Nabūdhā and Afīmiyā.⁸⁰ These are simply ortographical variants with slight differences, of the more common Iqlīmā e Labūdā/Layūdhā.⁸¹

In the biography of Noah, Ṭarafī gives two different versions of the name of the village in the Jazīra where the Ark landed: Tāqirdā and Tārandā.⁸² The names given by Ṭarafī were probably taken from the *Mubtada'* of Ishāq b. Bishr like nearly all the traditions collected in the story of Noah, but in the extant manuscript of this work the first name mentioned is a completely different version (*qawdī*) while the second, that could actually be read as *tārandā*, has no diacritical point.⁸³ The

⁸⁰ § 46 (Ms Vat., 53a; Ms Esc., 20).

⁸¹ See Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, Cairo 1979-90, I,469: Iqlīmā and Layūdhā; Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, Beirut 1993, I,429: Iqlīmā and Layūdhā; Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 72b: Lūdā and Iqlīmiyā (but it is not clear); Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul*, I,145: Layūdhā [=I,146]; Kisā'i, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, ed. by I. Eisenberg, Leiden 1922-23, 79: Albūdā (transl. by W. M. Thackston Jr., *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisa'i*, 85 as Lebuda); Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 43: Iqlīmā and Labūdā; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādīn al-jawhar*, ed. B. de Meynard, P. de Courteille and rev. by C. Pellat, I, Beirut 1966, 37-38 n. 49: Lūbadā and Iqlīmiyā; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tabṣira*, I,33: Qalīmā and Labūdā; *Siyar al-anbiyā'*, 20a: Iqlīmā and Layūdhā; Ps-Aṣma'i, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (in the *Kitāb al-shāmil*), London, Ms British Library or. 1493, 7a: Iqlīmā and La'ūdhā; al-Hayṣam, *Qīṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, 19b, 20a: Iqlīmā and Labūdhā; *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Anonymous), Berlin Ms Staatsbibliothek, or. quart. 1171, 149a: Labūd; Diyārbakrī, *Ta'rikh al-khamīs*, I,59: Iqlīmiyā and Labūdā; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XI,225: Iqlīmā and Lūzā; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq*, XIV,307: Lūdhā and Iqlīmiyā; Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, ed. by E. Sachau *et al.*, Leiden 1904f., I/1,13: Labūd and Iqlīmā; 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'rikh*, 33 no. 56: Iqlīmiyā and Layūdhā (corrected by the editor J. Aguadé with Labūdā); Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 213: Iqlīmā and Layūdhā, but at p. 214: Labūdhā; Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, Beirut n.d., I,6: Iqlīmā and Lūbidhā. See also the discussion of the name Labūdhā by Rosenthal in *The History of al-Ṭabarī*. I. General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood, ed. by F. Rosenthal, Albany 1989, 317 n. 903; the name given by Ṭabarī is discussed also by M. Lidzbarski, *De prophetis, quae dicuntur, legendis arabicis*, Lipsiae 1893, 11; see also about the Syriac versions of the two names in the *Treasure Cave*, N.A. Stillman, «The story of Cain and Abel in the Qur'ān and the Muslim commentators: some observations», *JSS*, 19 (1974), 234; and the names given by J. A. Decourdemanche, «La légende d'Adam chez les musulmans», *RHR*, 5 (1882), 378: Aklimia and Liouza, and in *L'Abrégé*, 92; and see, about the names, W. Bork-Qaysieh, *Die Geschichte von Cain und Abel (Hābīl wa Qābīl) in der sunnitisch-islamischen Überlieferung*, Berlin 1993, 34-35.

⁸² § 77 (Ms Vat., 58a; Ms Esc., 34).

⁸³ Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 104b. Concerning the first name, see also Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, IV, 366; and see also Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, II,282: Bāfirdā, with variants in the notes; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, I,381-82: Bāqirdā and Bāzabdā, but IV,366: Qardā and Bāzabdā; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, I,242: Baqirdā; Bāqirdā is probably the correct reading, see in fact Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 245. See also Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rikh*, III,24: Baqarwadā corrected by Huart with Biqardā; Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, ed. by V. Guirgass, Leiden 1888, 3: Biqardā and Bāzabdā, and see the variants (ed. with a preface and an index by I. Kratchkovsky, Leiden 1912, 58): Naqardāy and Bāzibdī; see also the different versions in Ps-Aṣma'i, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 11b.

name of Noah's wife, Āligha, is also relevant; it is a very uncommon variant of the well attested Wāligha, and a mere mistake in the transcription could be its cause.⁸⁴ Finally, in the story of Noah, Ṭarafī also quotes the names of Noah's daughters-in-law in a tradition dealing with the virtue of these names when written on the dovecotes: doves thrive in good conditions. The names are: Miḥla (Sem's wife), Nafisā (Cam's wife), and Suḥum (Yafet's wife), and they are different from those given in other sources.⁸⁵

Another name occurring in Ṭarafī's work which deserves our attention is that of Abraham's mother, Nūnāniyya. This version is not attested in any other sources.⁸⁶ Later on Ṭarafī gives the name of the man who spoke the words quoted in Qur.21:68: «Burn him (i.e. Abraham), and help your gods,

⁸⁴ § 71 (Ms Vat., 57a; Ms Esc., 32): ...*min ahlihi wa-huwa Kin'ān* (sic) *ibnuhu wa-Āligha imra'atuhu*, the correct text could have been: *ibnubu wa-Wāligha imra'atuhu*. See the other sources: Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, II,282: Wāligha; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, 383: Wā'ila; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XI,304,309: Wāghila; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, Cairo 1923 f., XIII,44: Wāli'a; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, Beirut 1966, I,181: Wāligha. Also different names are given, since it is argued by some sources that Noah had a second wife, a believer one, mother of Sem, Cam and Yafet; see Kisā'i, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 89: Noah had two wives, a believer one mother of his sons, 'Amūra, and an unbeliever one, Wāli'a; and Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ al-rusul*, I,173 [=I,177]: 'Amdhura, with variants in the notes; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, XIII,44: 'Amra; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi l-ta'riḥ*, I, Beirut 1967 (an. repr. ed. C.J. Tomberg, Leiden 1867), 63: 'z.ra; but see the names and the explanation given by Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XI, 342, and the name and the discussion in E. Kohlberg, «Some Shī'ī views of the antediluvian world», *Studia Islamica*, 52 (1980), 59.

