A COMPANION TO RELIGION IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Edited by

Josef Lössl and Nicholas J. Baker-Brian

WILEY Blackwell

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Paleo-Islam: Transfigurations of Late Antique Religion

Aziz Al-Azmeh

Introduction

Familiar as it may seem, writing or speaking of "Islam" is neither straightforward, nor is there an obvious point of reference. Islam is and has always been many things to many people. As a noun it can indicate a variety of things, by deliberation or by association, depending on the context in which it is used. Used unreflectively as a name and without further specification in terms of time, place, or level of analysis, it is vulnerable to being drawn into interpretative drifts associated with clichés and stereotypes prevalent in demotic perceptions and, especially in the past two decades or so, associated with images of very considerable ideological density. Expert scholarship has not been immune to this either.

These drifts generally convey an emphasis on singularity and incommensurability in a contrastive "Islam-and-the-West" mode of apprehension. They tend to privilege an understanding of Islam that is overdetermined by doctrine and doctrinal texts, and by a culturalist outlook generally oblivious to concrete social actors enracinated in time, place, and process. Islam thus devolves to a nominal category consisting of textual fragments transcending historical context, to a context consisting largely of floating texts, to history and to a social process perceived primarily through texts (Cahen 1967; Hourani 1976: 114–115; 117; Al-Azmeh 2007, chapters 2 and 7).

Strictly speaking, therefore, there can be no such thing as "Islamic history," although there are histories of Muslim cult, institutions, dogmas, and so forth, marked or demarcated in determinate ways by Islam as a religion. In contradistinction to a history stood upon its head, the present chapter will propose an approach that is, in the usual way of history and historians, more attentive to discrimination and distinction than metahistorical uniformity and linearity, or to rhetorical figures of continuity as may be conveyed by terms such as civilization. It is proposed that Islam, and the term is used here for convenience, be regarded in terms of time and process, rather than be perceived in terms of a homeostatic constancy over time, in which the genesis and development of Islam is presumed to be that of a total historical actor born virtually complete, signaled by the Qur'ān and by a political order ostensibly associated with it, even emerging from it, subsequent history being no more than the unfolding of a pre-established potential.

Thus, both Islam and Late Antiquity, the two terms framing this chapter, will need to be defined as to the specific settings in which they are, for present purposes, conjoined, and the manner of their association will need to be indicated explicitly. Both terms are therefore at once perspectives and constraints. Islam is in this context a nascent religion. Born under circumstances specific to late antique western Arabia and carried by social and political factors, Paleo-Islam is eventually and in the end rapidly becoming an Arab-Muslim imperial polity extending to the central lands of Late Antiquity, with a base in Syria.

Reflecting on Late Antiquity

Late Antiquity is a historical and geographical setting and an assembly of interrelated conditions, not simply a chronological tranche. It is lent coherence by an imperial system based on military prowess and the maintenance of tax bases and of a monetary system, with a distinct sense of confessionalism and of the lofty and hallowed station of the imperial person. This imperial system impelled the Arabs, as it had impelled the Goths and a variety of other Germanic peoples, to form ever greater, albeit not always stable, political and territorial units, and to be inducted thereby into the flow of Late Antiquity. This drove the Arabs to enter upon a process of ethnogenesis, with royalist or quasi-royalist structures of domination and established networks of trade giving force to ethnogenetic genealogies and increasingly correlated myths, legends, and lore, as well as the crucial linguistic and literary registers of a vehicular Arabic, ultimately written in a special script rather than other ambient prestige scripts (Nabatean, Greek, South Arabian), and producing a considerable volume of poetry and epic materials (Al-Azmeh 2014a, chapter 3).

Late Antiquity was also a period that witnessed profound transformations. Erstwhile polytheistic territories were becoming predominantly—if not almost entirely—Christian in the third and fourth centuries, while the much older Judaism persisted, with crucial developments in Rabbinism in Iraq and Palestine in the course of the fourth century (Boyarin 2009). The late antique world also saw the emergence of religions that were ultimately to be short-lived, such as Manichaeism, and—with the arrival of the Arabs in Iraq and Iran—the diminution and displacement of Zoroastrianism. And it witnessed, crucially, the canonization of scriptures (Smith 1989; Sawyer 1999; Fowden 2014, chapter 6).

A number of further specifications regarding Late Antiquity need to be made in order to achieve a measure of clarity about the parameters of the discussion, and about the constraints that arise from the Late Antiquity component itself. Scholarship on Late Antiquity has made considerable progress in the past three decades (Brown *et al.* 1997; Vessey 1998; Liebeschuetz 2004; Cameron 2008; Fowden 2014, chapter 2), though it is still beset by a host of questions regarding chronology, periodization, and morphology, which cannot be discussed here (Giardina 1999; Bowersock 2004; Athanassiadi 2006; Al-Azmeh 2014a: 2–18). Suffice it to say that in the present chapter the concept is used in a determinate way. Late Antiquity, as understood here, is unconcerned with the "hermeneutic of decadence and decline" (Cameron 2014: 82) that the study of the period inherited from its connection with classical history, as understood traditionally. It is devoid of east–west polarities, which had preoccupied quite a number of discussions, and which have little historical verisimilitude but do have ideological density arising from their being above all rhetorical figures for genealogical continuity. It is proposed here that Late Antiquity be regarded from a perspective that weighs space with time in such a way that the political, economic, and cultural center of gravity of the category, and of Romanity as well, is recognized as having shifted to Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean as the Italic and other erstwhile lands of the first Rome were disengaging themselves from the particular historical itinerary which we call Late Antiquity (Fowden 1993, chapter 1; Fowden 2014, chapter 4; Al-Azmeh 2014a: 4–5, 15–19, 23–26).

