

The Archangel Gabriel in History and Tradition:
An Analysis of his Role and Function in
Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Roxana-Ileana Iavoschi

A Thesis

In The Department

of

Theological Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Theological Studies) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

February 2004

©Roxana-Ileana Iavoschi, 2004



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 0-612-91046-6
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 0-612-91046-6

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this dissertation.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de ce manuscrit.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the dissertation.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

ABSTRACT

The Archangel Gabriel in History and Tradition: An analysis of his Role and Function in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Roxana-Ileana Iavoschi

Reference to the archangel Gabriel occur in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. At various stages of their histories, the intervention of the archangel Gabriel is associated with a crucial phase of the development of that religion. Emphasis will be placed on the Sacred Scriptures of those religions, as well as extra-biblical documents such as legends, lore, and iconographical representations. This data will be analysed in order to examine why it is the same angel that associated with all the three religions, leading to an examination into the origins of the root of the name Gabriel, in the apocalyptic context of a divine intervention bringing hope and reassurance, and announcing the coming battle between the forces of good and evil.

Special Thanks To:

Jakob-Lawrence: For understanding why Mama had to spend all those hours in the library or on the computer. You are my Angel-Butterfly.

My mother: I would not be here without you.

Maya: Mulțumesc.

Lori-Ann Paige: For making the miles between us disappear with a simple phone call or email.

Lisa St-Jacques: I will forever be grateful for Concordia's Chocolate-chip muffins!

Diane Roy: For your patience as you allowed me to spend countless hours rambling on about my thesis.

Valerie Tsilla Abitbol: My movie buddy and advice giver. Wow, 20 years...

Dr. Pamela Bright and Dr. Charles Kannengeisser: I am in awe to be in your presence.

Dr. Marie-France Dion: My mentor and friend, thank you for giving me so many opportunities and for allowing me to learn from you on a daily basis.

Dr. Christine Jamieson: For challenging me to prove myself.

Dr. Matthew Anderson: For allowing me to be unique in approaching the New Testament, and for helping me rediscover my own faith.

Connie DiFruscia: For always going the extra mile in order to help others. You are one in a million.

And last, but definitively not least:

Prof. Sean McEvenue: Without you, I would never have discovered my passion for Theology.

CONTENTS

General Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Islam.....	8-19
1.1 Texts: Qur'an.....	8
1.2 Introduction.....	9
1.3 Qur'an.....	11
1.4 Sirhas.....	14
1.5 Controversy.....	16
1.6 Conclusion.....	18
Chapter 2: Christianity.....	20-37
2.1 Texts: Luke.....	20
2.2 Introduction.....	22
2.3 New Testament.....	23
2.4 The Gospel According to Luke.....	25
2.5 Angelology.....	30
2.6 Iconography.....	34
2.7 Conclusion.....	36
Chapter 3: Inter-Testament Books.....	38-49
3.1.1 Texts: 1 Enoch.....	38
3.1.2 2 Enoch.....	40
3.1.3 3 Enoch.....	43
3.2 Introduction.....	44
3.3 1 Enoch.....	45
3.4 2 Enoch.....	46
3.4.1 Manuscript J.....	47
3.4.2 Manuscript A.....	47
3.5 3 Enoch.....	48
3.6 Conclusion.....	48
Chapter 4: Judaism.....	50-61
4.1 Introduction.....	50
4.2 Midrashim.....	51
4.2.1 Abraham.....	53
4.2.2 Jacob.....	56
4.2.3 Joseph.....	57
4.2.4 Moses.....	58
4.2.5 Others.....	59
4.3 Conclusion.....	61

Chapter 5: Hebrew Bible.....	62-69
5.1 Texts: Daniel.....	62
5.2 The Hebrew Bible.....	63
5.3 The Book of Daniel.....	64
5.4 The Origins of Gabriel- the Root גבר	67
5.5 Conclusion.....	68
 General Conclusion.....	 70
 Bibliography.....	 77
 Appendix.....	 85

General Introduction:

Angels in World Religions

To most people, the word angel brings to mind an image of the little Valentine angel that perpetually surrounds us in February. Yet, the existence and roles of angels have significance far beyond the image of Cupid. They have been present in world religions far longer than we could imagine.

Angels are anything but ephemeral images. The historical sequence of Western religions- Zoroastrianism¹, Judaism, Christianity, Islam- has not known how to tell the story of their truths without angelic intercessions, nor is there any major religious tradition, Eastern or Western, that does not rely upon angels.²

In polytheistic religions or mythologies, angels are present, but are not given too much attention. In Greek³ and Roman mythologies, angels are present, but their roles are not more or less important than any other G-d or G-ddess. In polytheistic religions and mythologies, it is not uncommon to find interaction between the world of the g-ds and that of humanity. The only difference between the two was that the g-ds had immortality and more power, yet their daily lives and existence intertwined with humanity in a variety of ways⁴. Since there was no tangible difference between the realms of the g-ds and humans, then there was no specific need for angels to transmit the will of the g-ds. If they had a specific message for humanity, they themselves would be communicating

¹ Zoroastrianism "is one of the earliest monotheistic religions, though encompassing an ethical dualism". This definition is found in D. Gill et al. *Collins Gem: Religions of the World*, Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999, p. 227.

² H. Bloom, *Omens of Millennium: The Gnosis of Angels, Dreams, and Resurrection*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1996, p.37.

³ For example, Eros (or Cupid to the Romans) was described as a g-d although he is depicted as winged. He was the g-d who played pranks on people by making them fall in love when pierced by his arrows, but his role is no more or no less important than that of the Fates or Artemis.

⁴ In *Mythology: The Illustrated Anthology of World Myths and Storytelling*, London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2002, C.S. Littleton (Gen. Ed.) tells us how "Zeus was famous for his sexual adventures, and many of the stories of classical mythology start with his seduction of a mortal woman" (p.159); we also read of Athene, who was "involved in both the public and personal lives of almost every member of society" (p.175) by teaching humanity about military competence, arts, and so forth.

what was needed. Interaction between g-ds and humans was the 'norm' within the polytheistic religions.

On the other hand, angels, or more precisely their role⁵, are a *necessity* for monotheistic religions, as they are the favoured mode of communication between G-d and humans since it is only in monotheistic religions that G-d never reveals his face to humans⁶. It is often the angels who serve as messengers to deliver good news, bad news, clarifying dreams and/or visions, teachers, warriors, protectors, etc. However, the more transcendent the idea of G-d is, the more angels appear in the role of interveners and interpreters. This is a characteristic of monotheism, and in Scripture, we can see the development of the idea of transcendence⁷. The more apart the realm of G-d became, the more humanity was in need of a way to keep in contact with the divine mind and will. As we were no longer privileged enough to have a glimpse of the heavens, we needed to keep a mode of communication open. If we pay close attention to it, we can get a general idea about when angels did indeed become a necessity⁸. R.H. Isaacs states that

Belief in angels was widespread in the ancient Near East. The g-ds of the Mesopotamians and Hittites had their subordinate messengers as did the Egyptian g-ds who also had divine couriers. Undoubtedly the concept of these Near Eastern societies worked to form the background out of which biblical stories of angels emerged.⁹

⁵ In the Bible, angels are rarely named, and they tend to be referred to by their function, such as the Angel of Death.

⁶ Even when G-d spoke to Moses in Exodus 3:4-4:17, it was through a burning bush. No monotheistic religion has ever offered a physical description of G-d. Although G-d himself has been the subject of certain artist, notably Michelangelo, it was never offered as true representation of G-d.

⁷ For example, in the face of research pertaining to the Pentateuch, there is a general agreement that the oldest source (J) document, G-d's interaction with man is described in anthropomorphic terms. The latest source (P) document, G-d is dealing with humanity through angels.

⁸ In books such as Genesis or Exodus, the emphasis was mostly on the *worship* of the One G-d, so it was still common for G-d to speak directly to humanity (i.e. Abraham and Moses); as time went on and the importance was now switched to the *existence* of One G-d, angels became the mode of communication (i.e. Daniel). With the coming of Christ, once again angels were but on the backseat as it was now Jesus who was the mediator between G-d and humanity.

⁹ R.H. Isaacs, *Ascending Jacob's ladder: Jewish Views of Angels, Demons, and Evil Spirits*, Northvale/NJ: Jason Aronson Inc, 1998, p.1.

The angels themselves were not the novelty within Scripture; it was their functions and the roles that they occupied that was something worth noticing. The appearance of an angel is often a literary technique used by the authors to indicate a divine revelation. After all, the “assistance of angels to the Jewish people finds expression first of all in the fact that they are ministers of the revelations of G-d”.¹⁰ Therefore, this assistance is crucial in being able to keep up with the Divine mind and will.

The word *angel* is the usual translation for the Hebrew word *malakh*. “The mission of a mal’āk is to (1)carry a message, (2)fulfill a special, specific commission, and/or (3)represent the one sending him”¹¹. The Hebrew Bible is filled with all these various if not confusing roles such as protectors¹², judges¹³, and guardians¹⁴. A. Coudert also states that,

In the Hebrew scriptures, angels perform the same functions as in Zoroastrianism: they praise and serve G-d, reveal divine truth, and act as extensions of the divine will, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked. They help humans understand G-d and achieve a proper rapport with him, and they conduct the souls of the righteous to heaven.¹⁵

Simply put, in Scripture, in both Judaic and Christian traditions, angels appear to be taken for granted. In fact, out of the Bible’s sixty-six books, angels are named only a handful¹⁶ of times. And even then, they are regarded as part of everyday life. Nowhere in the sacred writings is there any time spent as to giving the reader a little background

¹⁰ J. Danielou, *The Angels and their Mission*, Westminster/Maryland: The Newman Press, 1957, p.5.

¹¹ L.O. Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Grand Rapids/MI: Regency Lib., 1985, p.43.

¹² This description can be found in Ex.23:20; Dan.3:28 and 6:22; 2 Kings 6.

¹³ This can be found in Gen.19:1; 2 Sam.24:17; 1 Chron.21:15; 2 Chron.32:21; Isa.37:36.

¹⁴ A good example is Gen.24:7 and 40.

¹⁵ A. Coudert, “Angels”, in M. Eliade (ed-in-chief), *The Encyclopedia of Religion, Volume 1:AARO-AUST*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987, p.283.

¹⁶ Although angels are referred to numerous times, our chief concern is with the few times that they are mentioned by name.

information as to where these angels came from. Their existence is a given and the authors of Bible seemed to all bypass the step that would waste their time into convincing us that angels exist. This might be explained by the fact that at the time that the Hebrew Bible was written and assembled, Jewish thought on angels had already been influenced by Babylonian angelology and Zoroastrianism¹⁷. Since the New Testament was written after the Hebrew Bible, the authors assumed that the audience was already familiar with angels.

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, we can encounter angels as they interact with humanity on behalf of G-d. The first mention of angels can be found in Gen.3:24¹⁸. From that point on, they take on various roles and functions. “The literal meaning of the word indicates the primary function of angels as divine messengers”¹⁹. They become a bridge between the Divine mind/will and human activity. Thus, the role of angels is crucial because it allows for an intermediary/mediator between G-d and humanity.

In his book *Omens of Millennium*, H. Bloom makes an interesting point about angels in the Hebrew Bible. He states that:

[angels] barely make their way into the Hebrew Bible: almost never by name, and I have noted that frequently they are a redactor’s substitutes for daringly human appearances by G-d himself, Yahweh in the earliest stratum of biblical texts.²⁰

The first angel mentioned by name in the Hebrew Bible is Gabriel in the Book of Daniel²¹. Not only does this angel have the privilege of being the first mentioned by name, but Gabriel also has the privilege of being the one of the very few mentioned along

¹⁷ Zoroastrianism originated in ancient Persia, and dates back to more than 3000 years.

¹⁸ Genesis 3:24 says “He cast him out, and to the east of the garden of Eden he stationed the cherubim and a sword whirling and flashing to guard the way to the tree of life”. For the purpose of the subject here, I will allow the word ‘angel’ to refer to all celestial beings including Cherubim and Seraphim.

¹⁹ A. Coudert, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 1987, p.282.

²⁰ H. Bloom, *Omens of Millennium*, 1996, p.45.

²¹ And even here, we are dealing with the 27th book out of 39 within the Jewish Canon of Scriptures.

with Michael²². The angel Gabriel can also be found interacting with Zechariah and Mary in the New Testament²³ as the angel who announces the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, respectively. About 600 years later, Gabriel is once again identified as interacting with humanity on behalf of G-d (Allah), as the one who reveals the Holy Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

Our question is to see why the same angel is present in these three major world religions. The best way to go about it is in reverse chronological order, the same way that one would peel an onion, so should one peel away the mystery of the angel until we hopefully get to the core, that being the origin of Gabriel²⁴.

It is important to keep in mind that the purpose here is not to question or undermine any of the events, or traditions, mentioned. The sole purpose is to understand, or at least attempt to understand, why it is Gabriel specifically that is named in these religions; and to determine the extent of his importance in these religions. It would be interesting to imagine what would have been the outcome of the aforementioned religions were we to eliminate the role that Gabriel has fulfilled.

First, I will examine how the angel Gabriel is represented in Islam, and what functions are, or have been, attributed to him. Gabriel does more than simply give Muhammad the revelations of the Qur'an. He is described as having interacted with

²² Although Michael is referred to only in the passive sense, he does not have a direct interaction with Daniel. See Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev.12:7. The angels Uriel and Raphael are also mentioned in 2 Esdra 4:1-11 and Tobit 5:1-11:7(respectively), yet they do not appear in both Hebrew and Christian scripture and therefore do not serve our purpose here. The omission of these angels is in no way a downplaying of their importance.

²³ This is found in the Gospel According to Luke 1:11-20 and 1:26-38.

²⁴ There have been some sources such as books and internet sites that claim that the Archangel Gabriel was female, but this issue will not be addressed, as none of the authors of these claims even bother to name their sources or give any scholarly reasoning for such statements. Not to mention that the gender of Gabriel is not the relevant issue here. In religious scriptures, angels are not usually known for their gender or sexual practices-with the exception of the story of the Watchers in Gen. 6:4.

humanity on a variety of levels, that will be discussed further on. I will list the roles that Gabriel has played within Islam and compare them to his functions in the other religions. In order to do this, I will find where and how Gabriel is mentioned within the Holy Scriptures of the Islamic faith, the Qur'an. In order to discover most documentation on Gabriel, I will also briefly examine some Sirahs²⁵ where he is mentioned. What I will be looking for in this section is why it is specifically Gabriel that is being named? If Muhammad had a prior knowledge of the angel, where did that knowledge come from and why name him? It will also be worthwhile to hypothetically look at the alternate outcome of this religion had the angel Gabriel not been present.

That analysis will bring me to the next layer, which is Christianity. As Gabriel is named in the New Testament, I will look at where and what his interaction with humanity is. From there, I will examine the importance of his role, and once again try and compare it to his roles in the two other religions. Christianity is the one monotheistic religion that has no qualms about visually representing the celestial beings, and this will allow me to analyse the importance of the Gabriel iconography, both the ones based on Scriptures and the ones based on traditions. It is also in Christianity that there was a lot of time and effort spent on detailing the angelic hierarchy, therefore it will be a point worth further reflection.

Before moving on to the next logical step of looking at Gabriel in the Judaic tradition and the Hebrew Bible, I will spend a little bit of time on Inter-Testament books—more specifically the three books of Enoch. This will be worth looking at, as there will

²⁵ Sirahs are biographical stories concerning, but not limited to, the Prophet Muhammad. They can also be seen as part of the Islamic traditions and legends.

appear common ground with what was later developed in angelology by the Church fathers, and also some common roles that we will find in Judaic legends.

As with Islam, the Judaic tradition is filled with legends and lore that contain an array of references to the angel Gabriel. I will look at some of the most predominant midrashims that name Gabriel, and see how the position he holds there compares to the other roles that have been attributed to him. Finally, I will look at is the Hebrew Bible – containing some of the oldest references that we have of Gabriel - as this holds the key for the introduction of Gabriel into the monotheistic religions. Since research has proven that this is where one would hit the proverbial wall, I will attempt to offer some explication on the origin of Gabriel by analysing the origins of the name Gabriel, or the root גבר.

Chapter 1:

1.1 Texts

The Qur'an

Surah 2:97 (Al- Baqara)

97. Say: "Whoever is an enemy to **Gabriel** – for he brings down the (revelation) to your heart by Allah's will, a confirmation of what went before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe-

Surah 2:98 (Al- Baqara)

98. "Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and Messengers, to **Gabriel** and Michael, lo! Allah is an enemy to those who reject Faith."

Surah 66:4 (Al- Tahrir)

4. If you two turn in repentance to Him, your hearts are indeed so inclined; But if you back up each other against him, truly Allah is his Protector, and **Gabriel**, and (every) righteous one among those who believe, and furthermore, the angels – will back (him) up.

1.2 Introduction

Islam is the youngest of the three monotheistic religions that will be considered, as it dates from approximately 622 CE. Even if Islam is a monotheistic religion, it does not share all the common beliefs with the two other religions of the Book²⁶. It began with an individual, Muhammad, who is said to be the final prophet that Allah has sent to humanity²⁷ in order to communicate his divine message.

Muhammad was born into the Arab tribe of Quraysh in 570 CE. in Mekkah²⁸. His father died around the time of his birth, and he was given to a nomadic wet-nurse, Halima, who raised him until the age of five. His mother died when he was six, and he was then taken in charge by his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, who cared for him for two years. After the death of his grandfather, he was taken in charge by Abu Talib, his uncle. While traveling with his uncle at the age of 12, Muhammad met a Christian monk, Bahira, who “recognized the boy for what he was, and advised his uncle to take great care to protect him from the Jews”²⁹. At the age of 25, he married a widow, Khadija, who was 15 years his senior. Until the moment of his first revelation, his life was comparatively uneventful.

During Muhammad’s times, the Arabs were polytheists. M. Cook explains:

In the centuries preceding the life of Muhammad, however, external influences were beginning to disturb this ancient polytheism. Predominantly, this influence was monotheist; despite the Persian hegemony, the impact of Zoroastrianism seems to have been slight outside the north-east³⁰.

²⁶ Some of the variations include that Islam does not hold the belief that humans were created in G-d’s image (as found in the Hebrew Bible-Genesis 1:27); nor does Islam believe that Jesus was the Son of G-d, they believe that he was an earthly prophet; also, Islam does not believe in the Trinitarian idea of G-d.

²⁷ Other important Islamic prophets include (but are not limited to) Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isa (Jesus).

²⁸ Which is known as Mecca in what is today Saudi Arabia.

²⁹ M. Cook, *Muhammad*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 14.

³⁰ M. Cook, *Muhammad*, 1983, p.10.