⁸⁵ § 81 (Ms Vat., 58a; Ms Esc., 35). This legend was discussed by G. Levi Della Vida, «Una traccia del libro dei giubilei nella letteratura araba musulmana», *Orientalia*, 1 (1932), 205-212; Levi Della Vida at p. 207 relates the name as given by Ibn Qutayba in his *'Uyūn al-akhbār*: Sem's wife name is M.ḥ.l.th M.ḥ.w, Cam's wife name is 'dh.n.f N.shā, and Yafet's wife name is Z.dh.q.t N.b.t. Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'riḥ*, III,26-27, quotes these names: 'r.y.s.y.m.h bint Marāzīl, N(?)ḥ.l.b(?) (without diacritical points) bint Yārib, and Ṣalīb bint B(?)athawāyil. Similar names are given also by Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ al-rusul*, I,202-3 [=I,211-12], with many variant readings in the manuscripts; see the translation by W.M. Brinner, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, II. Prophets and Patriarchs (Albany 1987), 11-12: Arbaṣisa bint Marāzīl, Naḥlab bint Mārib and Ṣalīb bint Batāwīl. Names similar to the ones given by Ibn Qutayba are also in Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, 383, and see also other versions in Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, Beirut 1983, VII,267.

⁸⁶ § 88 (Ms Vat., 59a; Ms Esc., 37); see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, Beirut 1966, I,140 who gives the best explanation of the different versions of the names: it is Umayla (from Ibn 'Asākir<Ishāq b. Bishr) or Būnā bint K.t.b.nā (from al-Kalbī); in fact see Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḥ madīnat Dimashq*, II, 314: Umayla, and II,316: Yūnā...; Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 161a: Umayla. See also Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, I/1,21: Nūna bint K.r.n.bā or Abiyūnā; Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'riḥ*, III,48: Unayla or Abiyūnā; al-Hayṣam, *Qiṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, 37b: Uhayla; Hijrī (Ps-Wahb), *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 155a: Umayla; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, I,258: Nūnā bint K.r.n.bā; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 267: Nūtā; and see *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, Ms Staatsbibliothek, or. quart. 1171, 173a: Wathīma.

if you would do something!». The man who uttered these words against Abraham was a Kurd called Habzar.⁸⁷ It is worth noting that the whole passage is taken from Ṭabarī, with the introductory expression *jā'a fi l-tafsīr*, but that the name in Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* is different.⁸⁸

At the beginning of the story of Shu'ayb, Ṭarafī gives a list of Abraham's sons: Ishmael (the son of Agar), Isaac (the son of Sarah) and finally the sons of the third wife Qanṭūr bint Maqtūr, i.e. Madyan, Madūn, Bunshabān, Zumrūn, Ashbaq and Shajj.⁸⁹ The source of this report could be the *Muḥabbar* of Ibn Ḥabīb, but the names are slightly different, e.g. Yaqqshān instead of Bunshabān and Shuhḥ instead of Shajj.⁹⁰ The story of Hūd also contains the names of the two legendary cities, one in the east and one in the west, inhabited by the survivors of the 'Ād and of the Thamūd: Jābalqā e Jābarsā.⁹¹

Some other names can be found in the biography of Lot, e.g. the names of his daughters. The names of these two daughters, given by Ṭarafī in a long tradition mostly taken from the *Mubtada'* of Ishāq b. Bishr, were Raghūthā and Ranthā.⁹² However, it must be stressed that the extant manuscript of Ishāq b. Bishr's work contains different versions of the

⁸⁷ § 120 (Ms Vat., 63b; Ms Esc., 49).

⁸⁸ Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XVII,43: Hayzan; Id., *Ta'riḫ al-rusul*, I,241 [=I,262 but in the Leiden edition the name is Hayzan]; Haynūn. Hayzan and Haynūn seem to be the most frequent readings of the name; see the name Hayzan in Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḫ al-khamīs*, I,82; Khāzin, *Lubāb al-ta'wīl*, IV,300; Baghawī, *Ma'ālim al-tanzīl*, IV, 300; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, I,98; and see Haynūn in Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 77. See also Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-'uyūn*, III,453: Hayzūn; Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, V,639: Habūn. Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, I,261, and Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 275, relate the tradition but they do not give the name.

⁸⁹ § 170 (Ms Vat., 72b; Ms Esc., 66).

⁹⁰ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, 394. See, for different names, the sources we quoted in *Le Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā' di Ṭarafī*, 421: Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul*, I,309 [=I,345]; Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḫ al-khamīs*, I,130; Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, I/1, 22; Ya'qūbī, *Ta'riḫ*, I,28; Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 97; Kisā'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 152; al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-ṣaḥīḥayn*, Beirut 1990, II, 611 no. 4051; and only about Abraham's wives, see Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 33; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, I,285; Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'riḫ*, III,53.

⁹¹ § 186 (Ms Vat., 74a; Ms Esc., 70). The same names are given by 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'riḫ*, 41-42 no. 83; and Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 171b, but 150b: Jābalqā and Jāban Sā, 151a: Jābalqā and Jābarsā. See also Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 20: Jābalq and Jāyarsānayūt (but the Jumhūriyya edition, Cairo n.d., has here Jābarsānayūt); Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ al-rusul*, I,69 [=I,68]: Jābars and Jābalq, with many variants in the notes; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, II,105: Jābars and Jābalq; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fi waqā'i' al-duḥūr*, Beirut n.d., 163: Jābalqā; Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'riḫ*, II,73: Jābalqā and Jābalsā; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, I,21: Jābars/Jābarsā and Jābalq/Jābalqā; Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar*, I,47: Ḥābarshā and Jābalqā, I, 48: Ḥābaltā and Jābardā; and see also the names given in *L'Abrégé*, 55.