Moreover, and alongside specifying geographical remit by weighting it with chronology, the analysis of Late Antiquity can be further refined with reference to certain parameters of analysis. Thus, there can be various overlapping but differentiated sectoral periodizations of the histories of architecture, decorative arts, statuary, iconography, urbanism, language, literary forms, philosophy, and many other instances (Martin 1976; Al-Azmeh 2014a: 12–13). In effect, much of the work on Late Antiquity has conceived

this period under a particular signature, endowing it with a particular ethos that has been made to stand in, *pars pro toto*, for the entire period. This synecdoche has generally been taken for aspects of religious life, in a Gibbonsian attitude given a positive spin, be this expressed in Marrou's Theopolis or indicated by terms such as the "age of spirituality," or described as having been primarily an age that saw the rise into prominence of Peter Brown's late antique "cockney culture" encapsulated by the Holy Man. Most recently, it has been conceived under the signature of religious-exegetical and philosophical developments seen to characterize, and lend an inner morphological consistency to the millennium between Augustus and Avicenna (Fowden 2014).

This emphasis on religion is retained in this chapter for the simple reason that religion is this chapter's central concern. But it is an emphasis that is quite explicitly taken to be sectoral rather than morphologically central or structuring for other aspects of history, and it is conjoined with regard to the salience of empire (Cameron 2014, chapter 2). Empire was the vertical hinge of historical developments, a condition for developments of Paleo-Islam that took place, and in many very determinate ways a central causal element. Moreover, fundamental to this discussion of religion is not so much secondary elaborations by means of doctrine, basic or theologically and exegetically elaborated, as much as religion as practice at concrete points of application. This applies most particularly to the genesis of Islam.

Paleo-Islam

The reconstruction here offered of this period, and of Arabian religion and polity more generally, is based on Arabic literary sources, including Abbasid-era antiquarianism, as well as the Qur'ānic text and archeological and epigraphic remains. One common view, in some circles taken for self-evidence, claims that for a variety of reasons Arabic literary sources are unreliable to the degree of being virtually unusable. This hyper-skeptical school of scholarship, while being salutary in emphasizing the importance of source criticism and of the assessment of evidence, seems ultimately to neglect one essential task of a historian, which is historical reconstruction from difficult source material, in favor of a nihilistic cognitive position. It generally adopts too narrow an understanding of the document, reminiscent of the narrowest of nineteenth-century positivistic requirements for conditions and conceptions of certainty that do not obtain in reality. Moreover, it adopts on occasion echoes of post-structuralist and post-modern narrativist tropes, generally drawn at second or third hand. It makes a number of unwarranted assumptions implicitly,

assumptions of the wilful invention after the event of an entire body of litera-
ture, a conspiracy of astonishing and indeed inhuman range and power, one
which, by default of any rational explanation or by reference to historical veri-
similitude, must appear to have been miraculously enforced and maintained.
Having produced a cognitive tabula rasa of this period, many fanciful coun-
ter-historical scenarios were proposed and substituted for fact, including the
emergence of Paleo-Islam outside western Arabia, the proposition that
Muḥammad was a narrative fiction, or that the Qur'ān was a late Mesopotamian
text. In recent years this trend seems to have exhausted its potential for pro-
ductive work, and seems to persist still on inertial energy alone generated by
the first, previous generation of practitioners (see Al-Azmeh 2014b). It is
interesting to note that, with the emphasis on the pertinence of non-Arab
sources and witnesses, the one work that has used these systematically in
addition to epigraphic and other material remains (Hoyland 2015) produces
a narrative that introduces interesting and pertinent material, but also tends
to be in agreement with the general outline (as well as much detail) of what
occurs in the Arabic sources.

What is being discussed here is therefore the emergence and, with time,
the initial configuration of elements that were to crystallize and constitute
what is generally characterized as classical Muslim civilization and polity, what
I would rather characterize as Near Eastern civilization at the end of Late
Antiquity ca. 750 CE and beyond. The period of somewhat over a century
leading up to this will be designated as Paleo-Islam, in preference to other
labels that have been used almost casually, such as early, earliest, or primitive,
or pre-dynastic Islam, all of which seem to arise from a retrospective glance
from an accomplished condition that regarded its past as tidily linear. The
term is a historiographic category wedded to a chronological span, intended
to highlight the distinctiveness of this period of flux. It is quite deliberately to
allay any implicit assumption, made all too often, that the end result was
inherent in its beginning and arose from it inevitably and almost seamlessly.
One might say that pre-Umayyad or "pre-dynastic" Arabia would have been
more apt had it not been for the resilience of terminological conventions
containing the term "Islam," and for the thematic focus of this chapter. The
historiographic point of the "Paleo" description was taken on board fruitfully
(Fowden 2016); there is now a major Paleocoran research project, and
"Paleo-Arabic" has been suggested as a term (Robin 2016: 302–303).

Paleo-Islam is here understood as both a socio-religious phenomenon and
a broader historical development that saw the emergence of both a political
structure that was, in the fullness of time, to become durable, and of an
evolving scatter of credal, mythimetic, and devotional elements, both prac-
tices and representations, which were later to constitute a system. It is a

period that saw much alert exploration, innovation, adaptation, and assimilation correlative with the development of Muḥammad's charismatic polity and religion that were later to be construed together as a body of traditions. Paleo-Islam is the emergent condition of a new religion, Muḥammad's religion, prior to its doctrinal and exegetical elaboration, and prior to the consolidation of conditions, many the products of chance and fortune, that were to render its crystallization possible (for this whole body of topics, in this and subsequent paragraphs, see Al-Azmeh 2014a: 358–368).