There was a mixture of religions, and Mecca was the melting pot where various merchants would come to worship their g-ds. At the age of forty³¹, while meditating in a cave at Hira, Muhammad began receiving revelations from the angel Gabriel. The reason for these revelations is that

In time, people forgot, ignored or changed their teachings to suit themselves. Muslims believe that the final prophet, Muhammad, was sent by Allah to bring previous prophetic missions to perfection, and to complete divine religious laws which will remain valid until the end of time.³²

These revelations and interactions from Gabriel lasted until Muhammad's death in 632, and in the process of transmitting these revelations to the rest of humanity, a new religion was born. It is even suggested that Gabriel was with Muhammad during his last few moments on Earth. According to M. Rodinson,

He was growing steadily weaker; he talked disjointedly with his head on 'Ā'isha's breast. In a little while she felt his head get heavier and looked at him. He raised his eyes and, staring fixedly at the roof, uttered a few words. She thought she heard him say: 'The highest Companion...' and she knew that Gabriel had appeared to him. Then she saw that he was dead.³³

For the first three years after the initial revelation, Muhammad only preached to his family and close friends, and the first converts were his wife, Khadija, his cousin Ali, and a resident slave, Zayd. In the year 622 CE, Muhammad and some of his followers migrated to Medina, where he became the chief of the first Muslim state. After the death of Muhammad, Islam spread quickly in Arabia, and by the 7th-8th century had an empire that spread from Spain to North Africa to India. Today, there are two major branches of

³¹ This event occurred in 610 CE.

³² *Religions of the World*, 1999, p. 132.

³³ M. Rodinson, *Mohammed*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1971, p.288-9.

Islam: Sunnis and Shi'ites³⁴, but both believe that the Qur'an is the word of Allah transmitted by the angel Gabriel.

1.3 Qur'an

The Holy Scriptures of the Islamic faith is the Qur'an, yet it should not be the basis of a historical search of the nature of Gabriel or Jibril (as he is known in Arabic). In the Qur'an, Gabriel is only mentioned three times³⁵. This might not seem numerous, yet Muhammad himself is only mentioned four times by name. Yet, if one wants any information on the history of the life of Muhammad or on the angel Gabriel, the Qur'an is in fact the last place that one should look. As F.E. Peters mentions, "the Qur'an, a prime document that has a very strong claim to being authentic, is of no use whatsoever as an *independent* source for reconstructing the life of Muhammad."³⁶

The Qur'an is the written collection of revelations that were handed down to Muhammad between the years 610 to 632 CE by the angel Gabriel, who in turn was transmitting the message from Allah. According to Muhammad,

The revelation comes to me in two ways. Sometimes Gabriel visits me and tells it to me as though one man were speaking to another, but then what he speaks is lost

³⁴ The Sunnis, who make up about 90% of the world's Muslim population, consider themselves orthodox. They believe that no other prophet or revelation would come after Muhammad. Sunnis have no clergy and are now separated into four principles schools. The imams of the Sunnis are there to guide the prayers. On the other hand, the Shi'ites-about 10% of the Muslim population- believe that the succession of the Prophet should have gone to an immediate family member. They are waiting for the prophesized "hidden" imam who will bring an era of justice and happiness. The imams of the Shi'ites are believed to possess the secret sense of the Qur'anic revelations and is the rightful successor of the Prophet.

³⁵ He is mentioned by name in Surah 2:97, Surah 2:98, and Surah 66:4. In all three cases, Gabriel is in a passive role, as he is not interacting with anyone. We are being told of him.

³⁶ F.E. Peters, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994, p.261.

to me. But sometimes it comes to me as with the noise of a bell, so that my heart is confused. But what is revealed to me in this way never leaves me.³⁷

The author of the Qur'an is unknown to us, and traditional belief holds that there is only one true composer, Allah himself. Muhammad never wrote anything down³⁸ himself, and during the beginnings of the Islamic faith and within Muhammad's lifetime, the revelations were only transmitted orally. The Qur'an as we have it today was edited and assembled under the orders of Uthman, who was the 3rd successor of Muhammad in the late 640 or early 650. There is no specific order or links in between the various 114 Surahs, and their place in the Qur'an is no indication of their date.

It has been suggested³⁹ that Surah 96 (Al-'Alaq, or The Clinging Clot, or Iqra', or Read!) is the oldest one. This is the transcript of the first exchange between the angel and Muhammad. It was in the year 610, "that Gabriel appeared to Muhammad on Monday, 17 Ramadan, on the mountain Hira', when the Prophet was 40 years old"⁴⁰. Muhammad, who was meditating in a cave, recounts how an angel⁴¹ appeared to him and commanded him to "Recite!"⁴². Muhammad asked what he should recite. The angel then applied

³⁷ This is a traditional narrative that Muhammad is said to have spoken, and that the author is quoting in his book. T. Andrae, *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, Freeport/New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971, p.66.

³⁸ It is believed that Muhammad memorized the Qur'an by heart, and he would recite it to the angel Gabriel each year during the Holy month of Ramadan to make sure that he did not omit anything.

³⁹ One such scholar is Whab Ibn Kaysan.

⁴⁰ This is according to Baladhuri, and can be seen in U. Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as viewed by the Early Muslims, A Textual Analysis (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam* 5, Princeton/New Jersey: The Darwin Press Inc., 1995, p.111.

⁴¹ Some traditions (such as the one by Basran d. A.H. 139) will claim that it was Michael who put in charge of Muhammad during the first three years, and that Gabriel took over when Muhammad was 43 years old.

⁴² There exist different translations and variations as to whether the first word was 'Recite' or 'Read'. The problem is that in Arabic the answer 'what shall I recite' could also be translated as 'I do not recite/read'. Claiming that Muhammad could not read allowed the Muslims of the time to counter attack the Christians who were claiming that Muhammad was merely retelling Scriptures. Having Muhammad illiterate gave more of a miraculous aspect to the revelations. For example, N.J. Dawwood, in *The Koran*, USA: Penguin Books, 1967, it is written 'Recite'; while in A. Ali, *Islam: The Qur'an*, (Sacred Writings), New York: Quality Paperbacks Book Club, 1992, we find 'Read'.

great pressure to Muhammad⁴³, while this word exchange went on three times. Finally, Muhammad was told what to recite:

1. Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, Who created,
2. Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood.
3. Proclaim! And your Lord is Most Bountiful,
4. He Who taught by the Pen,
5. Taught man that which he knew not
6. Nay, but man transgress all bounds,
7. In that he looks upon himself as self-sufficient.
8. Verily, to your Lord is the return (of all).
9. Do you see one who forbids
10. A votary when he (turns) to pray?
11. Do you see if he is on (the road of) Guidance?
12. Or enjoins Righteousness?
13. Do you see if he denies (Truth) and turns away?
14. Doesn't he know Allah sees?
15. Let him beware! If he desists not, We will drag him by the forelock,
16. A lying, sinful forelock!
17. Then, let him call (for help) to his council (of comrades).
18. We will call on the angels of punishment (to deal with him)!
19. Nay, heed him not. But bow down in adoration, and bring thyself the closer (to Allah)!⁴⁴

After this frightening first encounter with the angel, Muhammad ran to tell his wife Khadijah about his revelation. As he was running from the cave, a voice that identified himself as Gabriel called out to him. Muhammad recognizes this as being the same voice as the one from the cave. After offering comfort to Muhammad – who was visibly shaken by his experience – Khadijah went to consult her cousin, Waraqa ibn Nofal, about Muhammad's vision. Waraqa ibn Nawfal⁴⁵ “was a scholar with a wide knowledge of the scriptures, both Jewish and Christian. He was even said to know

⁴³ The description usually conveyed is that the angel suffocated Muhammad.

⁴⁴ Surah 96: 1-19. The numbering in front of each line is the equivalent of the verses as numbered within the Qur'an.

⁴⁵ Sometimes, we will find variations in how certain names were translated from the Arabic, and since the Arabic alphabet is different from the Latin one, most names were translated phonetically, which would explain the variations.

Hebrew”⁴⁶. From then on, Muhammad welcomed and even anxiously awaited Gabriel’s sporadic visits and revelations.

1.4 *Sîrahs*

The best sources available for the ‘historical Muhammad’ are the Islamic historians such as Ibn Ishaq (died 149 A.H.⁴⁷), Ibn Hisham (d.151 A.H.), Muslim (d.261 A.H.), and various others⁴⁸. In these different *Sîrahs* (biographical stories) we get a detailed account of the life and times of Muhammad and, more importantly, of the interactions that the angel Gabriel has had with the previous prophets since the beginning of times. According to the various *Sîrahs*, we are told that Gabriel not only revealed the surahs to Muhammad, but he also intervened by saving Muhammad from mortal situations⁴⁹, by handing down guidance, knowledge, and also by accompanying Muhammad on his journey to the seven heavens⁵⁰. Gabriel is also the one who accompanies Muhammad on his visit to the Dome of the Rock⁵¹ in Jerusalem, where he is introduced to the previous Prophets.

As mentioned before, the most important source into the life of Muhammad, or more precisely into the history of how Muhammad came to be, can be found in the works

⁴⁶ M. Rodinson, *Mohammed*, 1971, p.73.

⁴⁷ A.H. is the Muslim lunar calendar, which contains 354 days. Approximately 17 year after the death of Muhammad, Umar ibn al-Khattab (the 2nd Caliph) changed the calendar to comply with Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina, which took place in 622 CE, and making the 16th of July 622 correspond with 1 Muharram A.H. 1. The migration is known as the Hijra, therefore A.H. stands for ‘After Hijra’ or the Latin ‘Anno Hegirae’ which means ‘in the year of the Hijra’. The conversion from A.H. to CE is as follows: $A.H.=1.030684 (CE-622.5643)$; likewise, the conversion from CE to A.H. is as follows: $CE=0.970229 A.H.+621.5643$.

⁴⁸ A good book that lists the various sources is *The Eye of the Beholder* by U. Rubin.

⁴⁹ There were various plots made to kill Muhammad- by Du’thur, by the citizens of Quraysh, and by the Jews of Medina.

⁵⁰ A journey that is very similar to the one taken by Enoch (in 2 Enoch 21:5-6).

⁵¹ Which today can be identified as the Great Mosque.

of Ibn Ishaq. Unfortunately, no complete manuscripts remain, but there have been numerous Muslim scholars to pass down the contents. What is interesting here is that his work *The Making of the Last Prophet*, Ibn Ishaq recounts everything from the creation to Muhammad. This book is very useful, since it contained information of the intervention that Gabriel has had with humanity prior to Muhammad. Here we are informed of Gabriel's instructions to Abraham⁵² on his pilgrimage with his son Ishmael and Hagar⁵³, of the location where Hagar and Ishmael should be set up⁵⁴. There is also mention of a more personal interaction between Gabriel and Hagar, as M. Cook illustrates:

One Muslim tradition describes the aftermath of the quarrel between Sarah and Hagar. Abraham took Hagar and Ishmael to an uninhabited spot in the wilderness, and left them there. Hagar's water-skin was soon empty, and her child was about to die when Gabriel appeared; he struck the ground with his foot, and a spring gushed forth. The uninhabited spot was Mecca, and the spring was Zamzam, the water-supply of the Meccan sanctuary which we met in connection with Muhammad's grandfather.⁵⁵

Gabriel also appeared to Abraham after the completion of the Holy Temple⁵⁶ in Mecca to instruct him on the circumambulation of the temple seven times, and on the rites of the Pilgrimage⁵⁷.

Similarly, Gabriel is named as the destroyer of Sodom⁵⁸, and as helping (along with Michael) the Israelites during the Exodus. Ibn Ishaq also mentions that Gabriel is the angel who appeared to the Virgin Mary "like a well-proportioned man [...] It did not seem to her that he was anything but a man of the children of Adam, [he then] breathed

⁵² Abraham is an important figure for Muslims, as they consider him the father of religion.

⁵³ Although Hebrew and Christian scriptures mention that Hagar was 'an Egyptian slave-girl' (Genesis 16:2), some Muslims believe that she was indeed his second wife. As mentioned, this is traditional belief, yet I was not able to find documentation backing this information.

⁵⁴ This is a take on Gen.21:8-21 when Hagar and Ishmael are expelled from Abraham's house.

⁵⁵ M. Cook, *Muhammad*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

⁵⁶ Which is known to Muslims as the Ka'bah.

⁵⁷ Gabriel will make a similar visit to Muhammad to instruct him on the correct ways of praying.

⁵⁸ Judaic tradition also names Gabriel as the destroyer of Sodom, as will be seen in the midrashims.

into her bosom and then departed from her”⁵⁹. What is interesting is that the author does not mention the interaction between Gabriel and Daniel, nor does he talk about the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist. Yet, there are striking similarities between Islamic and Judaic lore.

1.5 Controversy

There is an incident in the life of Muhammad that is a controversial issue for Muslims, as it deals with the ‘purifying’ of Muhammad. This controversy arises in various forms. To begin with, there is a division as to when the incident occurred, and more importantly, if the incident even occurred. In Islamic lore, it is mentioned that Muhammad was sure of becoming a prophet since he was visited⁶⁰ by the angels Gabriel and Michael, “who wash his body and remove from his heart hatred and envy, loading it with compassion and mercy instead”⁶¹. This washing⁶² was performed in order to cleanse Muhammad for the coming revelations, yet others claim that it occurred right before Muhammad ascended⁶³ to the seven heavens with Gabriel. Another scholar, Muslim (d. A.H. 261) claims that this was done in order to remove a black spot (Satan’s part) from Muhammad’s heart.

⁵⁹ Ibn Ishaq, *The Making of the Last Prophet: A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad* by Gordon Darnell Newby, Columbia/South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989, p.208.

⁶⁰ There are sources that claim this visit occurred when Muhammad was 10 or 20 years old.

⁶¹ This is a version of the events by ‘Urwa ibn al-Zubayr (d.A.H.94) in U. Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 1995, p.64.

⁶² Some sources claim that this took place near the well of Zamzam, which according to ibn Hisham, I, 116; Fakihi, II, 5-11 (U. Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 1995, p.67), is the well that is associated “with the image of Gabriel, who is said to have originated the well for Hagar and her son Ishmael when they were wandering in the wilderness of Mecca”.

⁶³ In U. Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 1995, p.232, al-Bukhari claims that “Gabriel opened his body, washed his insides, filled him with faith and wisdom, and ascended to heaven with him”.

The point of controversy arises from the argument that a true Prophet is of pure soul from birth. Since Muhammad was the last prophet, then he, like Jesus before him, was not touched by Satan. To allow the belief that this 'washing' occurred would be saying that Muhammad was not born a true Prophet. Some scholars, like Ibn Hibban, will omit the removal of the black spot since "Muhammad's soul never contained any evil parts"⁶⁴ and will mention that the angels did not know what they were looking for, or that they could not find anything. Yet, in both variations, there is indeed the visit from Gabriel to Muhammad before his call to prophecy.

The other controversy surrounding Gabriel and Muhammad concerns the infamous 'Satanic Verses'. While Muhammad was at Mecca, he sensed that his followers were beginning to turn their backs on him and Allah. He prayed for a way to reunite them, and received a revelation⁶⁵ that mentions three g-desses

Have you seen Lat and 'Uzza,
And another, the third (g-ddess), Manat?⁶⁶

It is then that Satan inserted his own words into the mouth of the Prophet. A misunderstanding occurred since the followers of Islam had total faith in Muhammad, and at the same time, the Pagans believed that Muhammad had turned his back on Allah (since their g-ds were mentioned in the surah). T. Andrae explains,

That evening the angel Gabriel came to him, and the Prophet recited the Sura to him. When he came to the words suggested by Satan the angel asked: "Have I taught you these two lines?" Mohammed then realized his error, and said: "I have attributed to Allah words which He did not reveal."⁶⁷

Gabriel then states:

⁶⁴ U. Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder*, 1995, p.67.

⁶⁵ Surah 53 (An-Najm, or the Star).

⁶⁶ Surah 53:19-20.

⁶⁷ T. Andrae, *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, 1971, p.23.

These are nothing but names which you have devised, you and your fathers, for which Allah has sent down no authority (whatever). They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire! Even though there has already come to them Guidance from their Lord!⁶⁸

This incident allows for the possibility that Muhammad either did not see Gabriel during the revelations; or that he did not recognize Gabriel's voice; or that Satan had the power to look/sound like Gabriel. It would be interesting to examine the reason why Gabriel is named, if he is never actually seen.

1.6 Conclusion

What is most important to remember about the revelations that Muhammad received is Allah's messenger: Gabriel. This is the same angel that has also played a crucial role in Christianity and Judaism. Yet, one should keep in mind that during Muhammad's lifetime, Christianity was indeed predominant in the Near East⁶⁹. In the *Sirahs*, we are also informed that Khadijah's cousin "has adopted Christianity and translated the Gospels"⁷⁰. He informs her that Muhammad is indeed a Prophet of Allah, since he fits the 'criteria' of what a prophet is: one who receives revelations for humanity from G-d⁷¹. This gives us the knowledge that Muhammad did have a prior knowledge of Christianity, and therefore of the angel of annunciation, being the same angel Gabriel found in the Gospel According to Luke. It is also a possibility that in order to allow a

⁶⁸ Surah 53:23.

⁶⁹ The Christian Church had been well established since at least the 2nd century.

⁷⁰ J.B. Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970, p.86.

⁷¹ *TheDK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*, Great Britain: Dorling Kindersley Limited and Oxford University Press, 1998, defines prophet as "a teacher or interpreter of the supposed will of G-d [...] from Greek *prophētēs* 'spokesman'." , p.656.

greater audience for his revelations that Muhammad associated the angel as Gabriel⁷² since he was already familiar with his role in Christianity⁷³. The naming of the angel Gabriel would allow that these divine revelations were indeed coming from the same source, therefore the teachings of Muhammad would not be viewed as something extremely foreign.

As we have seen, Gabriel was not only responsible for transmitting Allah's message, he also counselled Muhammad in times of crises, as well as having saved him from the numerous attempts made on his life. Therefore in Islam, we can plainly see that Gabriel hold a variety of roles which include: messenger, saviour (in the physical sense as Gabriel saves Muhammad's life), travel companion, instructor, and destroyer.

This allows us to assume that in Islam, Gabriel holds a crucial role, and his appearance in the various written traditions is of great significance. One would have great difficulty in relaying the beginnings and development of Islam without making numerous references to Gabriel. He holds similar roles in Islamic and Judaic lore, yet there are crucial differences with his role in Christianity. This goes as far as having certain events from Christianity, such as the annunciation of John the Baptist, omitted from the sirahs. This would be interesting to examine further, as it appears that most of the knowledge that Muhammad had on Gabriel comes from the New Testament.

In order to fully understand Gabriel's role in Islam, one should be familiar with the role that he played in Christianity. As this first layer has been peeled, we should now move closer to the core by examining the Christian view of the angel Gabriel.

⁷² As mentioned before, it is claimed by some that it was in fact Michael. Therefore the identity of the angel seems to be an issue for some Muslims as well.