⁹² § 156 (Ms Vat., 68a; Ms Esc., 61).

names.⁹³ Ṭarafī also quotes the name of Lot's wife in this chapter: Wālīma.⁹⁴

Finally, various names in the story of Moses are worth noting. The name and the origin of the Samaritan (*al-sāmīrī*) occurring in the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī, in a passage taken from Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*, is as follows: Mūsā b. Ṭayfar, from the Persian region of Kirmān.⁹⁵ The name Ṭayfar is clearly an orthographical variant of the more common name, as given in all the sources, Mūsā b. Ṣufar, even if some other versions give completely different names.⁹⁶ In his description of the vicissitudes of the mysterious al-Khiḍr, Ṭarafī quotes only one name, the name of the pirate king in the story of the ship damaged by al-Khiḍr. The name of this pirate king is Hadad b. Badr, that is an orthographical variant of the more common Hudad b. Budad.⁹⁷

⁹³ Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 192b: Raghūtā and Rathīthā or Rathūthā and Ra'ūthā; see also Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, I,182: Rītā and Za'ūtā, II,292: Rīthā and Za'ūthā; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-rusul*, I,299 [=I,334]: Rīthā and Ra'ziyā (Leiden edition has Ra'rabā) with many variants in the notes; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, I,179: Rīthā and Dha'ratā; Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 104: Rīthā and Ghīthā; Kisā'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 147, gives only one name: Rawāyā; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 319: Rīthā or Rayya and Za'ūrā or 'Arūba; in fact Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād*, IV,141, has different versions: from Muqātil: Rubthā and Zu'rathā, from al-Suddī: Rayya and 'Arūba; and see Id., *al-Muntaẓam*, I,284: Rīthā and Ra'rathā; Ibn Shaddād, *al-A'lāq al-khaṣira fī dhikr umarā' al-Shām wa-l-Jazīra II.1. Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq*, Damascus 1956, 18: Zughar and al-Rayya and he gives also the names of four sons. Regarding the name Zughar see also Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, III, 161; I am indebted to M. Lecker for this reference.

⁹⁴ § 159 (Ms Vat., 68b; Ms Esc., 63); for other versions see Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 191a: Wālīqa; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 319: Wāghila; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, I,181: Wālīgha; Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 106: H.l.s.f. ' or Wā'ila; Ibn Abī 'Udhayba, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 29a: Wālīgha or another name: Hul.s.q.; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, 383: Wāhila; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XI,309, XII,147: Wāhila.

⁹⁵ § 401 (Ms Vat., 117a; Ms Esc., 206).

⁹⁶ See Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, 387: Mikhā; Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, I,283: Mūsā b. Ṣufar; Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 208: Mūsā Ṣufar or M.n.jā; Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, XIII,223: Mūsā b. Ṣafar (sic) or Mikhā; Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rikh*, III,91: Mūsā b. Ṭ.f.y.r.; Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, V,593: Mūsā b. Ṣufar; al-Hayṣam, *Qīṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, 114b: Mūsā b. Ṣufar; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, I,353: M.n.jā; Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṭraf*, Beirut 1991, 567: Mūsā b. Ṣufar; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XIII,244: Mikhā or Mūsā b. Ṣufar; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 424: many versions: Ṣufar, Yūsuf, M.n.jār, or Mūsā b. Ṣufar. But see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, I,286: his name was Hārūn al-Sāmīrī (sic).

⁹⁷ § 480 (Ms Vat., 129b; Ms Esc., 256); See the version given by Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XVI,2; Hudad b. Budad; Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 227: Hudad b. Budad or Julandā or, from Muḥammad b. Ishāq, M.n.wāh b. Julandā al-Urdunni; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 436-37: Hudad b. Budad, 438-9: Julandā or, from Muḥammad b. Ishāq, M.n.w.la b. Julandā or Hudad b. Budad; Kisā'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 232: a king of Jordan; Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-'uyūn*, III,333: Hudad b. Budad or from Muqātil, M.n.d.la b. Julandā b. Sa'd al-Azdī; Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, II,309; Julandā; al-Hayṣam, *Qīṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, 112a: Ḥayḍar b. Julandā; Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, II,598: M.b.d.la b. Julanda al-Azdī; Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, V,412: M.d.d. b. N.d.d. Regarding the variant Julandā see J.C. Wilkinson, «The Julanda of Oman», *Journal of Oman Studies*, 1 (1975), 97-108.

Some general conclusions can be drawn from the material discussed above. With the exception of the names of the prophets, most of the names given by Ṭarafī are particular and not attested in other sources, even if they are only orthographical variants. Orthographical variants of names are common in Arabic literature, and it is not unusual to find that different manuscripts of the same work contain various versions. There is no doubt that this particularity is due to either the peculiarities of the Arabic writing or to the misunderstandings and corruptions of the scribes. However, all of these variations cannot be dismissed as simple mistakes in the transcription or copying. It is highly probable that at least some of these variants derived from the versions used in the sources relied on by Ṭarafī. Whether these versions arose as the result of some local differing tradition or of some misunderstanding in reading or copying cannot be stated.⁹⁸

The traditions describing the physical appearance of some of the prophets in Ṭarafī's work are the second subject to be discussed.

Ṭarafī usually gives a physical description of the prophets at the end of the chapters dealing with their biographies. The first of these descriptions is in the story of Adam and includes a clear source reference, Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 205/820 ca.). In this version Adam is described as «having a white complexion, a distinct space between his eyebrows, curly hair, wide eyes, big buttocks, and, as being, of such an intense whiteness that no one had ever seen a face like his or neck as long as his; he had also a hairy body».⁹⁹ It must be pointed out that this report, even if a comprehensive description not attested in other sources, is not very clear about the main question at issue in the traditions dealing with the appearance of Adam, i.e. whether he had a beard and, if so, when he grew it.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ For instance, the name al-Falaḥ concerning the *aṣḥāb* al-Rass in § 502 (Ms Vat., 131b; Ms Esc., 261) is clearly a mistake for al-Falaj.

⁹⁹ § 51 (Ms Vat., 54a; Ms Esc., 21-22): *wa-ammā šūratuhu ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam fa-dhakara Ibn al-Kalbī annahu kāna abyad̄ ablaj ja'dan a'yan 'aẓīm al-alyatayn shadīd al-bayād lam yura mithlu wajhihi wa-lā mithlu ṭūl 'unuqihi fi jasadīhi sha'r kathīr*.