It is being suggested that what was to become what we call classical Muslim civilization had been in effect the regional civilization of western Asia, perhaps its most successful crystallization (Morony 1984: 526). Late antique empires provided the conditions for both its emergence and initial crystallization. Paleo-Islam forms an integral part of Late Antiquity, and indeed in determinate ways its accomplishment (Fowden 1993, chapters 1 and 6; Fowden 2014, chapter 1; Al-Azmeh 2014a, chapter 1) in the sense that it instantiated, under the signature of a new universal calendar, two salient features that characterize this period.

These two features are monotheism and ecumenical empire, the conjunction of which, in constituting the history of this period, serves in very complex ways as its points of articulation and internal coherence. Umayyad polity is the end product of the translation of Romanity to the east, wherein its conditions of durability obtained: ecumenical empire with the salvific vocation of a monotheist religion, the two articulated symbolically by political theology and a theology of history both making increasing appeal to canonical proof-texts. The system was underwritten by an ecumenical currency (the epigraphic *dīnār*) and urbanism, whereby God and Mammon were engaged in a mutual embrace (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 38–39, 503–506, 524–525). It was underwritten by a continuity in taxation regimes no less than in certain forms of capital punishment (Marsham 2009: 486–488; 2011), by continuities in material culture including urbanism (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 37)—indeed, regarded in terms of lineal continuity, it is true that in its "perpetuation of a centralized, monotheist, and monarchical state, the caliphate was a direct inheritor of late antiquity" (Marsham 2009: 491; Al-Azmeh 2014a: 18–30, 500–508). Communal religious organization and confessional and sectarian elaborations continued from Roman through to Caliphal histories (Hoyland 2011: 1059–1062). The combined package was now expressed under a new, Arabian and Muḥammadan geneaological signature, and in a different linguistic medium, as the opening to Sasanian erstwhile territories in the east made possible the monetary and commercial, and also the cultural articulation of territories hitherto divided between Rome and Iran, now both forming part of the same imperial, commercial, and, with time, cultural world.

There have been a number of ways in which the emergence of Paleo-Islam as a religion has been narrated and analyzed, and the topic has been very much alive in recent scholarship, certain sub-fields of which, such as Arabian archeology and the history of Qur'ānic redaction, are in exponential growth. Broadly speaking, these various approaches have shared the general assumption that this religion emerged from the doctrinal and ritual templates of Judaism and Christianity, and that its emergence was linear, in essential measure seamless, almost natural and virtually self-explanatory. There have been internalist and externalist inflections to these studies, with emphases placed variously on proximate (including indigenous Arabian) or more distant monotheistic sources, but the historiographic template of interpretation has been fairly constant, generally tending to take antecedents for causes.

It is also generally assumed that the emergence of the Paleo-Muslim religion is largely to be conceived and understood in terms of texts and of Qur'ānic intertextuality, rather than in the systematic pursuit of the Sitz im Leben for the emergence of this text or for its internal structure and compositional process. There is considerable disagreement about which texts might be more relevant than others for this type of analysis, and the ever unresolved question of the intertexts of intertexts, as well as traversing a whole range of possibilities between appeals to general or vague precedents (such as the hypothetical "Syriac lectionary") and assertions of chapter-and-verse correspondences, concordances, and secondary redactions (Al-Azmeh 2013). More recently, academic fashion has opted for the use of Late Antiquity as a context (Hoyland 2012), the period being understood generally in terms of religion, a theopolis, as it were, and religions understood to consist of scripture, and in one particularly elaborate treatment, of scripture developing along with community-building itself understood as aligned with scriptural templates, developing, according to one major recent line of interpretation, from the psalmodic to the midrashic (Neuwirth 2010).

Such interpretations are generally doctrine-driven, and are overdetermined by theological assumptions, assuming the Qur'ān to have a distinct and univocal *Leittheologie* in the Protestant manner, making strong assumptions about a fanatical piety as the primary interpretative and causal motif (Sizgorich 2009: 36ff; Donner 2010), often making further assumptions about eschatological expectations as well (see Hoyland 2011: 1062–1063, 1066–1067). Generally speaking, the approach is one that does not give due weight to Arabian conditions in any but a general and formulaic way (in contrast to which, see Chabbi 1997). Much of this is, on closer scrutiny, somewhat anachronistic, and tends to overload the reading of the Paleo-Muslim scripture with later interpretative and glossatorial elements that include crucial input from Jewish and Christian texts in the folds of exegetical, theological,

and other elaborations of doctrine, ones that were only tangentially and frag-
mentarily in evidence at the Paleo-Muslim point of inception. Qur'ānic bibli-
cisms are manifest, but in complex ways, and are far more interesting and
significant than is usually supposed by scholarship that seeks to trace real or
imagined textual filiations and quotations (Neuwirth 2010: 567ff; Al-Azmeh
2014a: 270–272, 350–351, 452–453, 460–461, 475–477, 488–497). What
theology did exist, and whatever allusion was made to previous scriptures
during the career of the Paleo-Muslim founding hero Muḥammad, is likely
to have been understood in different ways by different constituencies, and
was more in the nature of theologoumena whose apprehensions and inter-
pretations were very context-specific. The imposition of a unitary sense or
interpretative direction, of an invariant theological template, bears little his-
torical verisimilitude.

In fact, the local Arabian polytheistic locutions, manners of worship, etio-
logical and other ethnogenetic legends, epithets, and epicleses, and indeed
notions of divinity and of the economy of the preternatural, are on closer
scrutiny constitutive of much of the Qur'ānic text and its contents (Rezvan
1996, 1997; Sinai 2011; Frolov 2013: 87–91; Al-Azmeh 2014a; Al-Azmeh
in press-1). For instance, the claim that the evocation of galloping horses in
Q, 100:1–3 is derived from the four horsemen of the Apocalypse of John
(Neuwirth 2010: 581–583) seems a typical displacement of the issue by
looking away from more proximate, indeed immediate occurrences of both
motif and image, these occurring in fact, with the use of the very same cen-
tral images, in a polytheistic oath by Quraysh at Mecca (Q, 100:1: *wa'l
ʿādiyāti ḍabḥā*; Ibn Ḥabīb: *ammā wa rabbi l-ʿādiyāti ḍ-ḍubbaḥi*; cf. Ibn Ḥabīb
1964: 116; Al-Azmeh in press-1). Biblicisms were incorporated into the text
in complex ways as it evolved, and will have been received differently by dif-
ferent constituencies of addressee.