⁷³ It is quite logical that one would name Gabriel, especially if his role had been established before in Judaism and Christianity, since more people would be willing to listen to the revelations.

Chapter 2: Christianity

2.1 Texts

The New Testament

The Gospel According To Luke

Luke 1:19

- 11 There appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right of the altar of incense.
- 12 At this sight Zechariah was startled, and fear overcame him.
- 13 But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard: your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John.
- 14 Your heart will thrill with joy and many will be glad that he was born;
- 15 for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He shall never touch wine or strong drink. From his very birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit;
- 16 and he will bring back many Israelites to the Lord their G-d.
- 17 He will go before him as forerunner, possessed by the spirit and power of Elijah, to reconcile father and child, to convert the rebellious to the ways of the righteous, to prepare a people that shall be fit for the Lord.'
- 18 Zechariah said to the angel, 'How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well on in years.'
- 19 The angel replied, 'I am **Gabriel**; I stand in attendance upon G-d, and I have been sent to speak to you and bring you this good news.'

Luke 1:26

- 26 In the sixth month the angel **Gabriel** was sent from G-d to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,
- 27 with a message for a girl betrothed to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David; the girl's name was Mary.
- 28 The angel went in and said to her, 'Greetings, most favoured one! The Lord is with you.'
- 29 But she was deeply troubled by what he said and wondered what this greeting might mean.
- 30 Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for G-d has been gracious to you;
- 31 you shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall give him the name Jesus.
- 32 He will be great; he will bear the title "Son of the Most High"; the Lord G-d will give him the throne of his ancestor David,
- 33 and he will be king over Israel for ever; his reign shall never end.'
- 34 'How can this be?' said Mary; 'I am still a virgin.'

- 35 The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy child to be born will be called "Son of G-d".
- 36 Moreover your kinswoman Elizabeth has herself conceived a son in her old age; and she who is reputed barren is now in her sixth month,
- 37 for G-d's promises can never fail.'
- 38 'Here am I,' said Mary; 'I am the Lord's servant; as you have spoken, so be it.' Then the angel left her.

2.2 Introduction

Christianity is the most widespread monotheistic religion today, which originated some 2000 years ago with the ministry and teachings of an individual named Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem in the year 7 or 6 BCE, to an ordinary Jewish couple, Mary and Joseph. Yet it is crucial to comprehend that “the Christian movement was due to the announcement of the career of Jesus by the apostles as a supreme Act of G-d”⁷⁴ as opposed to being the result of Jesus himself. Christians hold the belief that it was an angel who visited a young woman named Mary, who was to be married to a man named Joseph, and informed her that she would bear the “Son of the Most High” who would be the Saviour of humanity and the long awaited Messiah⁷⁵. According to the Gospel of Luke, it was the angel Gabriel who visited Mary.

The Scriptures do not tell us much about the childhood and early adulthood of Jesus, as the emphasis is placed mostly on the message that Jesus had to deliver. We know that around the age of 30, he was baptized by John the Baptist, and then started his public ministry about the Kingdom of G-d. Jesus went on to become a teacher, preacher, healer, and saviour of humanity. Jesus was later crucified, and three days after he was resurrected, at which time he is said to have ascended to Heaven. Today there are hundreds of branches of Christianity, yet they all refer to the New Testament as their Scriptures and share the tradition of Mary’s angelic visitation prior to the birth of Jesus.

⁷⁴ A.C. Bouquet, *Comparative Religion: a short outline*, (The Belle Sauvage Library), London: Cassell, 1961, p.233.

⁷⁵ It is interesting that the Gospel According to Matthew mentions an angel in his infancy narrative (Matthew 1:18-25), he never names the angel –only as “angel of the Lord” in 1:20- and the angel only appears to Joseph and not Mary.

2.3 New Testament

The New Testament consists of gospels, epistles, and apocalypses. It comprises a total of twenty-seven books- out of which twenty-one are epistles. These books were written over a period of one hundred years⁷⁶, and composed by various named and anonymous writers. In the New Testament, angels are referred to throughout the books and letters⁷⁷, yet we do not know who they really are, as their identity is not what we should be focusing on. Some also felt that it was now Jesus who was the new mediator between G-d and humanity, and therefore the focus should be on him and not on the celestial beings, as explained by P.R. Carrell:

This paucity suggests that either Jesus was held to have made the role of these angels redundant or that, in view of the glory and exaltation of Jesus to G-d's right hand, angels were of less importance as mediators between G-d and humanity.⁷⁸

There exists Gnostic documents dating from the early periods of the Church which claim that at times, the true identity of certain angels named is indeed Jesus⁷⁹. P.R. Carrell explains,

Some documents, such as *The Epistula Apostolorum*, a second-century CE document, possibly of Egyptian provenance, envisages Christ appearing in the form of the angel Gabriel. In the passage cited below it is not so much a case of Christ being identified with Gabriel, but of Christ taking the form of Gabriel in his function as messenger of G-d. Thus,

‘Do you know that the angel Gabriel came and brought the message to Mary?’ And we said to him, ‘Yes, O Lord’. And he answered and said to us, ‘Do you not remember that I previously said to you that I became like an angel to the angels?’ And we said

⁷⁶ Starting with Paul's *First Letter to the Thessalonians* in 50 CE, and ending with the books of *Jude* and *2 Peter*, which were composed around 130-150 CE.

⁷⁷ There are a total of 181 references to angels –including cherubim and seraphim- throughout the New Testament.

⁷⁸ P.R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.73.

⁷⁹ A good book offering various arguments on the angelomorphic nature of Christ found in the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles is C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*, (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.Reihe, 94), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997.

to him, 'Yes, O Lord'. And he said to us, 'At that time I appeared in the form of the archangel Gabriel to (the virgin) Mary and spoke with her, and her heart received (me); and she believed and laughed; and I, the Word, went into her and became flesh; and I myself was servant for myself, and in the form of the image of an angel; so I will do after I have gone to my Father'. (Ep. Apost. 14)⁸⁰

Those documents are worth the mention, as a richer documentation of angels can be found in the Apocryphal books and the Pseudepigrapha.⁸¹

An interesting view on angels is found in *Les Symboles de la Bible*, where the importance of angels within the New Testament is explained as follows:

Le Nouveau Testament, quand à lui, n'ajoute et ne retranch rien de significatif à la conception traditionnelle des anges. Les épîtres trahissent néanmoins une tendance à minimiser leur importance en les subordonnant absolument au Christ, voire à la mission apostolique elle-même.⁸²

We can see that the New Testament itself never denies the existence or role of angels, but the with coming of Christ, they are no longer as important in their interaction with humanity. This view of the angelic functions being replaced by Jesus is also shared by the Apostle Paul⁸³ and the early Christians. J. Danielou claims that "the role of the angels in the Old Testament is bound up with the Old Testament's preparatory mission; and it ceases with the coming of Christ, who takes the history of salvation directly into His own hands".⁸⁴ The conclusion that I would draw from this would be that according to the early Christians – St. Paul included – the coming of the Christ also allowed for the

⁸⁰ P.R. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, 1997, p.103.

⁸¹ This will be looked at in more detail when I look at the Books of Enoch.

⁸² M. Girard, *Les Symboles dans la Bible*, (Recherches Nouvelle Série – 26), Montréal: Bellarmin, 1991, p. 956.

⁸³ Paul believed that humans-through Christ- were even capable of surpassing angels in status and even serve as their judges (1 Corinthians 6:3). For him, it was as if with the coming of Christ, angels were no longer so powerful. Yet, it could even be implied that in Galatians 4:14, Paul equates Jesus with angels: "you welcomed me as if I were an angel of G-d, as you might have welcomed Christ Jesus himself". So here, Paul would not be making such a visible distinction between Jesus and the angels.

⁸⁴ J. Danielou, *The Angels and their Mission*, Westminster/Maryland: The Newman Press, 1957, p.9.

widening gap that has been long in the making with the ever-evolving transcendence. Jesus now replaced all the previous, and sometimes nameless, angels that served to communicate the Divine mind and will. The function and roles of angels will now be limited to the celestial realm, as they are no longer needed for direct interaction with humanity. The instances where angels are to once again have direct interaction with humanity will be within an apocalyptic context⁸⁵.

In Christianity overall, there was a general concern and study into angelology by the church fathers, but they did not seem too concerned with their identity, rather with their class and function. The ones mentioned by name are Gabriel and Michael, and in these instances, it appears that their identity is directly linked with their function. What is interesting to note is that the role of both of these angels is similar to their role in the Hebrew Bible, and the authors take it for granted that we should know who these angels are. Michael is mentioned twice by name⁸⁶, but both times he is only referred to, and the description of his actions does not involve interaction with humanity⁸⁷.

2.4 The Gospel According to Luke

In the New Testament, the angel Gabriel is only mentioned by name two times⁸⁸. The interesting part is that in Luke, Gabriel is not only mentioned by name, but he is presented as having an active role. We are presented to Gabriel through his interactions with humans, yet here too it appears that the author takes it for granted that we should be familiar with angels, and more specifically with this angel. It is also harder to find

⁸⁵ The word angel (and angels) appears 76 times within the Book of Revelation – the most in any of the New Testament books.

⁸⁶ In the Letter of Jude (9) and the Book of Revelation (12:7).

⁸⁷ Actually, both times his interaction is with evil forces (i.e. Satan or the Dragon)

⁸⁸ This is found in the infancy narrative in Luke 1:19 and Luke 1:26.

outside sources that deal with Gabriel, as most other relevant works⁸⁹ tend to deal with angelology in general and do not favour one over the other.

The Gospel of Luke is the longest of the four gospels and is dated around 85-90 CE. We do not know much about the author of the Gospel according to Luke, although this gospel is attributed to Luke “a physician, the fellow worker and traveling companion of Paul”⁹⁰ but, “because of his interest in a Gentile audience and his ease in handling the Greek language [...], the writer may have been a Gentile, perhaps the only non-Jewish Bible writer”⁹¹. The author was not himself an eyewitness to the life and works of Jesus. The author was a 2nd or 3rd generation Christian, so he was “aware that ‘many’ others before him produced Gospels”⁹². His writings are not the oldest Christian writings, but he is the first –and only – one who mentions an angel by name in the Infancy Narratives⁹³.

The presence of an angel in the annunciations is nothing new in itself, since it was used as a literary form to emphasize that the message that follows is truly a message from G-d. The author of Luke clearly based himself on the writings of the Hebrew Bible-both in style and content. This device used by Luke served to bring the readers into the Hebrew Bible, and also to argue that Jesus was indeed the Messiah that was talked about in the Scriptures. We know that Luke was very well educated in Hebrew Scriptures, and that the Gospel was itself targeted to an audience that was familiar with the Hebrew

⁸⁹ Some of the works include St-Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius.

⁹⁰ R.E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, New York: Doubleday, 1997, p.226.

⁹¹ S.L. Harris, *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction*, (3rd Ed.), Mountain View/CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999, p. 160.

⁹² S.L. Harris, *The New Testament*, 1999, p.162.

⁹³ The Gospel of Matthew similarly contains an Infancy Narrative, yet apart from agreeing that Jesus was born to Mary, a virgin, and Joseph, they differ greatly.

Bible, as this audience would be able to pick up on the similarities in the stories recounted.

The appearance of the angel Gabriel was used to fit with the Hebrew Bible birth annunciations⁹⁴. As Fitzmyer explains,

Old Testament birth announcement: (a) the appearance of an angel (or the Lord) to someone (mother or father); (b) fear on the part of the person confronted by the heavenly figure; (c) the heavenly message (often with stereotyped details); (d) an objection expressed by the person confronted or a request for a sign; and (e) the giving of some sign or reassurance.⁹⁵

As mentioned above, it is not surprising that the author of Luke uses a lot of imagery found in the Hebrew Bible, as he tries to bring the readers into the New Testament by allowing them to recognize the Old in the New. He uses a lot of characters that are found into the Hebrew Scriptures, as he wants the readers to be at ease with the stories, yet he does interject some new twists to the familiar settings. For example, the annunciation of John's birth matches that of Isaac (elderly parents) and is in itself a purely Jewish story, yet the annunciation of Jesus' birth contains an element of the new since the reader is now presented with a virginal birth.

We first encounter Gabriel when he appears to Zechariah in Luke 1:5-25. Zechariah was an elderly priest and a descendent of Aaron. He is married to another descendent of Aaron, Elizabeth. "Luke establishes the beginning point for his account in the heartland of Jewish piety attached to the Temple. John's parents are exemplary law-

⁹⁴ We can find this in Gen.16:7-13 (birth of Ishmael); Gen.17:1-21; 18:1-15 (birth of Isaac); and Jud. 13:3-20 (birth of Samson).

⁹⁵ J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke(I-IX)*, (The Anchor Bible), New York: Doubleday, 1981, p.318.

keeping Jews of the first order and Zechariah is a priest”⁹⁶. The visit of the angel Gabriel is keeping “a narrative mode that is familiar to us from Jewish apocalyptic texts. While angelic visitation has a wider provenance, the naming of angelic figures derives from apocalyptic circles (beginning from Dan 8-12) and in the apocalyptic manner the angel Gabriel announces end-time events (again the point of departure is Dan 8-12)”⁹⁷. The naming of Gabriel is not the only way that Luke goes on to bridge the Hebrew Bible with the Jesus event. He also uses the same type of stories that the people of the time were used to, such as elderly and/or barren parents⁹⁸. Yet, the most striking similarities do arise from the encounter between Gabriel and Zechariah, as it mirrors the angel’s encounter with Daniel. This argument is supported by J. Nolland:

A whole series of clues suggest that Zechariah’s experience is to be compared to that of Daniel to whom Gabriel announces the eschatological events. Already here the appearance is at the time of the evening sacrifice (Dan 9:20-21); in Luke 1:13 it is connected with prayer (Dan 9:20); the fear of Luke 1:12 matches that of Dan 8:17; 10:7; ὄρασις, “vision,” in Luke 1:22 is found six times in Dan 9-10 (Theod.); both in Luke 1:20, 22 and Dan 10:15 the visionary is rendered mute.⁹⁹

The angel Gabriel has a particularly important role since he is the same angel mentioned by name in the book of Daniel, which is an apocalyptic text. This is the reason why some scholars¹⁰⁰ go as far as to call the Gospel of Luke apocalyptic literature. Another important reason as to why the author of Luke names the angel Gabriel is because it is Gabriel that is called upon to interpret the visions and dreams of Daniel, and consequently, he is the one who mentions the 70 weeks prophecy and the coming of the

⁹⁶ J. Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, (Word Biblical Commentary, vol.35A), Dallas/Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1989, p. 23.

⁹⁷ J. Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 1989, p.19.

⁹⁸ Such as stories found in 1 Samuel 1-2; Judges 13:2; and Genesis 18:11.

⁹⁹ J. Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 1989, p.29.

¹⁰⁰ For example, H. Hendrickx, in *Infancy Narratives*, (Studies in the Synoptic Gospels), London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984, compares the striking similarities between the appearance of the angel Gabriel to Daniel and to Zechariah, and argues that one must understand the Gospel of Luke in an apocalyptic light.

anointed one. One of the reasons that Luke might have used Gabriel as the angel of annunciation is that the seventy weeks of Daniel could be matched with the birth of Jesus.

The next place that we encounter Gabriel is in the Infancy narrative of Jesus which is found in Luke 1:26-38. As the timeline indicates, six months after Gabriel's visit to Zechariah, he comes to a young woman in Nazareth. Mary was a virgin who was set to marry Joseph, who was from the house of David. We do not know much about Mary's background, other than that she was related to Elizabeth who belonged to the tribe of Levi. Her exact age is not given, but it is suspected that she was very young (in her teens). Gabriel presents himself to Mary and tells her of her role as chosen by G-d and, "the address already states enigmatically Mary's task in the purpose of G-d (the "greatly beloved" of Dan 9:23; 10:11, 19 may have the same function and identify Daniel as marked out to be the recipient of special revelation)"¹⁰¹. The angel goes on to inform Mary of how the Holy Spirit will visit her, resulting in the birth of the Son of G-d. Although shocked at the idea of being a virgin and being pregnant, Mary trusts Gabriel and willingly accepts her role.

Again, the act of using the angel Gabriel to announce the birth of Jesus is a way to stress the fact that Jesus was indeed the awaited Messiah that is talked about in the book of Samuel. This strategic method is very useful in bridging the Hebrew Bible (preparation) with the Gospels (the Jesus event). It is a very realistic assumption that the author of Luke names Gabriel as a result of the role that the angel holds in the Book of Daniel.

¹⁰¹ J. Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 1989, p.50.

2.5 Angelology

As seen in the previous chapter, Islamic tradition contains an array of biographical works on the life of Muhammad, and also on the interaction of G-d and angels with humanity since the creation of the world. As will be seen later on, Judaism also has a lot of extra-biblical stories that deals with interpretations and variations of the Bible stories. While Judaism, and later Islam, places a lot of emphasis on the interpretation of the existing scriptures, Christianity developed a rich legacy of elaboration, including the study and expansion of angelology.

The hierarchy of angels was extensively developed by the early Church fathers, and it is there that we are given an outline of the various dominions that exist in the Heavens. Pseudo-Dionysius'¹⁰² most important work is *The Celestial Hierarchy*, describes hierarchy as “a sacred order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine”¹⁰³, and presents the following hierarchical triads- in descending ranks:

- 1st Hierarchy: Seraphim
Cherubim
Thrones
- 2nd Hierarchy: Dominions
Powers
Authorities
- 3rd Hierarchy: Principalities
Archangels
Angels

¹⁰² He dates from the 5th or 6th century, and was taken for Dionysius the Areopagite. He based his hierarchies on neo-Platonic ideas.

¹⁰³ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, New York: Paulist Press, 1987, p.153.

The first triad “are found immediately around G-d and in proximity enjoyed by no other”¹⁰⁴. On stating the opinion of Hierotheus, Pseudo-Dionysius mentions that “this threefold group, says my famous teacher, forms a single hierarchy which is truly first and whose members are of equal status”¹⁰⁵.

The name ‘seraphim’ means “*fire-makers*”¹⁰⁶ or “*carriers of warmth*”, and they are only mentioned once explicitly in the Hebrew Bible in the book of Isaiah:

About him were attendant seraphim, and each had six wings; one pair covered his face and one pair his feet, and one pair was spread in flight. They were calling ceaselessly to one another,

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.

And, as each one called, the threshold shook to its foundations, while the house was filled with smoke. Then I cried,

Woe is me! I am lost,
for I am a man of unclean lips
and I dwell among a people of unclean lips;
yet with these eyes I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me carrying in his hand a glowing coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs.¹⁰⁷

Similarly, we hear of Cherubim in various parts of the Hebrew Bible¹⁰⁸, it is actually the first angelic being that is mentioned in the Bible. The term ‘cherubim’ means “*fullness of knowledge*” or “*outpouring of wisdom*”. The Thrones are not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but they are mentioned in Rabbinical legends. We also encounter the term ‘thrones’ in Colossians 1:16.