¹⁰⁰ See Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 17: Adam was without a beard (*amrad*) and had a lot of hair; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 199: he was *amrad* and his beard grew as punishment; Kisā'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 52: God caused his hair and beard to grow after falling, 53: Adam asked God why the beard had grown and He said that it was for his transgression and to distinguish male from female; see also Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, XIII, 22: when Adam fell down beard and hair grew and he suffered a lot from this. But see Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, II, 636: God granted him a long beard upon his request to become more handsome (see also Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XI, 172), II, 621 and Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya*, I, 97: Adam was the only one in Paradise to have a long beard reaching his navel; Maqdisī, *al-Bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh*, II, 99, III, 11: he was created *amrad* and only his offspring had beards; Ps-Mas'ūdī, *Akhbār al-zamān*, Cairo 1938, 49, and Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, I/1, 10: Adam had curly hair. See the

Later Ṭarafi quotes a long physical description of Abraham: he was «white with a complexion intermixed with redness, had beautiful eyes of intense blackness, a wide forehead, long cheeks, a hooked nose and little hair on his body; he was a white-haired man with a white beard that was neither long nor short, and he had big hands and feet». ¹⁰¹ This report is notable, since *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections and other works dealing with prophets do not usually contain such a detailed description of Abraham; only one other tradition about the messengers sent by Abū Bakr to Heraclius gives any details about the appearance of Abraham, though in a very brief form. ¹⁰² A *ḥadīth* attributed to the Companion Samura b. Jundab (d. 58-9/677-78) states that, in Muḥammad's words, Abraham was such a tall man that the Prophet, who met him in his nocturnal journey, could hardly see his head. ¹⁰³ In another widespread *ḥadīth* Muḥammad gives further particulars of the physical appearance of Abraham: «Regarding Abraham, look at your fellow (Muḥammad)», or: «I saw Abraham and I am the most similar to him among his offspring». ¹⁰⁴ The existence of traditions attributed to the Prophet probably

discussion in Kister, «Ādam», 139-40. Adam was also *akthar al-nās sha'ran*: see Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, Beirut 1985, I,387; al-Mu'āfā b. Zakariyā, *al-Jalīs al-ṣāliḥ al-kāfi wa-l-anīs al-nāṣiḥ al-shāfi*, Beirut 1987, III,391; Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, Beirut 1986, I,53 no. 13; but he became bald, see Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ*, 35; and C. Castillo, «Aportación a la mítica historia de Adán y Eva (II)», *Miscelanea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos*, 31 (1981), 47-48. See also Hijrī (Ps-Wahb), *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 35a. In some of these reports it is said that Adam was the most beautiful of human kind, a particular that usually concerns Joseph; see Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, I,97: Yūsuf had half of the beauty of Adam; but in another report, when Adam is shown his offspring and he saw Yūsuf, he was impressed by his beauty: Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 108-9.

¹⁰¹ § 150 (Ms Vat., 67a; Ms Esc., 59): *wa-ṣifāt Ibrāhīm, ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam abyad mushrab ḥumra ḥasan al-'aynayn ad'ajuhumā ṣalt al-jabīn ṭawīl al-khaddayn shāri' al-anf qalīl sha'r al-jasad rajul ashyab abyad al-liḥya laysa bi-l-ṭawīl wa-lā bi-l-qaṣīr shatn al-kaff wa-l-qadam*.

¹⁰² This report is of great significance: in fact Heraclius showed to the Muslim messengers the images of many prophets, including Muḥammad; see, about Abraham, Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I,388; Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il*, I,53; al-Mu'āfā b. Zakariyā, *al-Jalīs*, III,392; for further references and a discussion of this tradition, see R. Tottoli, «Dell'aspetto fisico dei profeti secondo alcune tradizioni musulmane», *AIUON*, forthcoming.

¹⁰³ Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Beirut, 1992, IV, 458 no. 3354.

¹⁰⁴ See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, Beirut 1983, V,329 no. 9719; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV,458 no. 3355, IV,494 no. 3437, VII,77 no. 5913; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Cairo 1991, I,153-54 nos. 166-168; Abū Ya'lā, *Musnad*, Damascus-Beirut 1989², IV,134 no. 2187, IV,179 no. 2261, V,108 no. 2720; see also the references in the notes; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, Cairo 1975, V,300 no. 3130, V,604 no. 3649; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, Beirut 1991, I,593-4 nos. 2501-2, I,800 no. 3546, III,123 no. 7794, III,622 no. 10832, V,91 no. 14595; Ibn Balabān, *al-Iḥsān bi-tarṭīb ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, Beirut 1987, I,134 no. 51; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'ummāl fi sunan al-aqwāl wa-l-af'āl*, Beirut 1989, XI,395-96 no. 31848; Haythamī, *Majma' al-zawā'id wa-manba' al-fawā'id*, Beirut 1967, I, 66-67; and see also Suyūfī, *al-Khaṣā'is al-kubrā*, Beirut n.d., I,169, 175,

prevented the diffusion of variant reports concerning the physical appearance of Abraham, and this is why sources do not usually dwell upon descriptions of him. At the same time, the statement that Muḥammad was similar to him held back the diffusion of popular traditions with fanciful particulars.¹⁰⁵

Following the biographies concerning David and Solomon, where no description of appearance is given, the next prophet described by Ṭarafī is Job. At the end of his story Ṭarafī quotes this short description: «Job was a man of a reddish complexion, blue eyes, protuberant cheeks and bulky constitution».¹⁰⁶ Other sources give a few particulars about the physical appearance of Job and all of them differ from this one in the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā* of Ṭarafī.¹⁰⁷

In the middle of the story of Joseph, Ṭarafī quotes a tradition about his physical appearance along with the description of Jacob and Isaac. This is an exception to the formal structure of the work, since the descriptions are usually found at the end of the chapters. The reason is clear: Ṭarafī is discussing the prodigious beauty of Joseph, which is so central to his biography, and recounts first the *ḥadīths* going back to the Prophet concerning his beauty, and then gives a full description of him, along with his ancestors, from a tradition attributed to Ibn al-Kalbī: «who stated, regarding the pictures of the prophets which in his view are reliable, that Joseph, God bless him and grant him salvation, was a white man, with curly

177; and cf. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, I, 173. It should be remarked that a variant of these traditions states that it was Jesus the most similar to Muḥammad, see for instance Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 475 no. 3394; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘ummāl*, XI, 396 no. 31849; but see for instance Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, III, 622 no. 10832, and Haythamī, *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*, I, 66: ‘Urwa b. Mas‘ūd was the most similar to Jesus.