In a similar vein, it is noteworthy that there is little evidence of a chiliastic
mood in Paleo-Islam (most recently restated and amplified by Shoemaker
2012, 2014). Qur'ānic chastisement pericopes might be interpreted rather
in the sense of the cataclysmic visions associated with betylic fury and retri-
bution, the chastisement and destruction of peoples by natural calamities in
this world unleashed by vengeful deities, and of course paradisical images as
well. Though some among Muḥammad's audience might have associated
this with biblical scenarios of the End, and although such associations
became stronger as the history of the Qur'ān moved forward, there is little
reason to assume a univocal reception, and the structure of Qur'ānic peri-
copes does not sustain a vision of *Heilsgeschichte* normally associated with
apocalypse (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 307–310). Apocalypse is a topic whose con-
siderable complexity is often disregarded in this type of scholarship

(Cameron, forthcoming), not least the relationship in it between apocalyptic as a narrative genre, a sentiment, and chiliastic collective action.

Finally, the formation of what was to become Muslim monotheism. Again, there seems to be an implicit consensus that this was a development that requires little explanation, allied to the other assumption, that Allāh was simply the Arabic redaction of biblical divinity whose emergence is somehow self-explanatory, or explainable, in the way customary in monotheistic histories of monotheism, in terms of the inexorable and ineluctable progress, or on the still-common assumption of a primeval monotheism. It is assumed, for no compelling reason, that the region where Paleo-Islam emerged, western Arabia, was well on the way to monotheism, or, in line with traditional Muslim historiography, that there were monotheistic groups active within it, or that the presence of Jews and Christians in south Arabia, northern Ḥijāz, Syria, and southern Iraq, and in scattered parts of north-central and central Arabia, betokens a systemic move away from polytheism, and constitutes sufficient explanation of what was eventually to become Muslim monotheism.

Building implicitly upon the unreflected "decline of paganism" template, this last point has recently been made all the more forcefully using south Arabian epigraphic material speaking of a Lord of Heaven and of a *Rḥmnn*, and citing the absence of clearly polytheistic epigraphic evidence, or rather that such has not hitherto been discovered, as evidence for monotheism. It is also asserted, despite the carefully calibrated religious politics of Ḥimyarite sovereigns, that Judaism was adopted as an official "state religion" ca. 380 (Gajda 2009; Robin 2012: 303–305; Robin 2014: 48–59), and it is postulated, without evidence or further qualification, that there resulted a "massive movement of conversion" (most recently, Robin 2014: 59). Surely, the assumption of such a monotheistic postulate rests on the evidence of absence in a situation, moreover, where one would have expected triumphalist monotheistic epigraphic evidence.

Despite some awareness of uncertainties pertaining to the nature, character and extent of Christianity or Judaism in the relevant regions—and one default escape route from uncertainty has been the invocation of Judeo-Christian groups whose existence is extremely doubtful—this is nevertheless not taken seriously enough to have narrative and analytical consequence (see Al-Azmeh 2014a: 259–276). Wherever they existed, Judaism and Christianity seem to have been highly autocephalic and particularistic (Hoyland 2011). Christianity especially seems to have been minimalist, hardly at all catechized, and often syncretized with polytheistic cults as a cult of the cross and of Madonna and child, in the usual additive and aggregative way of polytheism, and with only minimal ritual institutes such as baptism, and little evidence for the circulation of scripture, let alone for

Christological controversy (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 259–276). With regard to Yemen, one might at most countenance an ambiguous, uncertain, unsteady and episodic Christianity (and Judaism) as to the constituency to which "conversion" was directed—in the case of Judaism, a number of noble lineages—in a situation perhaps more reminiscent of the ambiguities of Ethiopian Christianity in its early stages (Bowersock 2013: 71–74) than of the Christianity of bishops in Syrian and Mesopotamian monasteries and cities. There is no evidence whatever, apart for traces of persons *de passage*, of Christianity between Aqaba and Yemen (Villeneuve 2011: 227–228). None of this allows inferences of blanket monotheism, not even tendentially.

Paleo-Muslim Divinity

The resilience and persistence of polytheism, not least in the Ḥijāz, a manfully pagan reservation resistant to ambient traces of monotheistic faith, is generally much underestimated. Little wonder, therefore, that Paleo-Muslim rituals were *ab initio* compatible with traditional betylism, central to which were pilgrimage, circumambulation, and the black stone at Mecca (Villeneuve 2011: 230). The Paleo-Muslim pilgrimage was an amalgamation of two polytheistic rites, with sacrifice less central than it had been (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 197–204, 224–227, 233–237, 328–338). Matters that might suggest monotheism precipitately and without due warrant might better be compared to the late Roman use of *heis theos*, an invocatory formula using a generic epithet in a polytheistic world where henotheism and monolatry waxed and waned with changing circumstances. This was an economy of the divine in which all deities received the honors of uniqueness at the right cultic time and place, as indeed did polytheistic Arab deities who received litanies of invocation (*talbiya*) that are almost automatically, albeit without justification, assumed to have been directed to a monotheistic Allāh (Belayche 2010; Al-Azmeh 2014a: 78, 227–232, 257).