¹⁰⁴ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.161.

¹⁰⁵ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.161.

¹⁰⁶ These definitions are found in Pseudo-Dionysius’s “The Celestial Hierarchy”, pp.143-191 in *The Complete Works*, I will indicate the definitions by putting them in italics.

¹⁰⁷ Isaiah 6:2-6.

¹⁰⁸ Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:18-22, 37:6-9; Numbers 7:89; 1 Samuel 4:4; 1 Kings 6:23-28, 8:6-7; Psalms 18:10, 80:1, 99:1; Isaiah 37:16; Ezekiel 1:4-28, 10:3-22.

The second hierarchy is the least talked about in the Scriptures, yet there are situated the guardian angels¹⁰⁹ that Jesus talks about. The Dominions¹¹⁰ signify “a lifting up which is free, unfettered by earthly tendencies and uninclined toward any of those tyrannical dissimilarities which characterized a harsh dominion”¹¹¹. The Powers “refer to a kind of masculine and unshakable courage in all its g-dlike activities”¹¹². The Authorities “have an equal order with the divine dominions and powers”¹¹³. This second triad “of the heavenly intelligence manifests its conformity to G-d”¹¹⁴

The lowest hierarchy holds the most interest for us as it is here that are situated the angels that we are most familiar with. The various Scriptures are filled with references to Archangels¹¹⁵ and Angels, as they are the ones who most often intervene with humanity on behalf of G-d. The Principalities¹¹⁶ are “g-dlike” and have a “*princely hegemony*”. The Archangels are mediators between the Principalities and the Angels, and their “relationship with the angels is due to their shared order as interpreters of those divine enlightenments mediated by the first powers”¹¹⁷. The Angels’ “hierarchy is more concerned with revelation and is closer to the world”¹¹⁸. Although Pseudo-Dionysius presents us with clear and well defined boundaries about the various triads, biblical texts tend to blur the line between Archangels and Angels, as this title is often interchanged.

¹⁰⁹ “Never despise one of these little ones; I tell you, they have their guardian angels in heaven, who look continually on the face of my heavenly Father” (Matthew 18:10).

¹¹⁰ We find references to Dominions, Powers, and Authorities in : Ephesians 1:21, 3:10; Colossians 1:16, 2:10; 1 Peter 3:22.

¹¹¹ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.167.

¹¹² Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.167.

¹¹³ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.167.

¹¹⁴ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.167.

¹¹⁵ According to 1 Enoch, the seven archangels are: Uriel, Raguel, Michael, Seraquel, Gabriel, Haniel, and Raphael. The consensus is on the fact that there are seven archangels, even if their names sometimes vary; although Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael are usually always named. The term Archangel is only found in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Jude 9.

¹¹⁶ Principalities are named in: Ephesians 1:21, 3:10; Colossians 1:16, 2:10.

¹¹⁷ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.170.

¹¹⁸ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p.170.

The most common functions attributed to the choirs were the praising of G-d's glory, and the functioning of nature and the universe¹¹⁹, as all celestial movement and occurrences were attributed to the angels. In H. Bloom's *Omens of Millennium*, we are presented with an inconsistency¹²⁰ concerning Gabriel as he states that "Gabriel and Raphael are among the most prominent cherubim, and sometimes Lucifer-Satan is assigned to them also"¹²¹; yet further on, following the detailed hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius, he states that Gabriel is one of the seven archangels mentioned in 1 Enoch. This inconsistency on the part of Bloom should not in any way distract from the importance of Gabriel, as the focus is his interaction with people, regardless of his official rank.

The first thing to notice when looking at the nine orders is that the beings, which are reported to intervene in behalf of G-d to humanity, are in fact, at the bottom of the Totem pole. P.R. Regamey notes:

The archangels are messengers for matters more important than those usually carried out in the world by lesser spirits. Michael and Gabriel seem to us so great, and yet we do not appreciate their true greatness, since we only judge by the duties they have fulfilled in this world, whereas these are in fact exceptional. Nevertheless, they are almost the lowest in this amazing structure.¹²²

The explanation as to why it is the lowest celestial beings that interact with us can be looked at in two different ways. Firstly, one could argue that only Angels and Archangels interact with us as we ourselves are lower beings; or secondly, we can look at

¹¹⁹ These same functions are outlined in detail in the books of Enoch (i.e. 3 Enoch 18:1-24; 2 Enoch 9, 10, 11, etc).

¹²⁰ This inconsistency would go to show that sometimes, Gabriel's exact title is not known or used. For some people, a celestial being is simply referred to as an angel as not everyone is familiar with the various hierarchies.

¹²¹ H. Bloom, *Omens of Millennium*, 1996, p.60.

¹²² P.R. Regamey, *What is an Angel?*, New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960, p.52.

it as their function being more privileged, as they are the main line of communication between the Father and his children.

2.6 Iconography

Iconography is an important part of Christian tradition, especially the Eastern Churches, as it is the continuation of the stories that we find within the Scriptures. It is here that the significance of Gabriel is emphasized, as the icon of Gabriel is always tied to the message of the Messiah. This is done in two very distinctive parts that complete each other and also allow for a deeper understanding of how Gabriel was seen in the tradition of the Churches.

The first part deals with the Annunciation. This is based on the Biblical texts-known as the Infancy Narratives- in which Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel. Throughout these icons ¹²³, the emphasis is placed on the message that Gabriel is conveying to Mary concerning the son that she will bear and the role that he will play in the salvation of humanity. He announces to her that her son will be Emmanuel 'G-d is with us'. This is a direct interpretation of the Scriptures, that focus more on the greatness and future role of Jesus than on the actual miraculous pregnancy. Gabriel's focus is on the end result, which ultimately is the arrival of the long awaited Messiah. These icons are centered on the Incarnate Messiah. The emphasis here is also placed on the significance of Gabriel as he is the messenger who reveals to Mary the meaning of her son.

¹²³ See Appendix 1, 2, and 3.

The second part of the iconography of Gabriel deal with the Passion, or the Suffering Messiah¹²⁴. These icons are not based on Scripture, as they are a type of midrashim-an interpretation. At the same time, they are a continuation of the message that Gabriel delivered to Mary, which is the meaning of her son and the suffering messiah. The most predominant of these icons known to the Eastern Churches is *Our Lady of the Passion-* or *Our Lady of Perpetual Help*, as it is also known. The representation is of the child Jesus finding refuge in Mary's arms. His is directly looking, quite frightfully, at Gabriel. "The archangel Gabriel, who earlier had explained the mystery of the Incarnation to Mary, explains the mystery of the cross to the future Saviour"¹²⁵. On the other side, the archangel Michael is represented as holding a stalk of Hyssop and a lance. This vision of the coming torture and death is what frightens the child Jesus so much that he finds solace in the arms of his mother. Mary is represented as feeling the upcoming suffering of her child, yet she too is now fully grasping the meaning of her son as was announced to her by Gabriel. This story is not mentioned in Scripture, yet it is a direct continuation of the Annunciation. A passage from the New Testament that would also show that Mary is grasping the meaning of her son is found in Luke 2:19, "But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered over them".

The iconography of the Eastern churches is not only concerned with the scriptural representations. At times, it is solely angels or archangels being depicted in order to give us a better understanding of their roles and functions¹²⁶. An example of these would be the icon representing the Archangel Gabriel, whom we can easily identify by the bowed posture-as he appeared to Mary- and by the slightly raised right hand-which is the symbol

¹²⁴ See Appendix 4.

¹²⁵ S. Nes, *The Mystical Language of Icons*, London: St-Pauls, 2000, p.58.

¹²⁶ See Appendix 5 and 6.

of the salutation made to Mary: “Greetings, most favoured one! The Lord is with you”¹²⁷.

2.7 Conclusion

The angel Gabriel played a crucial role in the beginnings and development of the Christian faith, as it is Gabriel himself who announced the birth of Jesus. Although this is the predominant role held by Gabriel, it is interesting that this role is intertwined with the importance of Christ as Messiah.

While it is arguable that Christianity would have developed in the same way had Gabriel not been named¹²⁸, it is nevertheless the image of the annunciation that is most prevalent in religious paintings and iconographies¹²⁹. The most significant meaning of Gabriel within Christianity could be the issue that Gabriel not only gives a detailed account of the future role of the Messiah, but he also serves as the bridge that allowed to bring the Jewish readers closer to an understanding of the Anointed one. Luke’s use of Gabriel was indeed very powerful as it brought certain events and characters from the Hebrew Bible to the Jesus event. This is similar to Gabriel being named in the Islamic faith, it allows the reader to experience something new with a familiar character.

What Christianity might-on the surface and in terms of accessibility- lack in legends and lore, it certainly makes up in artistic representations. It is here that one finds a rich array of iconographical representations that are in themselves a continuation and interpretation of the Scriptures. One of the reasons as to why Christianity is rich in

¹²⁷ Luke 1:28. Another version of this is “Hail Mary full of Grace”.

¹²⁸ Luke is the only Gospel who names the angel Gabriel for the annunciation. Matthew’s Infancy Narrative does not give any account of an angel visiting Mary; Mark and John don’t even contain Infancy Narratives.

¹²⁹ See Appendix 7 and 8.

artistic representations is because it is the only monotheistic religion that has no real prohibition against representing religious personalities¹³⁰. These icons are useful as they are the emphasis of the meaning of the Messiah and the role that he plays in the salvation of humanity.

The author of Luke -who was very familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures- most probably named Gabriel specifically because this was the same angel who appeared to Daniel to interpret his visions about the end of times and the coming of the Anointed One. The message is definitively more powerful if the coming of the Messiah announced to the Jews in Daniel is realized with the birth of Jesus.

Another layer has been peeled off, leaving us closer to the origins of Gabriel. So far, we have seen that Gabriel's presence in Islam could be traced back to his mention in Christianity. And now, we have learned that Christianity had knowledge of Gabriel from Judaism, making that the next layer to be analysed.

¹³⁰ Although Judaism has no problem representing certain characters from the Bible, Islam is on the other extreme where they are prohibited from any representation of sacred characters such as the Prophet Muhammad.

Chapter 3: Inter-Testamental Books

3.1.1 Texts

1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse Of) Enoch

1 ENOCH 9:1

- 1 Then Michael, Surafel, and **Gabriel** observed carefully from the sky and they saw much blood being shed upon the earth, and all the oppression being wrought upon the earth.

1 ENOCH 10:9a

- 9a And to **Gabriel** the Lord said, "Proceed against the bastards and the reprobates and against the children of adultery; and destroy the children of adultery and expel the children of the Watchers from among the people.

1 ENOCH 20:7

- 7 **Gabriel**, one of the holy angels who oversee the garden of Eden, and the serpents, and the cherubim.

1 ENOCH 40:9

- 9 And he said to me, "The first one is the merciful and forbearing Michael; the second one, who is set over all disease and every wound of the children of the people, is Raphael; the third, who is set over all exercise of strength, is **Gabriel**; and the fourth, who is set over all actions of repentance upon the hope of those who would inherit eternal life, is Phanuel by name."

1 ENOCH 54:6

- 6 Then Michael, Raphael, **Gabriel**, and Phanuel themselves shall seize them on that great day of judgment and cast them into the furnace (of fire) that is burning that day, so that the Lord of the Spirits may take vengeance on them on account of their oppressive deeds which (they performed) as messengers of Satan, leading astray those who dwell upon the earth.

1 ENOCH 71:8b-9; 13

- 8b Michael, Raphael, **Gabriel**, Phanuel, and numerous (other) holy angels that are in heaven above, go in and out of that house-
- 9 Michael, Raphael, **Gabriel**, Phanuel, and numerous (other) holy angels that are countless.
- 10 With them is the Antecedent of Time: His head is white and pure like wool and his garment is indescribable.
- 11 I fell on my face, my whole body mollified and my spirit transformed. Then I cried with a great voice by the spirit of the power, blessing, glorifying, and extolling.
- 12 And those are the blessings which went forth out of my mouth, being well-pleasing in the presence of that Antecedent of Time.
- 13 Then the Antecedent of Time came with Michael, **Gabriel**, Raphael, Phanuel, and a hundred thousand and ten million times a hundred thousand angels that are countless.

3.1.2 Texts

2 (Slavonic Apocalypse Of) Enoch Manuscript *J*

2 ENOCH 21:3

3 And the LORD sent one of his glorious ones, the archangel **Gabriel**.

2 ENOCH 21:5

5 <| And **Gabriel** carried me up, like a leaf carried up by the wind. | He moved
me along> and put me down in front of the face of the LORD.

2 ENOCH 24:1

1 And the Lord called me; and he said to me, “Enoch, sit to the left of me with
Gabriel.”

2 (Slavonic Apocalypse Of) Enoch Manuscript A

2 ENOCH 21:3

3 And the LORD sent one of his glorious ones to me, **Gabril**.

2 ENOCH 21:5

5 And **Gabril** carried me up, like a leaf carried up by the wind.
6 He moved me along and put me down in front of the face of the LORD.

2 ENOCH 24:1

1 And the Lord called me; and he placed me to the left of himself closer than **Gabriel**.

2 ENOCH 71:11b

11b And the archangel **Gabriel** appeared to Nir, and said to him, "Do not think that your wife Sofonim has died because of (your) error; but this child which is to be born of her is a righteous fruit, and one whom I shall receive into paradise, so that you will not be the father of a gift of G-d."

2 ENOCH 71:28

28 But, concerning the child, don't be anxious, Nir; because I, in a short while I shall send my archangel **Gabriel**. And he will take the child, and put him in the paradise of Edem.

2 ENOCH 72:1a

1 And it happened, when the child had completed 40 days in Nir's tent the LORD said to the archangel **Gabril**, "Go down onto the earth to Nir the priest, and take the child Melkisedek, who is with him, and place him in the paradise of Edem for preservation.

2 ENOCH 72:3

- 3 And **Gabriel** hurried and he came flying down when it was night, and Nir was sleeping on his bed that night. And **Gabriel** appeared to him, (and) said to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Nir! Restore the child to me whom I entrust to you.’”

2 ENOCH 72:4b-5a

- 4b And he answered **Gabriel** and said, “The child is not with me, and I don’t know who is speaking to me.”
- 5 And **Gabriel** answered him, “Don’t be frightened, Nir! I am the archangel **Gabriel**. The LORD sent me and behold, I shall take your child today. I will go with him and I will place him in the paradise of Edem.”

2 ENOCH 72:8b

- 8b And he answered **Gabriel**, “Blessed be the LORD who has sent you to me today!

2 ENOCH 72:9

- 9 And **Gabriel** took the child Melkisedek on the same night on his wings, and he placed him in the paradise of Edem.

3.1.3 Texts

3 (Hebrew Apocalypse Of) Enoch

3 ENOCH 14:4

- 4 These are the names of the princes who guide the world: **Gabriel**, the angel of fire;

3 ENOCH 17:1c

- 1b There are seven great, beautiful, wonderful, and honoured princes who are in charge of the seven heavens.
1c They are Michael, **Gabriel**, Šatqi'el, Šahaqi'el, Baradi'el, Baraqi'el, and Sidri'el.

3 ENOCH 17:3b

- 3b **Gabriel**, Prince of the Host, is in charge of the sixth heaven, which is in Makon.

3.2 Introduction

Before moving on to the Hebrew Scriptures, it is worthwhile to take some time and look at the appearance of Gabriel in the books that have not quite made it into the Biblical canon, yet that are abundant in angelic references, especially those concerning Gabriel. M.J. Davidson explains that

Divine revelation through angelic intermediaries is familiar from the OT [but] it is in certain non-canonical Jewish writings of the last three centuries BC and the first AD that the idea of revelation involving angels became a prominent and distinguishing feature in what is now recognized as a specific literary form, the genre apocalypse.¹³¹

It is also with this development of apocalyptic literature that angels became a favoured mode of communication of the Divine will, and as explanation of the functioning of the cosmos. The most predominant one are the Books of Enoch that were known to the Jews of Qumran, and that contain a lot of references to stories and events detailed in the Hebrew Bible.

In the Hebrew Bible, Enoch is presented as being the great-great-great-great-great grandson of Adam. The Scriptures do not go into the details about his life, but from the six¹³² mentions of him in the Bible, we are informed that G-d took favour on him and that he was carried to heaven in order to be shown the functioning of angels and nature. His travels are very well detailed, and we are introduced to more angelic activity than anywhere in the Bible.

¹³¹ M.J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran*, (Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 11), England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992, p.35.

¹³² Enoch is named in Genesis 5:17-24; 1 Chronicles 1:3 in the Hebrew Bible. In the Apocrypha we find him in Wisdom of Solomon 4:10-13 and Ecclesiasticus 44:16 and 49:14. Finally, he is mentioned in Jude 14 in the New Testament.

There are three known books of Enoch: 1 Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch which dates from the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE (most likely during the Hellenistic period); 2 Slavonic Apocalypse of Enoch dating from the late 1st century CE¹³³; and finally, 3 Hebrew Apocalypse of Enoch which is dated the latest at the 5th or 6th century CE. These books are in essence midrashim as they are interpretations of some of the earlier Hebrew Bible texts. The events covered in the books of Enoch are mentioned in Scriptures, but here we really have a detailed account of the 'skipped parts' of the text.

3.3 1 Ethiopic Apocalypse Of Enoch

1 Enoch introduces us to “a world under divine control. Each angel is responsible for some important matter”¹³⁴, and was written in Hebrew or Aramaic¹³⁵, or both, and we do not know the author¹³⁶. It is also the oldest surviving example of Jewish apocalyptic literature¹³⁷. It was a text that originated in Judea, and it was known to the Essenes and the early Christians. The book is separated into five parts which are:

The Watchers (Chapters 1-36)

¹³³ Although the dating varies tremendously. I. Andersen states that “since no manuscripts older than the fourteenth century are known, any time before that is available as the date by which the book reached its present form”, “2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch”, in J.H. Charlesworth (ed), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, Garden City/New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983, p.226. He goes on to mention “that dates ranging all the way from pre-Christian times to the late Middle Ages have been proposed for the production of 2 Enoch”(p.227).

¹³⁴ M.J. Davidson, *Angels at Qumran*, 1992, p.77.

¹³⁵ But, as E. Isaac mentions in “1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch”, in J.H. Charlesworth (ed), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, Garden City/New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983, “1 Enoch is found complete only in the Ethiopic (Ge'ez) Version” (p.6).

¹³⁶ Since 1 Enoch is a composite text, with its part dating from the early pre-Maccabean period to the late pre-Christian period, it would be hard to pinpoint the author.

¹³⁷ In *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, (2nd Ed., The Biblical Resource Series), Grand Rapids/MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998, J.J. Collins defines apocalyptic as: “a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and special insofar as it involves another, supernatural world”, pp. 4-5.