¹⁰⁵ A comprehensive analysis of the traditions about the physical appearance of Muḥammad and his Companions could help the understanding of this material about the prophets. Regarding the appearance of the Prophet see for instance the long description in ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta‘rīkh*, 79-82 and other references at p. 118 n. 208, or the vague description of the Prophet in Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 194 no. 684, I, 218 no. 796, I, 247-48 no. 944, 946-47, I, 269-70 no. 1053, I, 283 no. 1122; Suyūfī, *al-Khaṣā‘iṣ al-kubrā*, I, 71 f.; further references are given in Tottoli, «Dell’aspetto fisico dei profeti». The resemblance with the Prophet is evidently a way of praising someone, see for instance concerning al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 213 no. 774, but in the case of Abraham is the way to underline the strict connection between him and Muḥammad. A comprehensive description of the appearance of the Prophet is given in the books dealing with the *dalā’il al-nubuwwa*.

¹⁰⁶ § 256 (Ms Vat., 89a; Ms Esc., 125): *wa-kānat ṣifat Ayyūb ṣallā Allāh ‘alayhi wa-sallam aḥmar ashhal nāti’ al-wajnatayn ghalīḏ al-khalq*.

¹⁰⁷ See the descriptions given first by Tha‘labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*, 153; and then by Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, XII, 356; Ibn Abī ‘Udhayba, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*, 49a. See also the description in al-Ḥakīm al-Nisābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 635 no. 4113; and the definition given by Kisā‘ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*, 179: Job was the most similar to Joseph.

hair, big legs and arms, a little navel, large eyes and he was of uniform constitution. He was the most similar to Adam and his face radiated light. His father Jacob, God bless him and grant him salvation, was handsome, with slim cheeks and a long nose protruding over [his upper] lip. Isaac, God bless him and grant him salvation, was corpulent, white, of medium stature and had very little hair». ¹⁰⁸ Many of the particulars in this tradition deserve our attention, as is the case, for instance, with the clear indication of the source: Ibn al-Kalbī. Ṭarafī also quoted a tradition from Ibn al-Kalbī with regard to Adam, as has already been noted above. However, the exact source for these traditions regarding the physical appearance of various prophets, though attributed to Ibn al-Kalbī, cannot be ascertained. ¹⁰⁹ Moreover, another interesting particular is given at the end of the description of Joseph, where it is said that his face radiated light. This is similar to Shī'ite conceptions about prophetic light, but here this particular is related to Joseph's prodigious beauty, since Ṭarafī does not mention this light in his descriptions of the other prophets. ¹¹⁰ Finally, in relation to references from other sources, only some details of the description of the physical appearance of Joseph traced back to Ka'b al-Aḥbār in the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Tha'labī are similar to the ones given here. ¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ § 277-279 (Ms Vat., 92b-93a; Ms Esc., 138-139): *Wā-dhakara Ibn al-Kalbī fi-mā ṣaḥḥa 'indahū min ṣuwar al-anbiyā' anna Yūsuf ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam kāna abyad ja'd al-sha'r ghalīz al-sāqayn wa-l-'aḍḍayn ṣaghīr al-surra ḍakhm al-'aynayn mustawī l-khalq ashbah al-ṣuwar bi-ṣūrat Ādam yatala'la'u wajhuhu nūran wa-ṣūrat abīhi Ya'qūb ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam ḥasana raqīq al-khaddayn ṭawīl al-'irrūn mushrif 'alā shafa wa-ṣūrat Ishāq ṣallā allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam jasīm abyad rab'a az'ar.*

¹⁰⁹ Concerning Ibn al-Kalbī see Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, I, 268-71; it is worth noting that Yāqūt, in his *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, ed. by I. 'Abbās, Beirut 1992, VI, 2780, mentions a work by Ibn al-Kalbī with the title *Kitāb ḥadīth Ādam wa-wuldihi*; about this work see other references in N. Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri* I, Chicago 1957, 48.

¹¹⁰ About prophetic light, see the comprehensive article by U. Rubin, «Pre-existence and light. Aspects of the concept of *nūr Muḥammad*», *IOS*, 5 (1975), 62-119. Prophetic light has nothing to do with physical appearance of the prophets, see for instance *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, Berlin, Ms Staatsbibliothek, or. quart. 1171, 137b-188b, where there is a lot of evidence about this prophetic light.

¹¹¹ Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ*, 109; See about the three prophets Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I, 388-89; Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Dalā'il*, I, 55; see also the descriptions from Tha'labī, given by Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 345, Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-jalīl bi-ta'rīkh al-Quds wa-l-Khalīl*, Amman 1973, I, 68; Diyārbakrī, *Ta'rīkh al-khamīs*, I, 132; *Siyar al-anbiyā'*, 67a-67b; see also the long description in al-Hayṣam, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 56b. Concerning Jacob see Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XII, 312, where it is said that he was the most similar to Abraham; but in al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, II, 607 no. 4043, in a tradition going back to Ka'b al-Aḥbār where the description of Jacob and Isaac is given, it is stated that it was Isaac who was similar to his father Abraham. This similitude was already pointed out by a tradition in Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada'*, 198b; see also Ps-Aṣma'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 22a.

In the story of Moses, Ṭarafī mentions a report about his and Aaron's physical appearance: «Moses, God bless him and grant him salvation, was a man of very tawny complexion, lank hair, light of flesh, with sunken eyes, but sharp sight, and with contracted lips; Aaron, God bless him and grant him salvation, was similar to Moses, with a round head, large forehead and he was cross-eyed». ¹¹² Other sources contain descriptions of Moses with similar details. ¹¹³ It can be suggested that this long description also derives from Ibn al-Kalbī, like the other, similar reports about Adam and Joseph. Moreover, Ṭarafī had already mentioned something connected to Moses' appearance in the description of the miracle of the leprous hand, when he added that Moses was a man of tawny complexion. These same words occur in a *ḥadīth* where the Prophet described Moses, Abraham and Jesus. ¹¹⁴ In another place, at the beginning of this *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, Ṭarafī related one further detail concerning Moses's height in relation to the length of his rod. Also in a tradition dealing with the things that came down from Paradise with Adam, Ṭarafī mentions the rod of Moses which, it is said, «was ten cubits tall like Moses». ¹¹⁵

Finally, Ṭarafī also quotes the description of Jesus, but this report is notable only because he quotes some details taken in full from *ḥadīth*

¹¹² § 418 (Ms Esc., 218): *wa-kānat šifat Mūsā šallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam shadīd al-udma sabṭ al-sha'r ḍarb al-laḥm ghā'ir al-'aynayn ḥadīd al-naẓar muqallaṣ al-shafa wa-kānat šifat Hārūn šallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam shabīh bi-Mūsā mudawwar al-ra's 'arīḍ al-jabīn fī 'aynayhi qabal.*

¹¹³ See Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I,388; Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il*, I,53; al-Mu'āfa b. Zakariyā, *al-Jālis*, III,392; but see Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, 43, with a different description of Aaron; al-Ḥākim al-Nisābūrī, *al-Mustadrak*, II,631 no. 4105; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 391.