There is no reason to hold that Allāh had emerged in any but such circumstances, translated from a vague, distant, and sparsely attested and invoked oath deity, apparently without cult, to the master of the Meccan sacred enclave where he was offered monolatrous worship, without implication of a monotheist theology, and on to becoming the one and unique cosmocratic deity who embodied in Himself, exclusively and indivisibly, the very concept of divinity (Al-Azmeh 2014a, chapter 5). He had not been "a great god" comparable to major trans-local divinities such as Isis, Jupiter, or even the Arab Allat, or an otiose 'Il delegating his authority to a Baal, but rather an occasional and exotic deity. The transition to monotheism from a polytheistic

regard to
ı, unsteady
y to which
noble line-
f Ethiopian
ıan of the
; and cities.
passage, of
228). None
ıtially. .

ijāz, a man-
ıstic faith, is
ıleo-Muslim
ral to which
ı (Villeneuve
ı of two pol-
meh 2014a:
ıggest mon-
compared to
generic epi-
y waxed and
the divine in
ıt cultic time
:d litanies of
out justifica-
layche 2010;

such circum-
and invoked
eccan sacred
ıplication of a
: cosmocratic
very concept
'a great god"
even the Arab
ıther an occa-
a polytheistic

universe was abrupt, with time accelerated, and obeyed the general rules and patterns for divine emergence and change that had governed the world of polytheistic divinity.

In this world, religion was in a primary and elementary sense the cultic worship of deities organized by cultic associations, well-defined groups of birth and alliance performing sacrifices at specific times and places. Structure to this form of worship was endowed by times and places of worship and mechanisms of sacrifice rather than by a dogmatic template. This is the precise meaning of *dīn* in polytheistic Arabia (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 204–205), the word used for "religion" in Arabic. The only requisite item of dogma was belief in the uncanny powers of the divinities. Temples or other cultic locations were consecrated and, especially in the case of major, federal cult centers such as Mecca, consecrated together with fairly wide surrounding areas, delimited by cairns and other signs, within which certain rules and prohibitions applied, crucially ones that related to ritual purity. It is little wonder that, upon his migration to Yathrib (Medina), Muḥammad set up such a *ḥaram*, a sacred and protected enclave according to a number of agreements known collectively as the Constitution of Medina (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 130–131, 403; Munt 2014: 73–77 and chapters 1 and 2). The organization of the Meccan pilgrimage involved specific groups related by alliance performing their devotions (allied to trade, like all pilgrimage) in slightly different ways and at different times within this federal sacred region, much like others during Late Antiquity at Manbij (Hierapolis) in northern Syria, Rāmat al-Khalīl (Mamre) near Hebron in Palestine, and Jabal Ithlib near al-ʿUlā in northern Ḥijāz. Attempts to set up rival sanctuaries of this type were sometimes met with military force, as was that of B. Baghīḍ, not far from Mecca, at a time near enough to the life of Muḥammad to have been remembered vividly (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 130).

Divinities might be represented by altars, niches, stelae, betyls (all attested by recent archeology), or anthropomorphic representations (attested by literary sources). As in Nabatean lands, there is no evidence that aniconism was more than partial, or that the situation involved iconophobia (cf. Villeneuve 2011: 220; Al-Azmeh 2014a: 167–168, 217–218, 212–223). Of anthropomorphic or zoomorphic representations of deity, some were of local manufacture and others might be imported, such as Hubal at Mecca. There seems to have been a fairly rapid turnover of the divine, not least during the troubled sixth century, with the three famous deities of the Ḥijāz, Allat, al-ʿUzza, and Manāt, seemingly brought in, the second perhaps not very long before Muḥammad's lifetime (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 171–172, 177–180). Al-ʿUzza was worshipped by Muḥammad's Quraysh alongside other deities (he had sacrificed to her himself), including Isāf and Nāʾila brought with them from

the Red Sea region where their main sections had originated and where they still had a shrine, and the local Meccan deities whose names and location dot the pilgrimage itineraries, as well as long-distance deities such as Buwāna on the road to Syria.

A few deities were particularly distinguished in some specific function, such as cleromancy in the case of the Meccan Hubal and the nameless god at Dhū'l-Khalaṣa southeast of Mecca, beyond al-Ṭā'if, a town generally allied with Mecca at the time of Muḥammad's birth. These divinities nevertheless served, like other divinities, in an all-encompassing and all-purpose function, sustained by devotions and sacrifices punctiliously performed and offered and by votive offerings. Apart from being irascible when cultic infractions occurred or when hallowed ground was desecrated, by theft or murder or sexual delicts or hunting or the effusion of body fluids, they also guaranteed agreements and assured curses and sanctions against their breach, offered sanctuary, healing, prosperity, safety, progeny, regular rain. They also harbored treasuries.

There was no overarching theological template apart from belief in the efficacy of these deities, and indeed the religious situation as we perceive it from the sources conveys the impression of the sheer scatter of divine names across territory. There seem to have been rather convulsive shifts in the topography and social geography of the divine, involving the importation and renaming of divinities, the expansion of the geographical remit of some, by the multiplication of sanctuaries, or the gathering in of a wider territorial spread of worshippers brought into the alliance of cultic associations. There are also shifts due to the renaming of deities, of a complex transfer between names, epithets, and epicleses, and quite a number of other characteristics of polytheistic systems, especially those that were not under the command of stable polities with the institutional means of establishing durable structures of worship, including what would qualify as a priesthood and a body of specialists who might compose mythographies (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 49–64, 167–183).