The Parables (Chapters 37-71)
 Astronomical writings (Chapters 72-82)
 Dream Visions (Chapters 83-90)
 Epistles of Enoch (Chapters 91-107)

In it, Gabriel is mentioned by name a total of eight times¹³⁸, and six times out of eight he is only mentioned in passive roles¹³⁹. By passive roles, it is meant that Gabriel is only named as part of a list, or he is only referred to. The two times that he is mentioned in a relatively more active role is in 9:1(-11) and 10:9-10, where Gabriel and Michael plead with G-d about the devastation of the Watchers¹⁴⁰, and Gabriel is given the command of destroying the children of the Watchers¹⁴¹.

3.4 2 Slavonic Apocalypse Of Enoch

In his introduction, F.I. Andersen mentions that

2 Enoch describes a mystical journey through the ten levels of heaven (Chs. 1-21), a preview of human history (Chs. 22-38), an admonition based on Enoch's intimacy with the divine realm (Chs. 39-66), and a conclusion summarizing his supernatural experiences (Chs. 67 and 68).¹⁴²

2 Enoch is the most rich in mentions of Gabriel, but it is also hard to point where it came from. This work dates from the late 1st century CE¹⁴³, and is an "amplification of Genesis 5:21-32; that is, it covers events from the life of Enoch to the onset of the Flood"¹⁴⁴. The original language is most likely to have been Greek, but there are no Greek manuscripts of Enoch that we know of. The author is unknown, but most likely to

¹³⁸ Three times he is mentioned in the section on the Watchers, and five time in the Parables.

¹³⁹ In 20:7 Gabriel is described as the overseer of Eden; 40:9 he prays on behalf of humanity; in 54:6 he is named with others as destroying armies on judgement day; in 71:8,9, and 13, he is named with other angels.

¹⁴⁰ This story is briefly mentioned in Genesis 6:4.

¹⁴¹ This role is similar to the one that Gabriel holds in Midrashims, where he is named as the destroyer of Sodom.

¹⁴² S. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, (6th Edition), Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003.

¹⁴³ The text used is a translation by F.I. Andersen, and based on 2 different manuscripts from the Library of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Leningrad.

¹⁴⁴ F. I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch", 1983, p.223.

have been a Christian scribe. Manuscript *J* is the longer version, and manuscript *A* is the shorter one. Gabriel is mentioned by name three times in *J* and thirteen times in *A*.

3.4.1 Manuscript *J*

Two mentions¹⁴⁵ of Gabriel in *J* have him actively being sent to bring Enoch in front of G-d, and Gabriel carrying Enoch. The third mention¹⁴⁶ is a passive one as G-d tells Enoch to sit with Gabriel. What is noteworthy is that where Gabriel is not mentioned (as opposed to the similar passages in *A*), it is usually Michael¹⁴⁷ who replaces him. Here, we are presented with a completely different role of Gabriel as his function appears very simple and even mundane. One explanation could be that in 2 Enoch, being set in the Heavens, Gabriel does not have the opportunity to interact with humanity. We will see that this is not the case in the *A* manuscript.

3.4.2 Manuscript *A*

Manuscript *A*, although shorter, is richer in mentions of Gabriel, as we are here presented with the various functions that he holds, and similarly his close relationship with G-d. The first three references¹⁴⁸ of Gabriel are similar to those found in the *J* manuscript, but the differences are evident in the ten additional mentions of Gabriel. In 2 Enoch 71 and 72, Gabriel is presented as interacting with humanity on orders from G-d, and as carrying out G-d's commands. Gabriel is primarily interacting with Nir and his child (Melkisedek). We are told here of the story of how G-d decided to safeguard

¹⁴⁵ *J* 2 Enoch 21:3, 5.

¹⁴⁶ *J* 2 Enoch 24:1.

¹⁴⁷ *J* 2 Enoch 71:28; 72:1, 3, 5, 8, 9.

¹⁴⁸ *A* 2 Enoch 21:3, 5-6; 24:1.

Melkisedek in Eden until the flood passes. G-d uses Gabriel as an intermediary in order to deliver divine messages to Nir, concerning various events that are occurring in his life. This story has the feel of a midrashim as it is a sort of “reading between the lines” of Genesis 6.

3.5 3 Hebrew Apocalypse Of Enoch

Finally, there is 3 Enoch¹⁴⁹, which is said to have been written in the 5th or 6th century, yet is attributed to Rabbi Ishmael¹⁵⁰. The original language is said to have been Hebrew, and there have been various manuscripts of 3 Enoch found. Gabriel is mentioned by name three¹⁵¹ times, but all three times, he is only referred to or described as having a particular role. This text does not give us much information as to who was Gabriel. Here too, we are lacking the ever important interaction between Gabriel and humanity.

3.6 Conclusion

By looking at all three books of Enoch, one notices that part of the ‘magic’ about Gabriel is his interaction with humanity while delivering messages from G-d. It does seem that Gabriel is indeed better defined-and understood- by the role that he plays. When he is just mentioned in passing, or as part of a list, he seems to lose his individuality, as he is one of many.

¹⁴⁹ The translation used is based on two manuscripts belonging to Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 228/4 and to Oxford: Bodleian Library 1656/2.

¹⁵⁰ R. Ishmael was a famous Palestinian scholar who died before 132 CE.

¹⁵¹ 3 Enoch 14:4; 17:1,3.

The roles attributed to Gabriel vary greatly, and they range from Gabriel being described as a destroyer (of the bastard children of the Watchers, as well as of Sodom); to an interpreter and messenger (explaining to Nir the upcoming plan of G-d); an overseer of Heaven; and as the one who brings Enoch into the presence of G-d.

In the books of Enoch, one does get a better understanding of the role that Gabriel has, although these texts also tend to speak of Gabriel as someone that we already have a previous knowledge of. In fact, the most interactive text appears to be 2 Enoch, as it also contains similar ideas that are found in the Book of Daniel. The importance of these texts is that they not only present us with a variety of roles assigned to Gabriel, but they are our introduction to the apocalyptic genre. It is also within the apocalyptic texts that the role played by angels is amplified, as they are not only giving humanity a glimpse of G-d's 'master plan', but they are also speaking of the salvation to come. As we will see in the next chapter, this message equally apparent in Daniel's visions. So, once again we seem to be directed to Judaism in order to get closer to Gabriel.

Chapter 4: Judaism

4.1 Introduction

Judaism is the oldest¹⁵² of the world's monotheistic religions that is still practiced today. It originated with Abraham leaving the land of Ur and settling into Canaan per G-d's instructions, although monotheism in Israel originated only with Deutero-Isaiah¹⁵³. Abraham's grandson Jacob fathered twelve sons from which were descended the twelve tribes of Israel. After a long period of slavery Moses then led the Israelites out of Egypt and received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. The Jewish people have been trying to live by those commandments for thousands of years.

It would be hard to try to encompass an almost 6000 year-old religion within a few lines, although a brief description of the Hebrew religion is given by L. Baeck as following:

In its briefest form it is the idea and challenge of the One. This challenging idea is first the One thing, the One thing that alone is needful, that which has been commanded, the Good, the Right. Secondly and mainly it means the One Being who has proclaimed this One Thing and demands it from men, the One G-d, beside whom there is none else. And finally it means the unity and totality of man. It means that through this One Thing, and therefore with his whole heart and soul, man is to serve the One G-d and him only. All that the prophets from Moses downward have taught, all the ways in which the religion has tried to express itself anew, are, however different the ways in which it has been expressed, just this: that there is only *one* reality – the One G-d, His commandment and the doing of it...In each man, therefore, there is a unity, or to speak more accurately, a totality, that corresponds to the unity of G-d [...] From man is demanded conduct that is exclusively and absolutely related to G-d. To the One and only valid Thing man can give himself only if he yield up to it all that he is and all that he has; only thus can he serve the One G-d and acknowledge Him as the only one [...] This demand for definite decision, this sternness, this "Thou shalt, thou shalt not", is the core of Hebrew religion.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² The Hebrew calendar indicates the Jewish year as being 5764.

¹⁵³ Deutero-Isaiah refers to chapters 40-55 of the Book of Isaiah, and were written in Babylon towards the end of the Exile in 587-539 BCE.

¹⁵⁴ This description is given by Dr. Leo Baeck in A.C. Bouquet, *Comparative Religion: a short outline*, 1961, pp. 210-211.

In this section, I will not be presenting the texts separate from the body of the chapter, as they are too numerous, and some are just references to other texts. They will be presented as we go along, within their respective sections regarding the traditional/historical figure that Gabriel was interacting with.

4.2 Midrashim

Midrashims are interpretations on the various books of the Hebrew Bible and claim to offer a more in-depth explanation of the various stories. To really get a sense of the role that Gabriel has played in Judaism, the best resources are the various midrashims that tell of the close link and interaction that Gabriel has had with humanity since the Garden of Eden.

Midrashims originated as interpretations of the various biblical stories over thousands of years in various parts of the Middle East. Yet, their exact date of composition is impossible to determinate. “Nor were they ever collected in their entirety. They have to be culled from a vast literature, scattered over many countries and centuries. They will be found, for example, in both the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud, which contain the scholarly achievements of the first five centuries of our era”¹⁵⁵. They also helped to pass on the Bible stories orally even before the Scriptures were all written down and canonized.

We first encounter Gabriel in midrashim about the creation of mankind

When at last the assent of the angels to the creation of man was given, G-d said to Gabriel: “Go and fetch Me dust from the four corners of the earth, and I will

¹⁵⁵ L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968, p.xiii.

create man therewith.” Gabriel went forth to do the bidding of the Lord, but the earth drove him away, and refused to let him gather up dust from it. Gabriel remonstrated: “Why, O Earth, dost thou not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, who founded thee upon the waters without props or pillars?”¹⁵⁶

Gabriel is then named as the angel who destroys the bastard sons of the Watchers. This role of destroyer seems to be recurrent for Gabriel as he is the angel who is sent down to destroy Sodom¹⁵⁷. According to legend, “with his little finger the angel Gabriel touched the rock whereon the sinful cities were built, and overturned them”¹⁵⁸.

Another legend that names Gabriel concerns Leviathan and the dragon Rahab:

Ceux qui pensent que la vie de Léviathan fut épargnée envisagent une grande chasse angélique dont il est le gibier. Mais même les anges les plus audacieux doivent le fuir quand il est aux abois; et s'ils se regroupent pour l'attaquer, ils n'arrivent qu'à émousser leurs armes sur ses écailles. Quand, à la fin, Gabriel essaie de le hisser hors de l'Abîme où il est retourné, Léviathan veut avaler l'hameçon, la ligne et le pêcheur. Alors Dieu en personne doit le prendre au filet et l'abattre.¹⁵⁹

Those who think that Leviathan's life was spared are imagining a big angelic chase in which he is the game. But even the most audacious angels must flee when he is at edge; and if they assembled to attack him, they will only succeed in blunting their weapons on his scales. When, in the end, Gabriel tries to hoist him out of the Abyss where he has returned, Leviathan wants to swallow hook, line and fisherman. Then G-d in person must take him in the net and slaughter him.¹⁶⁰

and

Bien que certains croient que Léviathan et Bahémoth s'extermineront l'un l'autre, d'autres prédisent que Dieu enverra Michel et Gabriel contre ces deux créatures et que, comme ils n'arriveront à les abattre ni l'un ni l'autre, c'est Dieu lui-même qui se chargera de cette tâche.¹⁶¹

Even if some might believe that Leviathan and Bahemoth would exterminate one another, others predict that G-d would send Michael and Gabriel against these two

¹⁵⁶ L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, 1968, p.28.

¹⁵⁷ This role as destroyer of Sodom is equally seen in Islamic traditions.

¹⁵⁸ L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, 1968, p.118.

¹⁵⁹ R. Graves, et R. Patai, *Les Mythes Hébreux*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1987, p.66.

¹⁶⁰ This is my own translation.

¹⁶¹ R. Graves, et R. Patai, *Les Mythes Hébreux*, 1987, p.67.

creatures and that, as they would not be able to slaughter neither one nor the other, it is G-d himself who would take over the task.¹⁶²

Before moving on to the more predominant figures of the Hebrew Bible, I want to give a last example as to how Gabriel was present in the stories of the family of Adam.

This midrashim is an elaboration of the story of Abel's murder¹⁶³

D'autres encore estiment que la terre, bien qu'elle eût bu le sang d'Abel, refusa d'accueillir sa chaire – en tremblant avec une telle violence que Caïn lui aussi faillit être englouti. Partout où il essayait d'enterrer le cadavre, la terre le vomissait, et à la fin elle s'écria: "Je ne recevrai aucun autre corps tant que l'argile dont Adam a été façonné ne m'aura pas été rendue!" Alors Caïn prit la fuite et Michel, Gabriel, Ouriel et Raphaël placèrent le cadavre sur un rocher, où il demeura de nombreuses années sans se corrompre. Lorsque Adam mourut, les mêmes archanges enterrèrent à Hébron les deux corps côte à côte, dans le terrain même où Dieu avait pris la poussière d'Adam. Pourtant l'esprit d'Abel ne trouvait toujours pas le repos: pendant des siècles on put entendre ses plaintes retentir au ciel et sur la terre – jusqu'au moment où Caïn, ses femmes et ses enfants furent tous morts.¹⁶⁴

Others still believe that the Earth, while she had drunk the blood of Abel, refused to welcome his flesh – trembling with such violence that Cain himself was almost swallowed. Anywhere that he tried to bury the cadaver, the earth would reject it, and in the end she cried out: "I will not receive any other body as long as the clay from which Adam was created has not been returned to me!" Then Cain took flight, and Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael placed the cadaver on a rock, where it remained numerous years without decomposing. When Adam died, the same archangels buried in Hebron the two bodies side by side, in the same place from which G-d had originally taken the dust of Adam. However, Abel's spirit never did find any rest: during centuries one could hear his complaints resonating in heaven and on earth – until the moment when Cain, his wives and his children had all died.¹⁶⁵

4.2.1 Abraham

All three monotheistic religions consider Abraham as the Father of religion. It all began when Abram received a commandment to leave his home town and head to the

¹⁶² This is my own translation.

¹⁶³ This is found in Genesis 4:1-16.

¹⁶⁴ R. Graves, et R. Patai, *Les Mythes Hébreux*, 1987, p.107.

¹⁶⁵ This is my own translation.

promised land designated by G-d. As his wife, Sarai could not bear children, Abram had a child with the slave woman Hagar, who bore him Ishmael, who went on to be the father of the Arab nations. When Abraham was well into his years, G-d granted Sarai-now renamed Sarah- a son, Isaac. Stories concerning the life of Abraham can be found in Genesis 11:27 to 25:11, and were most likely written during the United Monarchy period of Israel's¹⁶⁶ history.

Abraham legends include one in which "Abram is left in a cave by his mother because of the slaughter of newborn males by King Nimrod. G-d sends Gabriel to tend to the infant who feeds Abram with his thumb, through which milk and honey flow"¹⁶⁷. The story then goes on to tell how in that same cave, Abraham finds a glowing stone – Tzohar- that is indeed the stone containing the light of the Garden of Eden, that has been passed on from Adam to Seth to Enoch to Methuselah to Lamech to Noah. Gabriel is also the angel who once again provides for Abraham when he is sent to prison by king Nimrod.

Gabriel was also present during the time of Abraham's circumcision as well as during the time of the birth of Isaac¹⁶⁸. As was seen in Islamic lore, it was Gabriel who was charged with the destruction of Sodom.

D'autres disent que la naissance d'Isaac fut annoncée trois jours après qu'Abraham eut circoncis toute sa maisonnée, et que Dieu donna ordre à Michel, Gabriel et Raphaël de reconforter Abraham qui souffrait beaucoup, comme il arrive toujours le troisième jour. Les archanges protestèrent: "Est-ce que tu nous enverrais à un endroit impur, rempli de sang?" Dieu répondit: "Par vos vies, l'odeur des sacrifices d'Abraham m'agrée davantage que la myrrhe et l'oliban! Dois-je y aller moi-même?" Alors ils l'accompagnèrent, déguisés en voyageurs

¹⁶⁶ An approximated date would be 1000-930 BCE.

¹⁶⁷ R.E. Guiley, *Encyclopedia of Angels*, New York/NY: Facts On File, Inc., 1996, p.69. Yet a similar is not identical version is found in L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, 1968.

¹⁶⁸ The story of the birth of Isaac is found in Genesis 21:1-5

arabes. Michel était chargé d'annoncer la naissance d'Isaac; Raphaël, de guérir Abraham; et Gabriel de détruire la ville mauvaise de Sodome.¹⁶⁹

Others say that the birth of Isaac was announced three days after Abraham had circumcised his household, and that G-d gave the order to Michael, Gabriel and Raphael to comfort Abraham who was suffering a lot, as it tends to happen on the third day. The archangels protested: "Would you be sending us to an impure place, filled with blood?" G-d answered: "By your lives, the odour of Abraham's sacrifices agrees with me more than that of mirth and oliban! Do I have to go myself?" So they accompanied him, disguised as Arabic travelers. Michael was charged with announcing the birth of Isaac; Raphael with healing Abraham; and Gabriel with the destruction of the evil city of Sodom.¹⁷⁰

If Gabriel did not play a major role in the life of Isaac, he in fact played a crucial role in allowing his marriage to Rebekah to take place. We find in Genesis 24:50-61 the story of how Abraham sent his servant, Eliezer, to find a wife for Isaac. When Eliezer saw that Rebekah was indeed that woman, he presented himself to her family to arrange the marriage. The greed of her father and brother almost caused the marriage never to take place. The following is the midrash based on the biblical story:

Selon d'autres, Laban, voyant les riches présents que Rébecca rapportait du puits, avait préparé à Éliézer un guet-apens, mais la crainte de sa stature gigantesque et de sa nombreuse suite armée l'y fit renoncer. Au lieu de quoi, il fit de grandes démonstrations d'amitié et posa devant Éliézer un plat de nourriture empoisonnée. L'archange Gabriel entra sans qu'on le vît et permuta ce plat avec celui de Bethuël, qui mourut instantanément.¹⁷¹

According to others, Laban, on seeing the riches that Rebecca was bringing back from the well, had prepared a trap for Eliezer, but fear of his gigantic standing and his numerous army made him renounce it. Instead of which, he made great demonstrations of friendship and placed before Eliezer a poisoned meal. The archangel Gabriel entered without being seen and switched this plate with that of Bethuel, who died instantly.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ R. Graves, et R. Patai, *Les Mythes Hébreux*, 1987, p.169.

¹⁷⁰ This is my own translation.

¹⁷¹ R. Graves, et R. Patai, *Les Mythes Hébreux*, 1987, p.188.

¹⁷² This is my own translation.

As can be expected, Gabriel is very present in the early stories of Abraham as Abraham is considered the father of Judaism¹⁷³.

