

## Imran

The father of Mary (q.v.) mother of Jesus (q.v.). Imran is attested three times in the Quran and Al - Imran is the title of the third sura. The name occurs incidentally in two passages of the narrative sections (see Narratives) which deal with the story of Mary and her mother, passages in which "the wife of Imran" (Q 3: 35) and "Mary, Imran's daughter" (Q 66: 12) are mentioned. The third passage, from which the title of the third sura is taken, mentions "the family of Imran" (Q 3:33) which God chose - along with Adam (see Adam and Eve), Noah (q.v.) and the family of Abraham (q.v.) - above all beings. The dominant exegetical trend understands the expression "the family of Imran" as an allusion to Mary and Jesus, to whom long passages are dedicated in the rest of the sura. A variant interpretation is, on the other hand, adopted by one of the first exegetes, Muqatil b. Sulayman (d. 150/ 767), according to whom "the family of Imran" of Q 3:33 refers instead to the family of Moses (q.v.) and Aaron (q.v.; Tafsir, i, 271). This difference of opinion derives from the fact that in later Muslim traditions, the same name, Imran, is also attributed to the father of Moses and Aaron, the biblical Amram. The source of the confusion between these two characters and their families might be traced to the Quran, where, paralleling a Christian tendency to utilize earlier biblical figures as "types" for later ones, Mary (Ar. Maryam) and Maryam, the sister of Moses, seem to coincide (cf. Q 19: 28, the verse in which the mother of Jesus is addressed as the sister of Aaron). Traditions, hadiths (see Hadith and the Quran) and "stories of the prophets" (qisas al - anbiya) legends do not contain relevant material about either of the two Imrans. The exegetes (see Exegesis of the Quran: Classical and Medieval) explain that the two Imrans are two different people, separated by a long period of time, one thousand and eight hundred years according to certain sources (Razi, Tafsir, viii, 24). The father of Moses and Aaron is called Imran b. Yashar or Imran b. Qahith and is a figure about whom little is revealed, especially if compared to the numerous traditions that describe Moses and the other members of his family. As far as the father of Mary, called Imran b. Mathan/Matan, is concerned, it is only noted that that he died before the birth of Mary.