The ubiquitous Allāt, for whom there is evidence all the way from northern Syria to south Arabia over a period a millennium and a half, would in this perspective seem to have been not so much a single and singular deity, or a specific divine person, as much as a common theonym shared by many local deities, sometimes syncretized iconographically, as with Athena Parthenos at Palmyra and Busra, Athena being the deity with greater trans-local salience and a mythographic template already, or with Isis. Even the so-called great gods—Zeus, Jupiter, Isis—were worshipped locally with local modifiers, geographical, ethnic or functional, becoming part of their theonyms: thus, for instance, Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Zeus Brontios (the thunderer), Zeus

where they
ocation dot
Buwāna on

c function,
eless god at
erally allied
nevertheless
se function,
and offered
infractions
· murder or
guaranteed
ich, offered
ey also har-

pelief in the
e perceive it
ivine names
shifts in the
importation
nit of some,
er territorial
tions. There
sfer between
acteristics of
command of
le structures
d a body of
14a: 49–64

from north
would in this
ar deity, or a
y many local
Parthenos at
local salience
-called great
al modifiers,
onyms: thus,
derer), Zeus

Kassios (of Mt. Cassius in Syria), Zeus Safathenos (of the Safaitic peoples), all syncretized with Baals duly qualified. Similarly, there are qualifiers for Allāt as well, location-specific or otherwise descriptive of her as *Btlt, parthenos,* or "Allāt, the goddess, who is in Buṣra" (inscription at Wadi Ramm; Wenning 2001: 81).

A single divine personality is the result not so much of worship in itself, which is more likely to be directed at different names and epithets on specific occasions defined by time and place. It arises rather from the trans-local, institutionalized cult structure with political articulations, maintained by a sodality that might develop into a priesthood. In some but not all instances, a central fund of belief was elaborated, in some instances theologically and philosophically elaborated. In its elementary form, the only belief required is in the efficacy of the deity addressed, and the taxonomy of the divine, including the distinctions between deities and the different types of preternatural beings such as angels, gods, and spirits, was very weakly elaborated. In the late antique context, few divinities approached a status of trans-local constancy and durability, such Isis and Mithras (especially among the military). Later, the gods of the Christians, Father and Son, were to constitute a firmer and less variant template.

Emphasis is here placed on worship at the concrete and immediate point of application, definable in terms of both time and place. Nevertheless, the polytheistic religion of the Arabs, albeit bereft of creed or dogma, and endowed with priestly functions only occasionally, was not haphazard. Durable form and structure were endowed by forms of sacrifice and invocation, supplication, thanksgiving, and propitiation organized by the undertow of sacred times and places (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 183–204). Major devotions tended to occur at specific moments and in specific places, the Meccan pilgrimages being virtually the only ones known to us in any detail. Overall, it can be asserted and inferred that devotions involving cultic associations, that is, the specific constituencies of particular devotions, occurred in specific places and at particular moments in a reckoning of a complex social time dependent upon the seasons and seasonal movements, on which also depended the all-important seasonal markets all across the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. The coordination between the rhythms of trade and transhumance, markets, seasons, and a variety of lunar calendars in use involved both negotiation (including the negotiation of intercalation) and monitoring the rise and movement of specific stars—it has been often asserted without clear justification that star worship was known among the Arabs, but indications are that stars were venerated as cultic auxiliaries that signaled the inception and termination of ritual times, the times of particular devotions incumbent daily or seasonally, rather than worshipped in their own right (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 183–204).

The worship of Allāh during the early stages of Muḥammad's Apostolate occurred within this context: cultic worship of Muḥammad's initially nameless Lord, *Rabb*, also Lord of the specific place that was the central Meccan enclave and the Ka'ba. This was initially and for a number of years monolatrous worship, which involved no denial of the worship of other deities, and there are clear indications of Muḥammad's henotheistic diplomacy of the divine as his career progressed, and before he was sufficiently motivated and emboldened to embrace monotheism determinedly and uncompromisingly. Nevertheless, the late antique path whereby in the late Roman empire, and over a period of centuries, a politically favored and hence cultically central deity became the monotheistic God of empire was yet to be accomplished, but the Muḥammadan period played this out in microcosm and on the west Arabian margins. The insinuation of the opaque, obscure, and occasional oath deity Allāh into the Meccan system (Chelhod 1958; Pavlovich 1982; Simon 1991) and his promotion during Muḥammad's lifetime to indivisible primacy, then to the unique manifestation of all divinity, constitutes this particular transition to monotheism at the point of application, a situation that would favor historical–anthropological over theologically driven considerations of Muḥammadan Paleo-Islam.

Mythological elaboration, and whatever elements of primary dogma there were, evolved gradually and will have been received differently by different constituencies. The overall trend, expressed in the approximate chronological sequence of the Qur'ān, indicates a move from a purely nominal object of worship to the semantic motivation and conceptual connotation of a divinity increasingly more elaborate and increasingly attuned to some of the basic motifs shared by Judaism and Christianity (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 293–295, 306–326). A gradual process is attested whereby Allāh became increasingly self-referential and self-predicating as the Arabian taxonomy of the preternatural was revised with the demotion of other deities, first to positions of inferiority, ultimately to being regarded as entirely chimerical (Welch 1980). This process saw the erection of increasingly clearer categorical boundaries than had earlier prevailed between gods, angels, devils, and the *jinn* of various kinds (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 293–294, 338–346; Al-Azmeh, forthcoming-2).

Muḥammad's Paleo-Muslim Allāh, apart from his concrete local and quite possibly betylic character, came to acquire another more ample texture that wove together the actions and epithets that had earlier characterized Arab divinities. This emergent god came increasingly to be construed in a way associated with biblical and related templates, mythemes, and theologoumena, involving elements of the biblical mythological lore of cosmology, anthropogeny, and prophecy. During the latter part of Muḥammad's career, Abraham came to acquire a central and indeed archetypal position, being a

Apostolate
ially name-
ral Meccan
ars monola-
deities, and
nacy of the
tivated and
romisingly.
empire, and
cally central
complished,
on the west
1 occasional
vich 1982;
o indivisible
ites this par-
tuation that
a considera-

logma there
by different
ronological
al object of
of a divinity
of the basic
: 293–295,
increasingly
f the preter-
positions of
Velch 1980)
1 boundaries
nn of various
oming-2).
cal and quite
texture that
terized Arab
ed in a way
l theologou-
cosmology,
nad's career,
tion, being a

prefiguration of Muḥammad and his monotheism, and a geneological figure for the Meccan pilgrimage rites adopted as central, and modified by Muḥammad (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 334–336).