4.2.2 Jacob

Jacob is the twin son of Isaac and Rebekah. Although he was the youngest of the two, he eventually stole Esau's birthright from a blind Isaac. Jacob went on to marry Leah and her sister Rachel, and he eventually had twelve sons and one daughter by his wives¹⁷⁴ and their handmaids. His sons' descendents became the twelve tribes of Israel. While travelling with his family to reunite with Esau, Jacob spent the night near a river where he wrestled with an angel¹⁷⁵ from whom he received a blessing and a name change-he would now be known as Israel. Similarly, stories about Jacob-himself a Patriarch- were written during the United Monarchy, and can be found in Genesis 25:26 to 36:43.

When Esau sells his birthright to Jacob¹⁷⁶, it is done so in front of Gabriel and Michael

D'autres disent qu'Ésaü exigea également de Jacob une forte somme en or, étant donné que son droit d'aînesse lui valait double part dans l'héritage de Canaan; et qu'il aurait par la suite désavoué le marché si Jacob ne l'avait fait jurer sur la crainte de son père Isaac qu'il aimait tendrement; et si Michel et Gabriel n'avaient été témoins lors de sa signature du contract.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Actually, the three world religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) view Abraham as the father of their religion.

¹⁷⁴ Leah bore: Reuben; Simeon; Levi; Judah; Issachar; Zebulun; and Dinah. Rachel bore: Joseph and Benjamin. Bilhah (Rachel's handmaid) bore: Dan and Naphtali. Zilpah (Leah's handmaid) bore: Gad and Asher.

¹⁷⁵ This can be found in Genesis 32:22-32. There is usually arguments about the identity of the angel who wrestled with Jacob, but it usually is debated if it was indeed an angel or G-d himself. Those claiming that it was an angel usually name either Michael or Gabriel.

¹⁷⁶ Genesis 25:29-34.

¹⁷⁷ R. Graves, et R. Patai, *Les Mythes Hébreux*, 1987, p.197.

Others claim that Esau also demanded a large sum of gold from Jacob, given his first-born birthright which was worth double in the Canaanite inheritance; and would have dissolved the deal had Jacob not made him swear on the life of Isaac whom he loved dearly; and if Michael and Gabriel would not have been witnesses to his signing the contract.¹⁷⁸

When Jacob steals the blessing from Esau, it is mentioned that it was the angels Gabriel and Michael who held up Jacob as he went to Isaac's bedside to receive the blessing that was meant for the oldest son¹⁷⁹. Later on when a third son is born to Jacob and Leah, Gabriel is summoned by G-d to bring down the name Levi.

4.2.3 Joseph

Joseph is the first born son of Jacob's beloved, Rachel. He was the favourite of Jacob, who did not hide his favouritism, and this caused his brothers to resent him. Stories concerning Joseph's life can be found in Genesis chapters 37 to 50.

Later on in the midrashim stories, Gabriel is there to help Joseph find his way to Dothan before his brothers plot to kill him. Yet, Reuben is the one who objects to the actual murder, and instead finds another way to get rid of Joseph. It is equally Gabriel who helps sustain Joseph when he is imprisoned in the pit into which his brothers threw him, and he is also the one who provides clothing for him. He is then sold into slavery and ends up in the Egyptian royal court. While he was in the king's court, it was Gabriel who "appeared unto Joseph, and taught him all the seventy languages¹⁸⁰, and he acquired them quickly after the angel had changed his name from Joseph to Jehoseph"¹⁸¹.

¹⁷⁸ This is my own translation.

¹⁷⁹ This story is found in Genesis 27:18-29.

¹⁸⁰ This is found in Genesis 37:23.

¹⁸¹ L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, 1968, p.230.

4.2.4 Moses

Another important Biblical figure with whom Gabriel is associated with is Moses. Moses was born to a Levite, Amram and his wife Jochebed, at a time when the Egyptian Pharaoh was very concerned about the growing Hebrew population. The Scriptures do not mention anything about his childhood or adolescence, and it is here that the midrashims come into play. Actually, of the collection of midrashims analyzed, it appears that Gabriel is predominant in the stories involving Moses¹⁸².

It is here too that Gabriel played a crucial role in his survival as he is the one who allegedly pinched Moses so that the Pharaoh's daughter heard him from the little ark. While growing up¹⁸³ at the Pharaoh's court, Moses took to playing on the Pharaoh's knees. One day, Moses took the crown off the Pharaoh's head to play with it. This sent warning bells to the court's counsel as they saw this as a premonition that Moses would one day overthrow the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh, on the counsel of his wise men-one of whom was Gabriel in disguise- places a hot coal and an onyx in front of the child to see which object Moses will reach for, as reaching for the onyx would indicate that Moses will one day overthrow the Pharaoh. It is Gabriel who the guides Moses' hand towards the hot coal. By placing his burning fingers in his mouth, Moses proceeds to burn his lips and tongue, resulting in him having a speech impediment¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸² It is a striking similarity between the amount of time that Gabriel has spent with Moses and, later on Muhammad.

¹⁸³ This midrashim is an expansion of what supposedly happened between the stories in Exodus 2:10 and 2:11.

¹⁸⁴ This is mentioned in Exodus 4:10: "But Moses said, 'O Lord, I have never been a man of ready speech, never in my life, not even now that thou hast spoken to me'; I am slow and hesitant of speech".

Gabriel is also named as the angel who accompanies Moses on his visit of Paradise. Later on, Gabriel is the angel who punishes the Pharaoh¹⁸⁵ after the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites.

Without a moment's delay, Gabriel descended and laid an iron chain about Pharaoh's neck, and holding him securely, he addressed him thus: "Villain! Yesterday thou didst say, 'Who is the Lord that I should hearken to His voice?' and now thou sayest, 'The Lord is righteous.' " With that he let him drop into the depths of the sea, and there he tortured him for fifty days, to make the power of G-d known to him.¹⁸⁶

On his last day alive, Moses recopied the Torah thirteen times and it was Gabriel who "brought it to the highest heavenly court to show the piety of Moses"¹⁸⁷. The final mention of the angel with Moses is when Gabriel refuses to be the one who brings Moses' soul to G-d:

In that instant, the Holy One said to Gabriel: Go forth and bring the soul of Moses. Gabriel replied: He who is equal in importance to sixty myriads – how can I bear to watch him dying?¹⁸⁸

Later on, it will be G-d, accompanied by Gabriel, Michael, and Zagzagel, who will bring Moses to Heaven¹⁸⁹

4.2.5 Others

In an interpretation of the Book of Exodus, when the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt and forced to build for the Pharaoh, we learn that Gabriel is the angel who brought forth a

¹⁸⁵ This is an interpretation of the events detailed in Exodus 14:23-28, even if in Exodus 14:28b it is mentioned that "Not one man was left alive".

¹⁸⁶ L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, 1968, p. 360.

¹⁸⁷ L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Bible*, 1968, p. 488.

¹⁸⁸ H.N. Bialik, and Y.H. Ravnitzky (Eds.), *The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, New York: Schocken Books, 1992, p.103.

¹⁸⁹ This midrashim can be found on page 104 in H.N. Bialik and Y.H. Ravnitzky (Eds.) *The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, 1992.

part of the wall which the Israelites had been forced to erect for the Egyptians. When it was discovered to contain the body of an Israelite child, punishment was meted out both to the guardian angel of Egypt and to the Egyptians themselves.¹⁹⁰

Gabriel is also mentioned as being a witness to the wedding of Solomon's daughter to a poor youth. Gabriel is also said to have had interaction with Nebuchadnezzar. A midrashim concerning the same time frame of Nebuchadnezzar concerns a discussion between Gabriel and the angel of hail, who both are vying for the honour of saving Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego from the fiery furnace¹⁹¹:

When the wicked Nebuchadnezzar cast Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah into the fiery furnace, Yurkami, the angel prince of hail, appeared before the Holy One and said, "Master of the universe, let me go down, cool the furnace, and thus save those righteous men from the fiery furnace." Gabriel spoke up and said, "The might of the Holy One will not be made evident this way, for you are the prince of hail, and everyone knows that water quenches fire. But I am the prince of fire. Let me go down and I shall cook it within and heat it without, and thus perform a miracle within a miracle..."¹⁹²

Even though midrashims seem to focus of the interaction between Gabriel and Daniel's companions, it is interesting to consider that we have yet to find any midrashim that address the interactions between Gabriel and Daniel when the angel is instructed to interpret Daniel's dreams. After all, the book of Daniel is where we are first introduced to Gabriel.

4.3 Conclusion

As we can see, Gabriel appears to be a permanent and important figure in Judaic lore, since he is present since the beginning of times. Within the tapestry of legends, Gabriel holds such roles as guardian of the infants Abram and Moses, as well as

¹⁹⁰ This is a version of the *Yalkut Exodus 243*, that we find in R.H. Isaacs, *Ascending Jacob's ladder*, 1998, p.62.

¹⁹¹ This can be found in Daniel 3:14-27.

¹⁹² This is *Talmud Pesachim 118b*, found in R.H. Isaacs, *Ascending Jacob's ladder*, 1998, p.61.

conspirator (in hiding Abel's corpse). Gabriel can also be classified as a helper in the Creation of humanity, and as a destroyer (of Leviathan and Sodom).

At the same time, these roles do not give us any new information as to the origins of Gabriel. We were able to peel off various layers and examine how Gabriel's role might have evolved throughout the Hebrew Bible, but the authors here once again seem to be operating on the notion that the reader is familiar with angels, and specifically this angel. Truth be told, the authors of the midrashim were indeed familiar with the Scriptures, therefore it is only natural that they themselves were familiar with the naming of the angel Gabriel. They were also writing to an audience that was equally familiar with the same texts.

Within a traditional and historical context, Gabriel really makes a difference is in the midrashims. It is here that we can see that Judaism sees its destiny linked with Gabriel's intervention in the lives of the early biblical characters, starting with Adam. Similarly, Gabriel seems to have had a vital intervention with the majority of key biblical characters.

The next layer that we will be looking at will be the texts on which the midrashim base themselves, that being the Hebrew Bible.

Chapter 5: Hebrew Bible

5.1 Texts

The Book of Daniel

DANIEL 8:16

- 15b Suddenly I saw standing before me one with the semblance of a man;
16 at the same time I heard a human voice calling to him across the banks of the Ulai,
'**Gabriel**, explain the vision to this man.'
17 He came up to where I was standing; I was seized with terror at his approach and
threw myself on my face. But he said to me, 'Understand, O man: the vision
points to the time of the end.'

DANIEL 9:21

- 20 Thus I was speaking and praying, confessing my own sin and my people Israel's
sin, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my G-d on behalf of his holy
hill.
21 While I was praying, the man **Gabriel**, whom I had already seen in a vision, came
close to me at the hour of the evening sacrifice, flying swiftly.
22 He spoke clearly to me and said, 'Daniel, I have now come to enlighten your
understanding.
23a As you were beginning your supplications a word went forth; this I have come to
pass on to you, for you are a man greatly beloved.'

5.2 The Hebrew Bible

The TaNaK-Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Kethuvim (Writings)- is the sacred scriptures of the Jewish people. It encompasses a total of thirty-nine books that were written down in a period of approximately 1100 years¹⁹³. Those stories were written down by various people¹⁹⁴ over a period of approximately ten centuries. References¹⁹⁵ to angels are made from the beginning of the Bible until the end, yet even here the authors presuppose that the audience has a prior knowledge of angelic beings. Usually, we are presented to angels by the functions that they serve¹⁹⁶, as they appear to be impersonal beings with only one function and purpose: to do the will of G-d on earth, and to interact with humanity on G-d's behalf. The importance of angels within the Hebrew Bible is also visible by the date of the books in which angels are found. There are two distinctive periods to keep in mind: before the Exile and after the Exile. Before the Exile, the most predominant angel that we find is the Angel of G-d – or angel of Yahweh, or Angel of the Lord¹⁹⁷. Yet, there is a spectacular incident towards the end of the Bible, in a book written long after the exile, where we are introduced to an angel on a first name basis.

¹⁹³ The earliest texts being certain poetry such as the *Song of Deborah* from Judges 5 in 1200-900 BCE, to one of the latest being the *Book of Daniel* which was composed in 165 BCE.

¹⁹⁴ Some influential groups of the Hebrew Bible are: Poets, Storytellers, Prophets, and Priests.

¹⁹⁵ Once again including all celestial beings, there are 186 mentions of angels in the Hebrew Bible.

¹⁹⁶ Such as the Angel of the Lord in Genesis 22:11 and Exodus 3:2.

¹⁹⁷ Some examples are: Gen.16:7,9,10,11; Ex.23:20,23; Num.22:22-27,31,32; Judg.6:21; 1 King 19:5.

5.3 The Book of Daniel

The book of Daniel is the only apocalyptic¹⁹⁸ literature within the Hebrew Bible, and it tells the story of an Israelite youth named Daniel, who is taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar and given an education at the Babylonian court. While at the king's court, Daniel is revealed to be a wise man who is capable of interpreting dreams and visions. It is here that we get to one of the final layers of our search for the origins of Gabriel, as it is in the book of Daniel that we are first introduced to Gabriel by name. This is the first time, ever, in Scripture that an angel is given a proper name.

The book is separated into two major parts, the Narratives that are found in chapters 1-6¹⁹⁹ and the Visions that are described in chapters 7-12²⁰⁰. The second part was written long after the Babylonian Exile. Yet the name Gabriel could have been brought back from the exile. S.B. Frost explains,

The new element in the Jewish attitude to angels which comes in after the Exile and grows steadily thereafter is that angels come to have both a personality and a name of their own, and are thought of as ranked in orders, with archangels as superior to ordinary angels, as officers to privates in an army.²⁰¹

Daniel's reference of angels could indeed be a reflection of the descriptions given in Ezekiel²⁰², but what is of importance here is the naming of the angel.

¹⁹⁸ The symbolism found in these visions make of this an apocalyptic text, as it deals with the end of times and the salvation to come.

¹⁹⁹ This is dated from the Exile.

²⁰⁰ This part dates from around 168-164 B.C.E., during the Syrian persecution involving Antiochus Epiphanes. But the action of the book is said to be taking place in the 6th century BCE, during the Babylonian captivity. Although J.G. Baldwin, in *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries), Downers Grove/IL: InterVarsity, 1978, will argue that this text holds to an Exilic date.

²⁰¹ S.B. Frost, *Old Testament Apocalyptic: Its Origins and Growth*, London: The Epworth Press, 1952, pp.24-25.

²⁰² Arguments on this issue are made in P. Carrell, *Jesus and the Angels*, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997, especially in chapter 2, pp.24-52.

Daniel 8:16 mentions the angel by name, the angel Gabriel (and Michael-by reference only). This is an important passage since “it shows that angels were created by G-d with varying powers – or ranks – in angelic armies”²⁰³. A good argument as to why angels are named for the first time in the Hebrew Bible is that at the time that Daniel 8 was written, Israel already had knowledge of angels from the Babylonians. The author of Daniel was familiar with the various names and functions that were attributed to angelic beings from the Babylonian²⁰⁴ religions. For example, the Jews of the time familiarized themselves with Babylonian creation myths, but “in order to avoid inconsistency with the monotheistic character of Judaism, the Jewish legends were ascribed to the world of angels”²⁰⁵. Israel’s faith has not always been monotheistic, but it became as such during the Exile. This corresponds to the time that the Jews were exposed to the Babylonian culture. M. Girard states that the Exile was the starting point from which

Ces conceptions peu approfondies se développent petit à petit en une véritable angéologie. On a cherché les causes de ce phénomène: l’influence d’autres religions, en particulier le dualisme iranien; mais surtout, l’émergence progressive des schèmes de pensée apocalyptiques, à la faveur de l’étoilement du charisme prophétique et de l’évolution de la théologie dans le sens d’une affirmation forte de l’absolue transcendance divine.²⁰⁶

[These little known conceptions developed little by little in a real angelology. We have searched for the cause of this phenomenon: the influence of other religions, in particular the Iranian dualism; but mainly, the progressive emergence of the schemes of apocalyptic thinking, in favour of the expansion of the prophetic

²⁰³ L.O. Richards, *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Grand Rapids/MI: Regency Lib., 1985, p.44. The importance of angelic hierarchy will be the focus of later traditions with the help of such documents as the Books of Enoch and the works of Pseudo-Dionysius.

²⁰⁴ At the time, the Babylonian religion had itself been exposed to “strong influences from ZOROASTRIANISM, to which part of the Jewish population was exposed during the Babylonian captivity in the seventh century BCE” (R.E. Guiley, *Encyclopedia of Angels*, New York/NY: Facts On File, Inc, 1996, p. 104.

²⁰⁵ R.H. Isaacs, *Ascending Jacob’s ladder: Jewish Views of Angels, Demons, and Evil Spirits*, Northvale/NJ: Jason Aronson Inc, 1998, p. 48.

²⁰⁶ M. Girard, *Les Symboles dans la Bible*, 1991, p.955.

charisma and of the theological evolution directed towards a strong affirmation of the absolute divine transcendence.]²⁰⁷

Another reason why the book of Daniel is significant in the study of Gabriel is because, for the first time in Scriptures, an angel is actually described: “one with the semblance of a man”²⁰⁸. The importance of the explanation of the dreams and visions are what the reader should be focusing on, but the naming of an angel would help to emphasize that Daniel was worth such intimacy with G-d, therefore giving even more value to the message delivered. “The message of Gabriel has been called the key to this chapter, indeed to the entire book”²⁰⁹. Gabriel’s message, and the central theme of the book, deals with the rise and fall of tyrants. It conveys a message of hope and encouragement during times of persecution, as it announces the coming of the Anointed One.

Since apocalyptic writings were used to give hope – in this case to the nation of Israel, the personal identification of an angel would indeed captivate the attention of a nation, and would indicate to the Israelites that G-d is merciful as he will send them a saviour. Another important element of the use of angels in the apocalyptic genre is “the increasing emphasis on the majesty of G-d. He was thought to be too holy for men to dare come near him”²¹⁰. “This may well be explained by Israel’s greater contact with other religions and increasing stress on Yahweh’s transcendence, without any diminution in his activity in the world”²¹¹.

²⁰⁷ This is my own translation.

²⁰⁸ Daniel 8:16.

²⁰⁹ D. Berrigan, *Daniel: Under the Siege of the Divine*, USA: The Plough Publishing House, 1998, p.165.

²¹⁰ S.B. Frost, *The Old Testament Apocalyptic*, 1952, p.25.

²¹¹ C. Brown (Gen. Ed.), *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Grand Rapids/MI: Regency/Reference Library, 1975, p.101.

The problem lies in the fact that the author of Daniel had knowledge of Gabriel, and he appears to be addressing an audience that also had a personal knowledge of this angel. Just the mention of the name is enough to attract attention. Therefore, no time is wasted on 'telling' the audience WHO Gabriel is. Another alternative in searching for the origins of the name is to understand the composition of the name itself.