¹¹⁴ § 376 (Ms Vat., 111a; Ms Esc., 189): *wa-yuqāl inna [Mūsā šallā Allāh] 'alayhi wa-sallam kāna rajulan ādam. Ḥadīths usually add some other particulars, but the most cited tradition going back to the Prophet states that Moses was a man of tawny complexion and tall like men of the tribe of Shanū'a; see Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV,422 no. 3239, IV,458 no. 3355; IV,475 no. 3396, and cfr. IV,494 no. 3438, VII,77 no. 5913; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I,151-54 nos. 165-168; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, V,300 no. 3130, V,604 no. 3649; Abū Yā'lā, *Musnad*, IV,179 no. 2261, V,108 no. 2720; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I,527 no. 2197, I, 553 no. 2324, I,557 no. 2347, I,732 nos. 3179-80, I,800 no. 3546; III,122 no. 7794, III,622 no. 10832, V,91 no. 14595; Ibn Balabān, *al-Iḥsān*, I,134; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, V,329 no. 9719; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'ummāl*, XI,395-96 no. 31848; Haythamī, *Majma' al-zawā'id*, 66-67; Bayhaqī, *Ḥayāt al-anbiyā'*, Cairo 1988, 21 no. 10; Suyūfī, *al-Khaṣā'is al-kubrā*, I,175,177. And see the description of Moses in Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 141, and of Moses and Aaron, traced back to Ka'b, in Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 172; and also the description of the Moses in front of the Pharaoh, in Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, 124.*

¹¹⁵ § 39 (Ms Vat., 52a; Ms Esc., 17): *ṭūluhā 'ashara adhru' 'alā ṭūl Mūsā.* See also Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ al-rusul*, I,431 [=I,501], I,127 [=I,126]; Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 241; al-Hayṣam, *Qīṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, 107b; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḥ madīnat Dimashq*, XVII,380; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, 389; he says only that the rod was tall like Moses; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 202. But see also Kisā'i, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 235: twenty cubits; Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, 45: twenty; and Diyārbakrī, *Ta'riḥ al-khamīs*, I,63: ten or forty cubits.

literature as well as the name of Bukhārī: «Concerning Jesus, God bless him and grant him salvation, he was a man having a medium stature and a red complexion.¹¹⁶ Al-Bukhārī states that he was red as if he had just come out of the bath; he had curly hair and broad breast, while in another report he had a complexion between red and white with lank hair, as if water was trickling down from it even though it was not moist, and the locks of his hair fell onto his shoulders». ¹¹⁷ In the final part of his report Ṭarafī points out the contrasting particulars in the *ḥadīths* with regard to Jesus's complexion, red or between red and white, and his hair, lank or curly. ¹¹⁸

A few words should be added to draw some final conclusions. Most of the descriptions of the prophets in the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* of Ṭarafī are not attested to in other sources and, with the exception of the description of Jesus, there can be few doubts that Ibn al-Kalbī was Ṭarafī's source on this subject. However, it cannot be ascertained with certainty whether or not Ṭarafī relied directly upon his work or took material from an intermediary

¹¹⁶ About the meaning of *ḥumra* and *aḥmar* when related to complexion, see E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, London-Edinburgh 1863-93, 640c, 642a; and see the discussion of the question in Tottoli, «Del'aspetto fisico dei profeti».

¹¹⁷ § 452 (Ms Vat., 124b; Ms Esc., 241): *wa-kānat ṣifat 'Īsā ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam marbū' al-khalq ilā al-ḥumra wa-qāla l-Bukhārī aḥmar ka-annahu [kharaja min dīmās] ya'nī l-ḥammām ja'd al-sha'r 'arīḍ al-ṣadr wa-fi riwāya ukhrā ilā l-ḥumra wa-l-bayāḍ sabṭ al-sha'r ka-anna sha'rahu yaqturu mā'an wa-in lam yuṣibhu balal taḍribu limmatuhu bayna mankiḇayhi*.

¹¹⁸ See, with complexion between red and white and lank hair: Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV,422-3 no. 3239; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I,152 no. 165; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I,527 no. 2197, I,557 no. 2347; see, about Jesus with curly hair and tawny complexion as if he had just come out of the bath (but *ḥadīths* sometimes give only one of these particulars): Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV,475 no. 3394, IV,475 no. 3396, IV,494 no. 3437-8; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I,151 no. 165, I,154 no. 168; Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, V,300 no. 3130; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I,635 no. 2697, I,732 no. 3179: complexion between red and white but curly hair, I,732 no. 3180, I, 800 no. 3546: white complexion and curly hair, III,123 no. 7794; 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, V,329 no. 9719; Ibn Balabān, *al-Iḥsān*, I,134; al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'ummāl*, XI,395-96 no. 31848; Abū Ya'lā, *Musnad* V,108 no. 2720, and Haythamī, *Majma' al-zawā'id*, I,67 (=Ibn Ḥanbal no. 3546). Finally a tradition states that Jesus was a man of tawny complexion (*ādam*) and lank hair, and adds that water used to trickle down his head and his locks of hair were falling on his shoulders: Mālik, *Kitāb al-muwaffa'*, ed. by M. F. 'Abd al-Bāqī, Beirut 1988, II,920 (*Ṣifat al-nabī*, 2); Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, VI,495 no. 3440-1, VII,75-6 no. 5902, VIII,403 no. 6999, VIII,441 no. 7026, VIII,441 no. 7128; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I,155-6 no. 169; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* II,383 no. 5554, II,480 no. 6107, II,517 no. 6320, II,539 no. 6434; Abū Ya'lā, *Musnad*, IX,346 no. 5458, IX,359 no. 5469. See the description given by Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 387, traced back as usual to Ka'b al-Aḥbār; and see Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 573; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, II,97; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, XIV,34 f.: Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, II,20; Ibn Abī 'Udhayba, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 128b; Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 22; see also Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il*, I,389; Abū Nu'aym, *Dalā'il*, I,54; al-Mu'āfa b. Zakariyā, *al-Jalīs*, III,392. See also Tottoli, «Dell'aspetto fisico dei profeti».

source quoting Ibn al-Kalbī. What is sure is that the descriptions of the prophets given in the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*' of Ṭarafī contain many notable details.