Ultimately there developed a notion of the universal sovereignty and celestial transcendence of Allāh, in a passage from an animate noumen at the corner of the Meccan Kaʻba to an extensive and ubiquitous, but functional rather than abstract or fully mythological notion of divinity. Various theologoumena—rather than theology as such, which was a later development—were entering Muḥammad's teaching and preaching as well as the text of the Qur'ān, in a connotative expansion of divinity increasingly monopolized by Allāh. These contained some of the basic motifs existing in Judaism and Christianity, but also embodied in increasingly biblicizing language the powers and privileges of polytheistic divinities, including fate.

All the while, it might bear repetition that different audiences will have received these theologoumena differently and variously, and it is unlikely that what was later to become an abstract notion of divinity would have had much purchase initially at the expense of monolatry and henotheism. Allāh and His synonyms—Rabb and al-Raḥmān—inhabited a world where the categorical divisions and boundaries of the preternatural were still uncertain, a world that admitted of transmogrification, and one in which a deity might be at once betylic, jinnic, and transcendent, and might, as the God of the Qur'ān or as Yahweh through his *mal'ak* or his appearance as a storm or a fire, or in the aspect of the Metatron, transmit His energies through a variety of media and forms, through angels and the Spirit, through his spirit as breath animating clay or impregnating the parthenogenetic body of Mary. That anthropomorphism is not excluded in this situation but is rather an integral part of the possibilities offered is manifest (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 181–182, 306–326, 334–336, 346–357; van Ess 1992, 1999).

Polity and Cult

Traditional Arab paganism was organized, as has been suggested, as cultic associations, based on inter-group alliances both socio-political and territorial, cemented by oath—what the Swiss were later to call *Eidgenossenschaften*. The earlier history of Paleo-Islam is the history of Muḥammad's charismatic leadership, first of a body of acolytes worshipping the new deity in Mecca, later the rapidly expanding and aggressive embryonic polity at Yathrib (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 368–403).

Especially pertinent to the purposes of this discussion is the way in which this Paleo-Muslim polity, emblematized by the worship of Allāh, was constituted as

a religious sect divided, not always sharply, from religious practices around it, and evolving a distinctive body of beliefs that distinguished it even more sharply from its environment, and set on its way to become what might be described as a new religion or denomination, what was later to be known as Islam (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 360–368). The crucial point of transition is constituted by Muḥammad's so-called Farewell Pilgrimage shortly before his death in 632. Following upon the conquest of Mecca, and the barring of pilgrimage to all but adherents of Muḥammad, he decreed the end of intercalation in Arabian calendars. As has been suggested, intercalation was a negotiated arrangement aiming to synchronize the social rhythms of pilgrimage, trade, and transhumance with the lunar and solar calendars. The ending of intercalation severed the relationship between the ritual time of religion and the social time of trade and transhumance, and rendered the religious calendar standing alone apart from, and above, social time, as an instance of self-referential control, all the more abstract and manifestly arbitrary as it was severed from the solar calendar and hence from the seasons and social processes associated with them (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 194–197, 332–333).

In the usual way of sectarian formations, the cultic association that we call the Paleo-Muslim community went through a process of devotional development and came to acquire a ritual habitus at once continuous with previous practices and distinct from it at a number of signal points. This habitus came in the usual manner to distinguish this group from others, without regard to the rigor of its application, which appears to us on available source material to have been erratic but not to have been excessive by any measure. A form of regular, ritual prayer at set times, first three times daily, later five (this may have become standard after Muḥammad's lifetime), was introduced in a manner that was distinct from previous practices of supplication, but continuous with some of their bodily movements, the repetition of litanies, and other common aspects of prayer. A month of fasting was introduced, somewhat continuous with irregular previous practices of asceticism that had been associated with doing penance for ritual infractions, sometimes associated with a calendar that was later associated with the fasting month of Ramaḍān. Procedures of ritual purity were associated with acts of prayer as well as with pilgrimage; Paleo-Islam retained clothing conventions of pilgrimage, but it is unknown if its ablutions corresponded to polytheistic practices.

There were also alimentary prohibitions, of swine, blood (the Arabs ate a variant of blood pudding), and carrion, but also regulations of ritual slaughter. While this last had been associated previously with sacrifice, it was with the Paleo-Muslims extended to all slaughter, with the need to pronounce a formula of consecration before the victim is killed, and relating also to the

permissibility of consuming flesh provided by Jews and Christians. What may originally have been intended to bar Paleo-Muslims from partaking of polytheistic sacrificial flesh was to become what is today known as *ḥalāl* slaughter. The consumption of alcoholic drinks remains a vexed question: praised as well as prohibited in the Qur'ān, a blanket prohibition was to come quite late, and then only with regard to grape-based drinks; drinking was only sporadically suppressed by the authorities in the Paleo-Muslim period. Quite apart from these matters, the norms required for membership of Muḥammad's cultic association and polity were, with the exception of political loyalty, minimal—political loyalty expressed in allegiance to Muḥammad (*bayʿa*), individual as well as collective, and the payment of tribute in the Arabian manner, which Muslim jurisprudence was later to classify under acts of charity.