5.4 The Origins of Gabriel-the Root גבר

“The name comes from the root *geber* (man or strong) together with 'ēl (G-d)”²¹². E. Jenni and C. Westerman state that *gbr* translates to “to be superior”²¹³. G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren mention that the verb can mean “to be strong”, or “to use more power”, or even “to make oneself greater than another, to boast, to be proud”²¹⁴. From those definitions, it becomes clear why the root גבר is used to represent strength, so we can understand why the name Gabriel is given various translations such as 'G-d is strong', or 'Man of G-d', or even 'G-d is my strength'. Once again, the search into the origins of the name cannot go too far as the root *gbr* appears to “be detected inmost of the Semitic languages”²¹⁵. So this in itself does not give us a clearer date as to when the name might have been put together in order to signify a celestial being.

By looking at the literary genre in which Gabriel is mentioned and by looking at the meaning of his name, it allows one to see why his naming is of great importance. The

²¹² C. Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, p.103.

²¹³ E. Jenni, and C. Westerman, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (Vol. 1 אב - הנה - אב 1), Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, p.299.

²¹⁴ G.J. Botterweck, and H. Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, (Volume II, bdl-gālāh - גלה - גדל - גלה), USA: Eerdmans, 1975, p.368.

²¹⁵ G.J. Botterweck, and H. Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 1975, p.367. E. Jenni, and C. Westerman, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1997, p. 299, also mentions that the root “occurs in all branches of the Sem. languages”.

apocalyptic genre is not only used to give hope to persecuted people, it also announces and prepares for a cosmic battle that is to take place between the forces of good and evil. The angel Gabriel – or more specifically, his name – serve to give hope that G-d is indeed powerful, and will prevail. The appearance of the angel associated with strength has got to be more than a simple coincidence. In Christianity, it is also within an apocalyptic text that Gabriel will be named. Another interpretation is that the name, denoting strength, also gives strength and credibility to the messages that Gabriel delivers.

5.5 Conclusion

The Book of Daniel is a milestone when it comes to angels, as Gabriel has the honour of being the first angel in the Bible given a name. The setting of the book is also important as it is an apocalyptic text that requires celestial intervention in order to allow the main character to understand the divine message. This fits well with the reasoning as to why the author of Luke also names Gabriel. It is a smooth continuation and transaction between the Hebrew Bible-and its expectations- and the Jesus event.

The only visible role attributed to Gabriel is that of messenger/interpreter of visions. Unlike the Christian and Islamic traditions, the role that Gabriel holds within the Hebrew Bible is not crucial to the development of Judaism. This in itself could be debatable, but I would argue that even if Daniel would not have had the angelic explanations to his visions, it probably would not have changed the outcome. The purpose of the book was to uphold the morale of the persecuted Jews, and it does not contain specific instructions that must be followed in order for the Messiah to come.

The root of the name is what is of importance within the Hebrew Bible, as it allows for the image of strength: either strength of the message, or strength of the One sending the messenger. Although the root could also signify 'man', it contains an underlined notion of power. Within an apocalyptic text, it is a definite plus to also give a glimpse of the outcome. With the angel who is the definition of strength, how could one lose? This has been the final layer of the origins of Gabriel, but it is nowhere near the core as there is a critical lack in historical material that would allow one to reach further in time.

General Conclusion

In the introduction, I stated that the analysis of the role and function of the Archangel Gabriel would be done in a reverse chronological order, in hopes of retracing the importance of Gabriel within the monotheistic religions. Going back in time has allowed us to get an idea of where Gabriel came from and what he originally stood for. Now, I want to start from the beginning – chronologically speaking- in order to truly show how the various religious traditions built on each other in order to bring us to the Gabriel that we now know.

The root *gbr* has been around for over 3000 years within the Semitic languages. It has come to denote strength, superiority, greatness, and/or power. Finding this root in the name of an angel – Gabriel – implies a variety of things. It implies the greatness, and uncontested power of the celestial being, and consequently the greatness and power of the one sending this divine messenger, G-d. It also gives, forgive the pun, strength to the message that is being delivered. It is no longer a nameless angel delivering a message from above, it now comes to give hope and reassurance that G-d will save his people. The name can also be understood as having a military denotation, as we are first introduced to Gabriel within an apocalyptic context.

The best way to show how the role of Gabriel was built upon throughout the various traditions is to use a table. That will allow us to compare the roles that have been attributed to Gabriel and how one religion/tradition might have built on an already existing core.

Book of Daniel (H.B.)	Judaism	Books of Enoch	of The Gospel of Luke (N.T.)	Islam
Messenger		Messenger	Messenger	Messenger
Interpreter		Interpreter	Interpreter	
	Destroyer	Destroyer		Destroyer
		Travel Companion		Travel Companion
		Overseer		
	Guardian			
	Conspirator			
	Helper			
				Saviour
				Counsellor
				Instructor

With this table we can see that although Gabriel does hold some of the same roles in the different religions/traditions, there is a definite increase in the roles that are attributed to him with the latest monotheistic religion (which dates from the 7th century AD).

The stories of the Hebrew Bible started being written down around 1000-930 BCE during the United Monarchy. Any communication between G-d and humanity was made either through G-d himself²¹⁶ or through unnamed celestial beings who were most often described by the role that they held. This was nothing out of the ordinary as the authors are presupposing the audience's prior knowledge of celestial beings²¹⁷. With the development and human understanding of a religious tradition, there was a significant increase in the transcendence of G-d, and angels become the most often used mode of transmitting the Divine will. Long after the Babylonian Exile, there occurs a novelty within the sacred texts. For the first time, we are introduced to an angelic being in a more personal way.

²¹⁶ Such as G-d speaking directly to Adam (Gen.3:9ff), Cain ((Gen.4:9ff), Noah (Gen.6:13ff), Abram (Gen.12:1ff), and Moses (Ex.3:4ff).

²¹⁷ Many Ancient Near Eastern Civilizations – such as Iranian and Egyptian – contain winged beings in their stories and myths.

Within Scripture, we first encounter Gabriel by name in the Book of Daniel, which is an apocalyptic text. The author of Daniel wrote long after the Exile, so it is quite possible that by that time, the Jews had had exposure to the Babylonian angelic beings, and quite possibly to the name Gabriel itself. The naming of a divine being in an apocalyptic text also helps to emphasize the divinity of the message, and the reassurance of the power and victory of G-d. The message delivered to Daniel was one of a Saviour to come who will indeed bring about a new age of salvation. Gabriel himself is dispatched to give the news to Daniel – and therefore to the Jewish people – and the angel even gives a timeline²¹⁸. The presence of Gabriel within the Hebrew Bible allows me to conclude that his role was very important in that it delivered a message of hope, but I would not go as far as to claim that had Gabriel not been present things might have turned out differently. In short, Gabriel's presence in the Hebrew Bible is not a necessity for the outcome of Judaism. The same could not be said if I were to analyse the Judaic midrashims.

Within the Jewish tradition, there exists an array of legends concerning the stories found in the Hebrew Bible. The midrashims were written long after the Hebrew Bible, yet their dating is unsure. It is feasible that the authors of the midrashims wanted to build on Gabriel's importance, and this resulted in Gabriel being named as holding numerous roles throughout the history of Israel. Gabriel was presented as being a favourite of G-d, and he was even helping Him before humanity was created. From that point on, Gabriel was present in the life of almost all the major characters of the Hebrew Bible, especially

²¹⁸ Although this being an apocalyptic text full of symbolism, one should not try to take the timeline literally.

the patriarchs. Had Gabriel not been present, Abram would not have survived in the cave, Sodom would not have been destroyed, Rebekah would not have been married to Isaac, and so forth. Obviously Gabriel's presence is of dire importance if we are to take into consideration the midrashims. I would conclude that the authors of the midrashims were building up on the importance that Gabriel had in the book of Daniel, and amplified his functions to include everything from G-d's personal helper to Moses' babysitter to destroyer.

Other texts that emphasize the various roles attributed to Gabriel are the books of Enoch that were known to the Jews of Qumran. In these texts, we are presented to an archangel that hold many of the same roles that he does in some midrashims and in the book of Daniel. More precisely, it is as if the authors of Enoch wanted to give us a more detailed identification of who Gabriel was. We are only briefly presented to him in the Book of Daniel, but in 2 Enoch, we are actually shown that Gabriel has, and still does, interact with humanity on a regular basis and under different circumstances. Yet, I would have a hard time claiming that Gabriel's presence is crucial in these books, as the authors of Enoch focus mostly on the heavens, where often Gabriel is named as part of the group of ministering angels. Even with the enriched roles and functions that Gabriel is presented as having in the inter-testamental books and the midrashims, the writer of Luke focuses mainly on the interaction that Gabriel had with Daniel.

The coming of the Messiah presented as many problems as it did solutions. The Messianic title of Jesus was not unanimously accepted as Jesus failed to live up to the

expectations of some people. The Jews were waiting for a political and military deliverer, and for one who would reassemble the Jews that were scattered and persecuted. It was also his crucifixion that presented a stumbling block for some. The synoptic Gospels each tried to argue the Messianic Jesus in various ways. The author of the Gospel of Luke presented the Hebrew Bible as the preparation to the Jesus event, and he did so by linking the 'old with the new'. One major link that he used was in his Infancy Narrative, where he specifically names the angel who visited Zechariah and Mary. This was the same angel that explained the visions to Daniel: Gabriel. This in fact carries a lot of weight, as not only is that author giving the audience a character that they are familiar with, but it makes sense as this is the same angel who announced that a Messiah would come. Gabriel appearing in the Infancy Narrative of both John the Baptist and Jesus is the author's way of emphasizing the Messianism of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke tries to show how the time elapsed corresponds with the time announced by Gabriel to Daniel. In the New Testament, Gabriel's role is limited to the Annunciation, but under no circumstances am I belittling this function. I would even go as far as to claim that were Gabriel not named, it is conceivable that there might have been need for more proof that the Hebrew Bible was indeed linked in to the Jesus event.

As seen, Gabriel also played an important role in the iconography that developed later on, especially in those concerning the Annunciation. That passage from Luke²¹⁹ has been represented numerous times by various artists, from countless countries and ages. The importance here is to emphasize the divinity of the message delivered by Gabriel, and the role that the Messiah will have in the salvation of humanity.

²¹⁹ Luke 26-38.

Even if later on in the New Testament and the development of the early Church, angels seem to lose their importance – as they are no longer the mediators between G-d and humanity – Gabriel is nevertheless important as he is the one who announces the coming of this new mediator. Gabriel's presence in Christianity is indeed very powerful as it facilitates the bridging of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Gospel narratives.

We can well imagine that by the year 600 CE or so, the Middle East had a vast and in depth knowledge of the Scriptures. That is not to say that all the Near East was following this Scripture. At that time, it was quite a melting pot with Judaism, Christianity, and various other Pagan religions. The Arabic peninsula appeared to be the meeting spot of all these various religions. In no way am I undermining the events surrounding Muhammad, but if were to be in a situation where I have knowledge of Scripture – Hebrew Bible and New Testament – and I see the constant corruption surrounding idol worship what would be my best bet in getting people to return to the worship of the One G-d? The best way would be to present characters that are indeed already known to people. It might have been harder for Muhammad to get people to listen to his message had Gabriel not identified himself by name – it was hard enough with Gabriel by his side. The naming of Gabriel is actually what convinced even his uncle-in-law that the revelations were indeed coming from the same G-d who spoke to Abraham and Jesus. So yes, the Islamic faith based itself on the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. The role that Gabriel held here is very important, as the Islamic religion cannot relay the story of its beginnings without naming the angel. The functions that Gabriel has in the legends is also very similar to the functions that he has in the

midrashims. The sirahs present Gabriel as having interacted with humanity since the beginning, and many of his roles are identical to the ones found in Judaic lore²²⁰. This once again can be interpreted as a way that the author allowed for a wider audience to the message that was being delivered: the return to the worship of the One G-d.

The definite starting point of the angel Gabriel cannot be determined, yet I can confidently say that from the moment that we first gained knowledge of him, he has changed the outcome of our religious history. Whether one calls him/herself a Jew, a Christian, or a Moslem, one cannot deny the role that has been played by Gabriel in the shaping of these three religions. I have gone as far back in time and traditions as possible in order to examine the importance of Gabriel, and the only definite conclusion that I can come to is that Gabriel is extremely significant for these three monotheistic religions. Another definite assumption that one can make is that from the starting point – the Book of Daniel, as it is the oldest reference of Gabriel that we possess – these religious traditions have built up on each other in order to bring Gabriel into their reality and the message being delivered at the time. It is more than pure coincidence that not only is Gabriel the one angel²²¹ being named in all three religions, but his interaction with humanity is strikingly similar, yet each with its own particularity. Gabriel is the link that allows for the flow of continuity from the creation of mankind to the revelations of the Qur'an. Through Gabriel's constant interactions, one concludes that it is the same G-d that is still trying to communicate with humanity.

²²⁰ Such as Gabriel being named as the angel who destroyed Sodom.

²²¹ The Archangel Michael is also named in these same three religions, but he never interacts with humanity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ACHTEMEIR, P.J. (Gen. Ed.), *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, Cambridge: Harper & Row, 1985.
- ALEXANDER, P. (Translator), "3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch", in J.H. CHARLESWORTH (Ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1983, pp.223-315.
- ALI, A. (Translator), *Islam: The Qur'an*, (Sacred Writings), New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1992.
- ANDERSEN, I. (Translator), "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch", in J.H. CHARLESWORTH (Ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1983, pp. 91-221.
- ANDRAE, T., *Mohammed: The Man and his Faith*, Freeport/New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
- ARMSTRONG, K., *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet*, San Francisco: Harper, 1992.
- BARKER, M., *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second G-d*, Great Britain: The Longdunn Press Ltd, 1992.
- BERRIGAN, D., *Daniel: Under the Siege of the Divine*, USA: The Plough Publishing House, 1998.
- BIALIK, H.N., and Y.H. RAVNITZKY (Eds), *The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah, Legends from the Talmud and Midrash*, New York: Schocken Books, 1992.
- BLOOM, H., *Omens of Millennium: The Gnosis of Angels, Dreams, and Resurrection*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1996.
- BOTTERWECK, G.J., and H. RINGGREN (Eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: Volume II (bdl-gālāh) גלה-בדל*, USA: Eerdmans, 1975.
- BOUQUET, A.C., *Comparative Religion: A Short Outline*, (The Belle Sauvage Library), London: Cassell, 1961.
- BRAUDE, W.G., and I.J. KAPSTEIN (Translators), *Tanna Dēbe Eliyyahu/The Lore of the School of Elijah*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 5741-1975.

- BRAVERMAN, J., *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Hebrew Bible*, (The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 7), Washington/DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1978.
- BROWN, C. (Gen. Ed.), *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Grand Rapids/MI: Regency/Reference Library, 1975.
- BROWN, R.E., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- _____, *The Book of Daniel*, New York: Paulist Press, 1962.
- BUDGE, E.A.W., *Babylonian Life and History*, (2nd Ed.), New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc, 1975.
- BUNDY, W., *Jesus and the First Three Gospels: An Introduction to the Synoptic Tradition*, Cambridge/Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1955.
- CARRELL, P.R., *Jesus and the Angels*, (Angelology and Christology of the Apocalypse of John), United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- CHARLESWORTH, J.H. (Ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1983.
- COLLINS, J.J., *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, (2nd Ed.), Grand Rapids/Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.
- COOK, M., *Muhammad*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- COUDERT, A., "Angels", in M. ELIADE (Ed-in-chief), *The Encyclopedia of Religion, Volume I: AARO-AUST*, New York: Macmillian Publishing Company, 1987.
- CRADDOCK, F.B., *Luke*, (Interpretation), Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990.
- DANIELOU, J., *The Angels and their Mission: According to the Fathers of the Church*, Westminster/Maryland: The Newman Press, 1957.
- DAVIDSON, G., *A Dictionary of Angels including the Fallen Angels*, New York: The Free-Press, 1967
- DAVIDSON, M.J., *Angels at Qumran: A Comparative Study of 1 Enoch 1-36, 72-108 and Sectarian Writings from Qumran*, (Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series II), England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992.
- DAWOOD, N.J. (Translator), *The Koran*, USA: Penguin Books, 1967.

- DELCOR, M., *Le Livre de Daniel*, (Sources Bibliques), Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie Éditeurs, 1971.
- DeVAUX, R., *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961.
- ELIADE, M. (Ed.-in-chief), *The Encyclopedia of Religion, Volume I: AARO-AUST*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987.
- Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. II (A-Ang)*, Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica Jerusalem, 1972.
- Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. II (Lek-Mil)*, Jerusalem: Encyclopaedia Judaica Jerusalem, 1972.
- FEILER, B., *Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*, USA: William Morrow, 2002.
- FITZMYER, J.A., *The Gospel According to Luke (I-LX)*, (The Anchor Bible), New York: Doubleday, 1981.
- FLETCHER-LOUIS, C.M.T., *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*, (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2.Reihe, 94), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997.
- FOREST, J., *Praying with Icons*, Maryknoll/New York: Orbis Books, 1997.
- FREEDMAN, D.N. (Ed.-in-chief), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 1 A-C*, New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- _____, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. 2 D-G*, New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- FROST, S.B., *Old Testament Apocalyptic: Its Origins and Growth*, London: The Epworth Press, 1952.
- GAER, J., *The Lore of the Old Testament*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952.
- GENTZ, W.H., *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1986.
- GERARD, A.-M., *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 1989.
- GIBB, H.A.R., and J.H. KRAMERS, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New York: Cornell University Press.

- GILL, D., *Religions of the World*, (Collins Gem), Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.
- GINZBERG, L., *Legends of the Bible*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968.
- GIRARD, M., *Les symboles dans la Bible: Essai de théologie biblique enracinée dans l'expérience humaine universelle*, Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1991.
- GLUBB, J.B., *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970.
- GOLDIN, J., *Studies in Midrash and Related Literature*, Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 5748-1988.
- GOLDINGAY, J.E., *Daniel*, (Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 30), Dallas/Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1989.
- GRANT, M., *The History of Ancient Israel*, (History of Civilisation), London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984.
- GRAVES, R., et R. PATAI, *Les Mythes Hébreux*, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1987.
- GUILEY, R.E., *Encyclopedia of Angels*, New York/NY: Facts on File, Inc., 1996.
- GUILLAUME, A., *The Traditions of Islam: An Introduction to the Study of the Hadith Literature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.
- HARRIS, S., *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction*, (3rd edition), Mountain View/CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999.
- _____, *Understanding the Bible*, (6th edition), Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003.
- HAMMER, R., *The Book of Daniel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- HARTMAN, L.F., and A.A. DiLELLA, *The Book of Daniel*, (The Anchor Bible), New York: Doubleday, 1978.
- HARVEY, V.A., *A Handbook of Theological Terms: A Reading Reference Book of over 300 articles*, New York: The MacMillan Company, 1964.
- HENDRICKX, H., *Infancy Narratives*, (Studies in the Synoptic Gospels), London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984.
- IBN HISHAM, 'A.-M., *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishaq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, Lahore/Pakistan: Branch Oxford University Press, 1968.

