

## A Linguistic-Historical Analysis of the Meaning of Tahṛīf in the Qur'ān, and its Later Semantic Developments

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DOI: 10.22096/RC.2021.244790

[Received Date: 08/02/2021 Acceptance Date: 30/05/2021]

### Abstract

Four Quranic verses in which the term “yoḥarrifuna” has occurred are most cited to prove the textual distortion of the Bible. Some scholars, however, tend to see these verses as referring to something other than textual corruption of the Bible, yet no one has still conducted a systematic research to determine the clear meaning of these verses and their relation to the idea of Biblical falsification. After a philological survey on the meaning of Tahṛīf in Arabic and other Semitic languages, this paper conducts a semantic analysis of these verses and shows that neither lexically nor in the semantic grid of the Quran this word implies textual falsification, but it simply means misinterpretation. Through a survey on the oldest Christian-Muslim polemics it is shown that how the meaning of the word underwent a shift from misinterpretation to textual falsification.

**Keywords:** Biblical Falsification; The Bible; The Quran; Misinterpretation; Distortion.

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