Various other traditions, which are difficult to collect under a single subject heading but which are nevertheless relevant, will be discussed below.

In the story of Adam, Ṭarafī quotes a popular etymology of the Arabic word for man (*insān*): he states that man was named *insān* because he was gladdened (*anisa*) by the creation of Eve.¹¹⁹ The most widespread interpretation says that the origin of the term *insān* is a Qur'ān verse (Qur.20:115) where it is said that man forgot (*nasiya*) his pact with God.¹²⁰ Another statement in the story of Adam merits our attention: in the tradition detailing the objects that Adam brought with him when he fell down on earth from Paradise, it is said that no man, except the prophets, could take the rod (of Moses), without being devoured.¹²¹

In the story of Solomon, Ṭarafī relates a tradition where the prophet asked the chief of the birds the whereabouts of the hoopoe; in this report the chief of the birds is the crane (*al-kurkī*). In the traditions dealing with this episode in the other sources, it is usually the eagle who looks for the hoopoe upon Solomon's request.¹²²

Two segments from the biography of Joseph are relevant. At the beginning Ṭarafī introduces the following report with the statement «from a *tafsīr* from Ishāq b. Bishr»: Joseph had a dream, before that of the stars, but similar to it: his brother went and gathered firewood, and his brothers' faggots fell down prostrate to Joseph's faggot.¹²³ Another report occurs at the end of the story of Joseph. Jacob asks the wolf, who was reputedly involved in the presumed death of Joseph, about the fate of his son; the answer the wolf gives, denying every charge, is worth noting: «O prophet of

¹¹⁹ § 27 (Ms Vat., 50b; Ms Esc., 12).

¹²⁰ Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XVI,221; see Muqātil, *Tafsīr*, III,43; Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt*, I/1,6; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh madīnat Dimashq*, II,614.

¹²¹ § 40 (Ms Vat., 52a; Ms Esc., 17): *wa-ḡila innahā kānat lā ya'khudhuhā ghayr nabiyy illā akalat-hu*.

¹²² § 224 (Ms Vat., 81b; Ms Esc., 99); see, concerning the eagle, as chief of the birds, Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*', 312; Muḡīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-jafīl*, I,128; *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*', (Anonymous), Ms Princeton n.s. 2120, 1b; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān*, 513.

¹²³ § 258 (Ms Vat., 89a; Ms Esc., 125-26); this tradition (cf. *Gen.* 37:7) is given also by al-Hayṣam, *Qīṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, 57b: together with another dream before the one with the stars; Ps-'Aṣma'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*', 29a. Other sources describe other dreams by Joseph before the famous dream of the stars; see for instance Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*', 110; Kisā'ī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*', 157; Ibn Abī 'Udhayba, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā*', 30b; F. Croisier, *L'histoire de Joseph d'après un manuscrit oriental*, Genève 1989, 107.

God, I did not even see your son (...); I only came (to the region of Canaan) to visit some relatives; my village is eighty parasangs away from here». ¹²⁴ Only a few sources give similar details about this tradition, usually saying that this wolf was in Palestine visiting some other wolves or a brother. ¹²⁵

At the end of the story of Joseph, ʿArafī mentions some important traditions about the number of the prophets and their ‘nationality’. This material is typical in the works dealing with prophets and sources usually state that all the patriarchs and the prophets were from the Israelites excluding some who were Syrian, and spoke Aramaic, and some others who were Arab. The number and the list given by ʿArafī are relevant: he states that all, but eleven, were Israelite: Adam, Idrīs, Noah, Hūd, Šāliḥ, Lot, Abraham, Shu‘ayb, Ishmael, Isaac and Muḥammad. ʿArafī then gives another version: all but twenty of the prophets were Israelite: four of them were Syrian, Adam, Seth, Idrīs and Noah, and four were Arab, Hūd, Shu‘ayb, Šāliḥ and Muḥammad. ¹²⁶ Contradictory numbers in all probability derive from a mistake of the copyist, since ʿArafī mentions only eight prophets, in line with a well known tradition going back to the Companion Abū Dharr (d. 32/651 ca.). Sources usually only specify eight or ten prophets, who were Arab and Syrian, with many variations to their nationalities and languages. ¹²⁷ It

¹²⁴ § 330 (Ms Vat., 102a; Ms Esc., 165): *Yā nabiyy Allāh mā ra‘aytu li-ibnika šūra qaṭṭu qāla fa-mā adkhalaka arḍ Kan‘ān qāla ji‘tu min ajl qarāba li min al-dhi‘āb wa-bayn wa-bayna qaryatī thamānīn farsakhan.*

¹²⁵ See in Ibn al-Murajjā, *Faḍā‘il Bayt al-Maqdis wa-l-Khaṭīb wa-faḍā‘il al-Shām*, ed. by O. Livne-Kafri, Shfaram 1995, 352-53 no. 584; and R. Y. Ebied and M. J. L. Young, *The Story of Joseph in Arabic Verse*, Leiden 1975, 13. For some other traditions about this dialogue between Jacob and the wolf, see Tha‘labī, *Qisaṣ al-anbiyā’*, 116; and Kisā‘ī, *Qisaṣ al-anbiyā’*, 159-60. Also Maqdisī, *al-Bad’ wa-l-ta’rīkh*, III, 70, hints at this story and relates that *Quṣṣāṣ* have a lot of legends about the wolf.

¹²⁶ § 331-333 (Ms Vat., 102a-102b; Ms Esc., 165-166).