- IBN ISHAQ, M., *The Making of the Last Prophet*, (A Reconstruction of the Earliest Biography of Muhammad by Gordon Darnell Newby), Columbia/ South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.
- ISAAC, E. (Translator), "1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch", in J.H. CHARLESWORTH (Ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol I: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983, pp. 5-89.
- ISAACS, R.H., *Ascending Jacob's Ladder: Jewish Views of Angels, Demons, and Evil Spirits*, Northvale/New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1998.
- JASTROW, M., *The Civilization of Babylonia and Assyria: Its Remains, Language, History, Religion, Commerce, Law, Art, and Literature*, New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1971.
- JANOWITZ, N., "Theories of Divine Names in Origen and Pseudo-Dionysius", *History of Religions: An International Journal for Comparative Historical Studies*, (30/4) May 1991, pp.359-372.
- JENNI, E., and C. WEATERMANN, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament, Volume 1. 'āb-hnp-הגף-בא-אב-הנפ*), Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.
- JERVELL, J., *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984.
- KARRIS, R.J., *St. Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke Chapters 1-8*, (Works of St. Bonaventure), New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001.
- KOMONCHAK, J.A., et Al. (Eds), *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Wilmington/Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1988.
- LACHS, S.T., *The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, (A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament), New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House/ New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1987.
- LACOCQUE, A., *The Book of Daniel*, London, SPCK, 1979.
- LANGERMANN, Y.T. (Translator), *Yemenite Midrash*, (Philosophical Commentaries on the Torah), San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996.
- LATTEY, C., *The Book of Daniel*, Browne and Nolan Limited, 1948.
- LaVERDIERE, E., *Luke*, (New Testament Message 5), Wilmington/Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1980.

- LEANEY, A.R.C., *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St-Luke*, London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958.
- LINGS, M., *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, Cambridge/U.K.: The Islamic Texts Society, 1991.
- MAQSOOD, R., *Islam*, (Teach Yourself Books), England: Cox & Wyman, 1994.
- McDOWELL, J., *Daniel in the Critics' Den*, California: Campus Crusade For Christ International, 1979.
- McLAY, T., *The OG and TH Versions of Daniel*, (Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series, number 43), Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.
- METCALF, J., et al. (General Editors), *DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*, Great Britain: Dorling Kindersley Limited and Oxford University Press, 1998.
- MORRIS, L., *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Michigan: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988.
- MORRISON, A.W. (Translator), *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Volume I*, (Calvin's Commentaries), Grand Rapids/Michigan: Eerdmans, 1972.
- MOTYER, A., *Isaiah*, (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries), England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999.
- MOUNT, C., *Pauline Christianity: Luke-Acts and the Legacy of Paul*, (Supplements to Novum Testamentum 104), Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- NES, S., *The Mystical Language of Icons*, London: St-Pauls, 2000.
- NOLLAND, J., *Luke 1-9:20*, (Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 35A), Dallas/Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1989.
- O'DEA, J.K., et al., *Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972.
- O'GRADY, J.F., *The Four Gospels and the Jesus Tradition*, New York: Paulist Press, 1989.
- OUSPENSKY, L., and V. LOSSKY, *The Meaning of Icons*, Crestwood/New York: St.Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989.
- PETERS, F.E., *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994.

- PLUMMER, A., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*, (5th Ed.), London: Edinburgh, 1922.
- PORTEOUS, N., *Daniel*, (Old Testament Library), London: SCM Press Ltd., 1979.
- PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS, *The Complete Works*, (The Classics of Western Spirituality), New York: Paulist Press, 1987.
- RAHMAN, H.U., *A Chronology of Islamic History 570-1000 CE*, Boston/Mass: G.K. Hall & Co., 1989.
- RAPPOPORT, A., *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel: Volume I*, New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1966.
- RÉGAMEY, P.-R., *What is an Angel?*, (Volume 47, Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism), New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960.
- RENARD, J., *The Handy Religion Answer Book*, Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 2002.
- RICHARDS, L.O., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Grand Rapids/MI: Regency Lib., 1985.
- RINGE, S.H., *Luke*, Louisville/Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995.
- ROBINSON, J.M. (Director), *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, (Translated by Members of the Coptic Gnostic Library Project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity), San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977.
- RODINSON, M., *Mohammed*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1971.
- RUBIN, U., *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the early Muslims, A Textual Analysis*, (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 5), Princeton/New Jersey: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1995.
- SANDMEL, S., et Al. (Eds.), *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha*, (Oxford Study Edition), New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- SARDAR, Z., *Muhammad: Aspects of His Biography*, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1982.
- SAWYER, J.F.A., *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity*, Cambridge: University Press, 1996.
- SEALE, M.S., *Qur'an and Bible: Studies in Interpretation and Dialogue*, London: Croom Helm, 1978.

- SIBONY, D., *Les trois monothéismes: Juifs, Chrétiens, Musulmans entre leurs sources et leurs destins*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1992.
- ST-BONAVENTURE, *St-Bonaventure's Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Chapters 1-8*, (Works of St-Bonaventure, Volume VIII, Part I), New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001.
- THROCKMORTON, Jr. B.H., *Gospel Parallels: A Comparison of the Synoptic Gospels*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992.
- TOWNER, W.S., *Daniel*, (Interpretation), Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984.
- VARDY, P., and M. MILLS, *The Puzzle of the Gospels*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997.
- WENHAM, D., and S. WALTON, *Exploring the New Testament Volume I: A Guide to the Gospels and Acts*, London: SPCK, 2001.
- WESTERMANN, C., *Une histoire d'Israël, Mille ans et un jour, I. Les Patriarches*, Paris: Les Éditions Du Cerf, 1996.
- WIESEL, E., *Messengers of G-d: Biblical Portraits and Legends*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1976.
- WIGODER, G., *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989.
- WISEMAN, D.J., et al., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, London: The Tyndale Press, 1965.
- WHITHEY, J.R., and S.W. HOWE (Eds.), *Comparative Religious Literature: Tanach, Apocrypha, Pirke Avot, Midrash, New Testament, Koran*, New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1977.
- Who's Who in the Bible: An Illustrated Biographical Dictionary*, Pleasantville/New York: the Reader's Digest Association Inc., 1994.
- YUSUF ALI, A. (Translator), *The Qur'an*, Istanbul/Turkey: ASIR MEDIA, 2002.
- _____, *Meaning of the Qur'an: The Last Testament And Final Revelation On Earth*, Scarborough/ON, Canada: Al-Attique Publishers Inc., 2003.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: The Annunciation

(Russian Variant. Novgorod School. Egg tempera on pine. Burnished gold)
1993



Appendix 2: L'Annonciation d'Oustioug

(Novgorod, Moscou, Galerie Trétiakov)

XII siècle



Appendix 3: L'Annonciation

(Ochrid, Péribleptos Saint-Clément – Yougoslavie)
XIV siècle



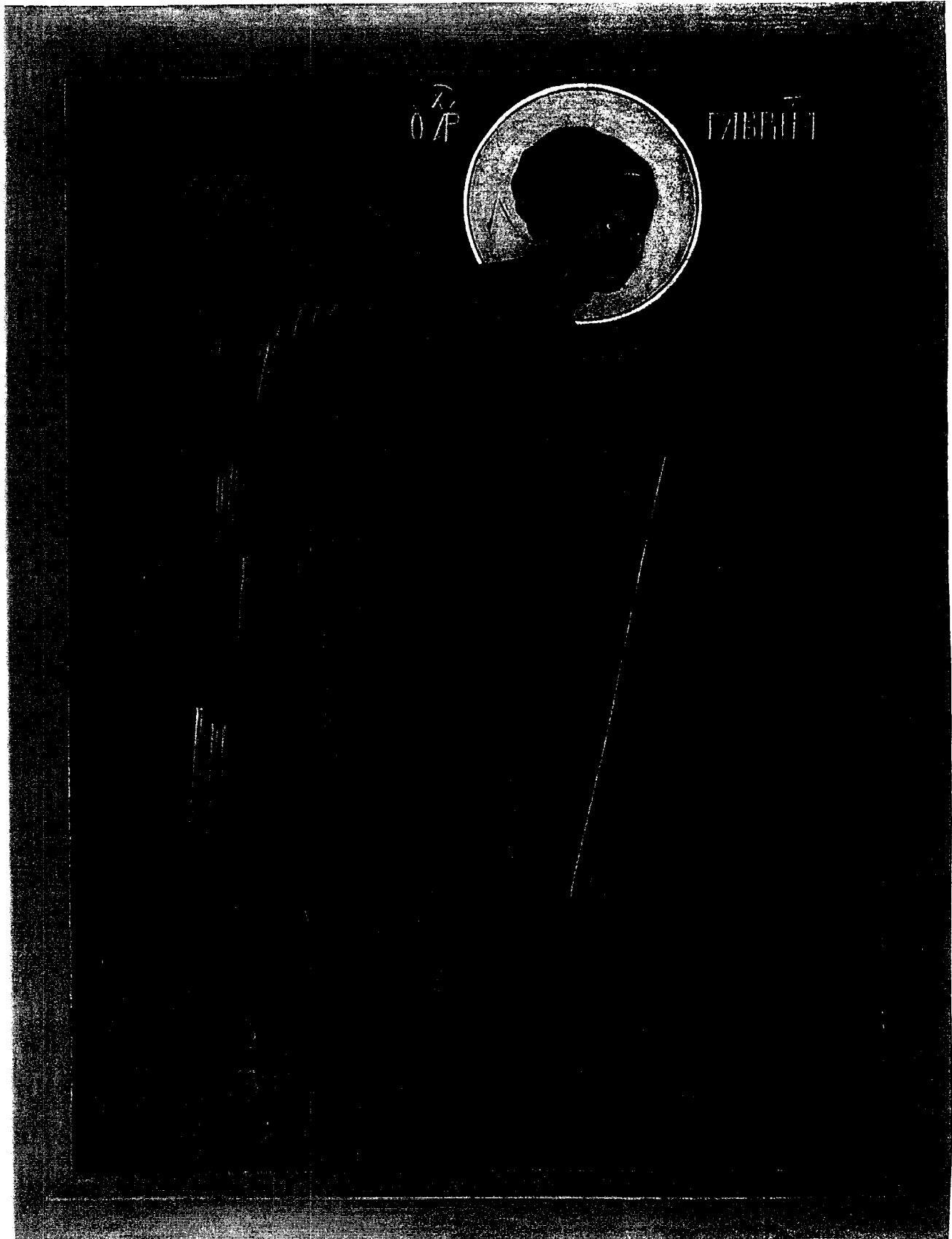
Appendix 4: Our Lady of Perpetual Help

(Greek variant from Crete. Egg tempera on oak)
1994



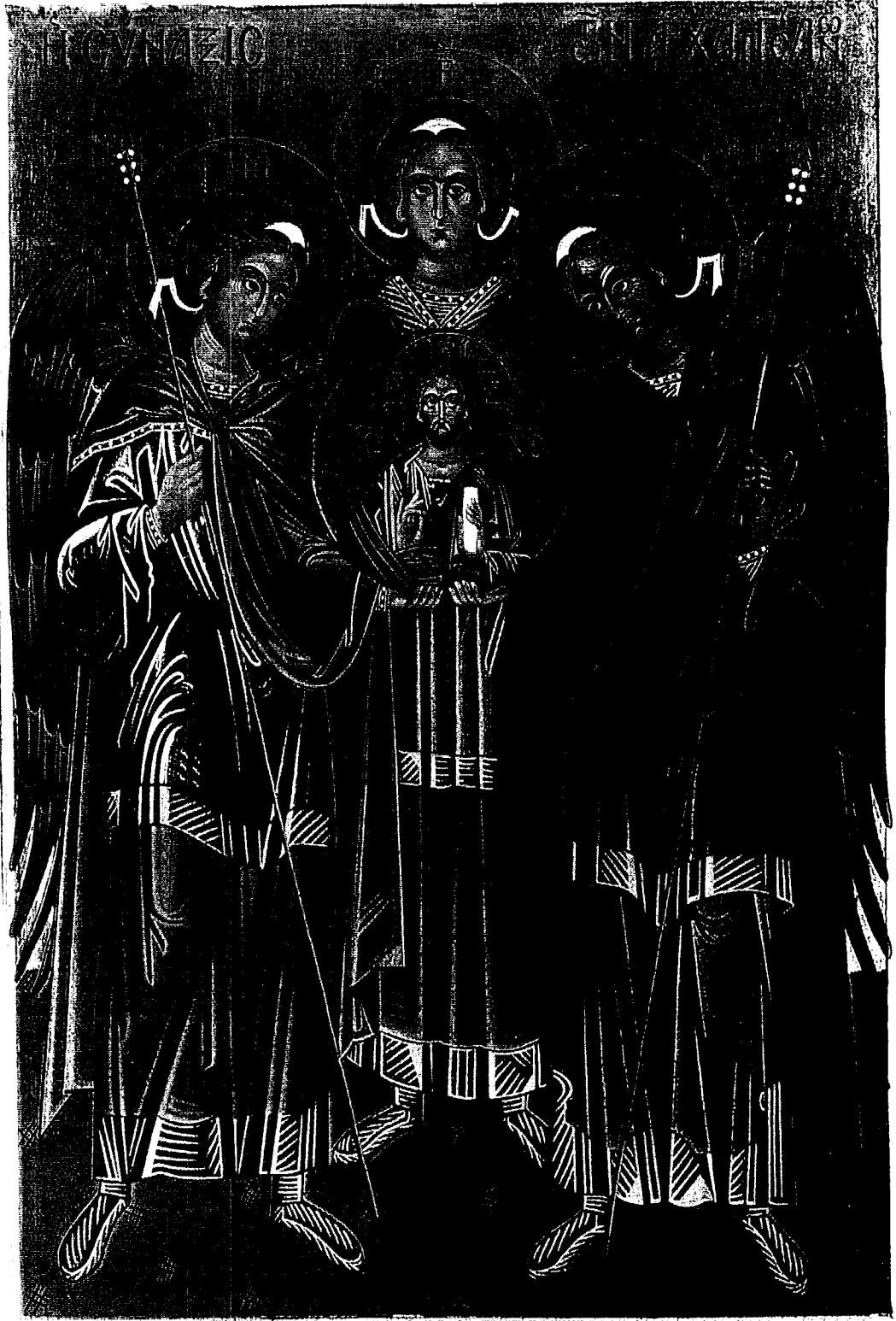
Appendix 5: The Archangel Gabriel

**(Russian Variant. Novgorod School. Egg tempera on beech)
1986**



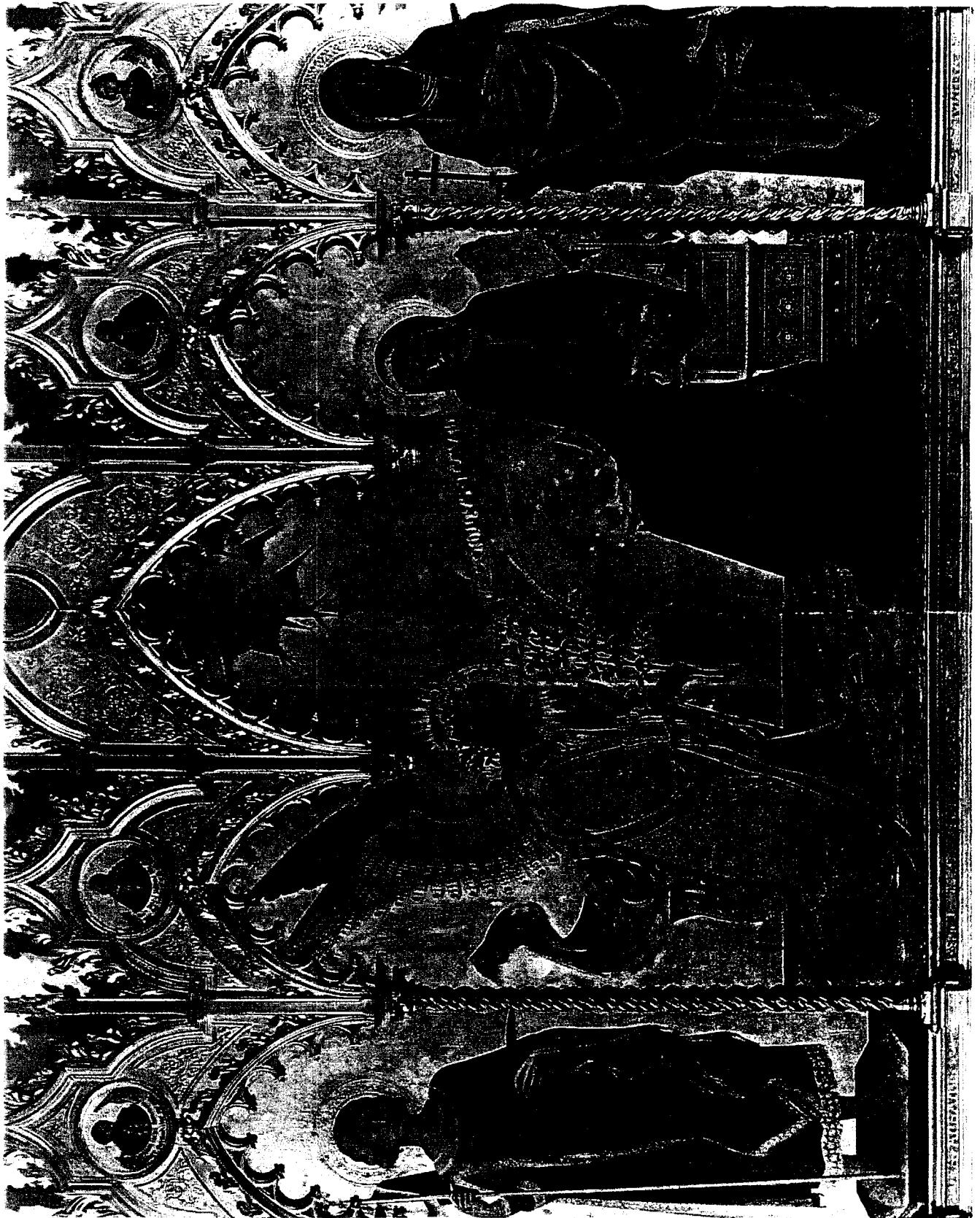
Appendix 6: The Assembly of the Archangels

(Greek version. Egg tempera on beech. Burnished gold)
1999



Appendix 7: L'Annonciation

**(Simone Martini. Florence, Galerie des Offices)
vers 1283-1344**



Appendix 8: L'Annonciation
(Carlo Crivelli. Londres, National Gallery)
vers 1429-1495