¹²⁷ See Ishāq b. Bishr, *Mubtada’*, 183a: five prophets spoke Arabic: Muḥammad, Ishmael, Shu‘ayb, Hūd and Šāliḥ, and all the others spoke Aramaic; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 56: five were ‘*ibrāniyyūn*’: Adam, Seth, Idrīs, Noah and Abraham, and five Arab: Hūd, Šāliḥ, Ishmael, Shu‘ayb and Muḥammad; the same as in Ibn Qutayba also in Maqdisī, *al-Bad’ wa-l-ta’rīkh*, III, 1; Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, *Mir‘āt al-zamān*, 586: four Syrian and four Arab, as given by ʿArafī (> Abū Dharr), but in the same page Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī gives another tradition: all the prophets were from Israelites excluding ten of them (all the names given by ʿArafī but Adam); Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, II, 746: four Syrian prophets and four Arab (> Abū Dharr); see the same tradition also in Ḥusaynī, *Qisaṣ al-anbiyā’ ‘alā ra’y al-imāmiyya*, Berlin, Ms Staatsbibliothek Petermann I, 633, 3b; al-Mu‘āfā b. Zakariyā, *al-Jalīs*, III, 376; Mujīr al-Dīn, *al-Uns al-jalīl*, I, 175. See also Shāṭibī, *Kitāb al-jumān fī akhbār al-zamān*, London, Ms British library or. 3008, 16b: four Arab prophets; Majlisī, *Bihār al-anwār*, XII, 385: five Arab prophets, including Ishmael; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, XVII, 651: five Arab prophets: Muḥammad, Noah (!), Hūd, Šāliḥ and Shu‘ayb; ‘Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta’rīkh*, 27 no 43: there were prophets speaking three languages: Syriac, Hebrew and Arabic; five prophets were Syrian: Idrīs, Noah,

should be pointed out that what is at issue here, in the lists and names of prophets, is in reality the nationality and the language spoken by Abraham and Ishmael. Later on, in the chapter dedicated to Ishmael and Isaac, Ṭarafī states that Ishmael spoke Arabic from birth.¹²⁸

Another peculiar report not attested in any other source available to me can be found in the story of Moses. It is stated «in a *tafsīr*, that the magicians decided to bewitch Moses and they transformed his head into that of a lion, his body into that of a pig and his hands into those of a monkey».¹²⁹ Ṭarafī mentions further significant material about al-Khiḍr, when he quotes a long tradition concerning his dialogues with Moses, where one exhorts the other (*ja'ala yuwaṣṣī kull wāḥid minhumā ṣāhibahu*). Only a few parts of this tradition can be found in the major *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections or in *zuhd* books.¹³⁰

* * *

The parts of Ṭarafī's *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* dealt with here share some features in common: they are connected with traditions or questions—such as onomastics or the physical descriptions going back to Ibn al-Kalbī—that are typical of the material of popular origin regarding the prophets. This is apparently material that authors of *qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* collections could not afford to neglect. Notwithstanding the exegetical character of his *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, Ṭarafī could not but include such popular traditions when dealing with particular subjects—such as names or physical description of the prophets—while almost always disregarding what is stated in *ḥadīths*. What Ṭarafī's source or sources were for these traditions cannot be stated definitely. It is possible that the *Mubtada'* of Ishāq b. Bishr was the source for some of this material, but for some other traditions a Qur'ānic

Abraham, Lot and Jonah, and twelve (sic!) spoke Arabic: Adam, Seth, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ishmael, Shu'ayb, al-Khiḍr, the three prophets mentioned in the sūrat Yā-sīn, Jonah, Khālīd b. Sinān and Muḥammad, and see also 27-28 nos. 42-44; cf. also Sa'īd al-Andalusī, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-umam*, ed. by L. Cheikho, Beirut 1912, 6: five Syrian prophets.

¹²⁸ § 334 (Ms Vat., 102b; Ms Esc., 166).

¹²⁹ § 382 (Ms Vat., 112a; Ms Esc., 192): *wa-fi ba'd al-tafsīr anna al-saḥara ijtama'ū an yasharū Mūsā fa-ja'alū ra'sahu ra's asad wa-jasadahu jasad khinzīr wa-yadayhi yaday qird.*

¹³⁰ § 490-498 (Ms Vat., 130a-130b; Ms Esc., 257-259). See, for some traditions of this kind, Tha'labī, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 229-230; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, V, 640-41; Samarqandī, *Tafsīr*, II, 310; Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, V, 432; Ḥusaynī, *Qīṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, 110a; Ibn Abī 'Udhayba, *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 68a; Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, XIII, 294; see also *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Anonymous), Ms Gotha A 1742, 154a-154b; *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Anonymous), Ms Gotha A 1743, 33b-34a.

commentary seems to be far more probable, as in the case of the two reports introduced by the expression *fī ba‘d al-tafsīr*.

At the same time we should also consider the possibility that this material could have been taken from another, unknown, work dedicated to the prophets, which Ṭarafī had at his disposition and made use of for his *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*. We have already pointed to the probability that Ṭarafī took these traditions from one or two intermediary sources, as he tended to rely upon few sources, such as the works of Ṭabarī and Ishāq b. Bishr.¹³¹ The most likely explanation is that this intermediary source was another work containing traditions about the prophets, and in this case it could have been a work from al-Andalus, where this literary genre was widely diffused.¹³² If this local *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* production, now lost, ever existed, it surely influenced Ṭarafī in some way, with its materials and traditions of popular origin, and left its sign in the parts of his work that have been dealt with in this article.

ABSTRACT

The *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* of the Andalusian Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī is a collection of stories of the prophets which was written in the 5th/11th century. There are only two extant manuscripts of this work. Little is known about the author, who was an expert in variant readings of the Qur’ān. No biographical or later source mentions this *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* collection.

Ṭarafī’s work is introduced by a preface that indicates its exegetical character. Its most noteworthy feature is the strong dependence on Ṭabarī’s *tafsīr*. Notwithstanding this, some of the material included by Ṭarafī in his work is quite interesting, such as the traditions dealing with onomastic, the physical appearance of the prophets, and various other reports.

RESUMEN

La obra del andalusí Ibn Muṭarrif al-Ṭarafī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, es una colección de relatos sobre los profetas escrita en el siglo v/xi y de la cual sólo se conservan dos manuscritos. Se conoce muy poco sobre su autor, un experto en lecturas coránicas. Ninguna fuente biográfica —ni otras fuentes posteriores— menciona esta colección de *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*.

La obra se inicia con un prefacio en el que se puede apreciar su carácter exegetico. La característica más notable del texto es su estrecha dependencia del *tafsīr* de al-Ṭabarī. Sin embargo, parte de los materiales que al-Ṭarafī incluyó en su obra no carecen de interés, como es el caso de las tradiciones que se refieren a la onomástica, el aspecto físico de los profetas y otros temas.

¹³¹ See in particular p. 143.

¹³² This work could be the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* of Aḥmad b. Khālid mentioned above.