Finally, Paleo-Islam, both cult and polity, found durable expression in a canon of scripture, the Qur'ān (Al-Azmeh 2014a, chapter 7). One needs be careful about undue concentration on the content of this scripture at the expense of its composition, transmission, and circulation as a devotional phenomenon emblematic of the emergent Paleo-Muslim cultic community, later religion. Such concentration, correlative with attempts to extract a *Leittheologie*, is heavily impregnated by conditions that have become familiar after the Reformation, conditions conducive to regarding integral texts as stand-alone objects, "study Bibles" as distinct from "liturgical bibles" (Barton 2003; Chapman 2003; Folkert 1989). Matters were far more complex and interesting than might be had by adopting a simplified version of the "oral-to-the-written" template or the assumption that the Qur'ān was a stenographic transcript (Al-Azmeh, in press-1).

Rather, the Paleo-Muslim canon might be seen as a series of events of beatific audition, a function that is well provided for by the rhetorical and acoustic features of the Qur'ān. It was a series of pronouncements, presumably all of Muḥammadan inception or with Muḥammadan support, that, irrespective of their moment of inception, were reiterated on various occasions and by a variety of voices and hands, preserved in a number of redactions, mostly fragmentary ones, or ones that were later to constitute subdivisions of the integral text. This condition implied two primary moments of delivery and circulation: first, various forms of declamation, and storage and dissemination of declamations by means of repetition and reiteration, self-reference, and self-authorization (Sinai 2006; Boisliveau 2014), and second self-reflexive semantic and commentarial expansion, interpolation, occasional adaptation and reformulation, narrative and allusive reference to contemporary and non-contemporary events, the use of para-Qur'ānic material, and arguably intertextual references to both Qur'ānic and extra-Qur'ānic texts, in both the written and the spoken media.

This condition prevailed and persisted in the main until a definitive canonical skeletal-morphemic text was collated from collections and fragments available under the Caliph 'Uthmān (r. 644–656) and at his initiative (see, conveniently, "Canonization of the Qur'ān," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, third edition). The text was to continue serving as both the emblem of the emergent cultic association rapidly becoming a new religion for a new empire, and as the source for liturgical and other occasions of devotional pronouncement. It was quickly to attract exegetical and scholiastic comment, and to feature as the source of proof-texts in the elaboration of Muslim dogma, theology, jurisprudence, and much else. The text's many lives constitute the most tangible and abiding product of Paleo-Islam.

Late Antiquity and After: Toward Classical Islam

The Umayyads concerned themselves much with the Qur'ān, as text to be subject to greater standardization, as ornamental object and highly ornamented emblem. Inheritors of the Romans and the Sasanians in what they took to be universal dominion (Al-Azmeh 2014a: 18–30, 500–508); they made central a new ecumenical currency that was to be of long duration, the epigraphic gold *dīnār* of 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705), starting in 695, and consolidated the use of the Hijra calendar. With them, the Muḥammadan cultic association of Paleo-Islam is carried forward with expanded geographical and ethnographic remit very far beyond what Muḥammad's horizons would have pictured, toward becoming an imperial religion and a religion of empire. They were also involved in the further development of cultic and ritual practices, and in their consolidation, continuation, and confirmation, including the centralization of ritual space around Mecca and the Meccan *qibla* as the direction of prostration in prayer universally.

Crucially, it was the Umayyads who started cultivating a cult of Muḥammad as a geneaological paradigm for empire, religion, and ruling house, and as a cultural hero, prophet, and Umayyad kinsman, the point of genealogical reference for emergent Islam. While until around the middle of the Umayyad dynasty's lifetime ca. 690 Paleo-Muslims were a cultic association comprising Arabs and their newly acquired clients, things were evolving in such a way that Islam was now no longer restricted to the ruling Arab elite. The new religion was no longer based upon geographical and genealogical proximities, coherences, and intimacies, but the religion of an imperial state, responding to a vast change of scale requiring the construction of virtual connections and the greater formalization and abstraction of social and political relations.

Paleo-Islam was, as we saw, constructed partly of a habitus of ritual and idiom, with time partly routinized under conditions of intensive and direct interaction and conflict. With the disengagement of a ruling class properly so called, and the vast spatial dilation of this polity and the dispersal of its human armature across territories with very differing conditions, a new kind of habitus was called for, one based upon an abstract point of reference, set up at a mythological distance, beyond the pressure of evolving circumstance. A skeleton of habit was required to uphold the frame of a polity together: such emerged, with time, with the formalization of ideological reference to the Apostle, with a formality allowing for great diversity, based upon exegetical and other interpretative possibilities, reflected, in the fullness of time, in divergences within what was to become Muslim law, theology, exegesis, all authentically Islamic because all equally Muḥammadan, buttressed by proof-texts relating the Apostle's words and deeds. With historical distance from Muḥammad, and with much water having flown under the bridge since his lifetime, he could now be construed not only as the fount of enduring and renewed charisma through a virtual cult of the prophet, but also as the topos around which the routinization of charisma—Muḥammadan, Umayyad, and, later 'Abbāsid—could be woven.

In short, Muḥammad was henceforth to figure as the emblematic founder, acquiring the usual lineaments of an eponymous and etiological hero in an epic romance, involved in a sense of history that preserved much veridic material, some retrieved by antiquarians, but one that also worked toward the construction of a discourse on a past that was not only epical, but also mythical. Muḥammad the hero was emblematized in the *maghāzī* sections of the *sīra*. This began with al-Zuhrī (d. 741/2), rapidly to be inserted into a mythical narrative, salvational-historically and typologically recorded in the *mubtada'* of the *sīra* and in works of the history of Prophecy, the whole lot encrusted with premonitions, anticipations, wonders, and miracles. He was the hero of an ongoing imperial concern, a figuration made into an obvious, perhaps an inevitable, option. It might be said that this new figuration of Muḥammad constituted a move from the immediate, concrete, constrained, and personalized preoccupations of a small and expanding cultic association and ruling caste and its leaders that was the element of Paleo-Islam, to the limitless possibilities and freedoms afforded by an emblematic genealogy, affording an abstract point of reference, in this sense impersonal and rational, as was required by the vast change of scale from Arabian beginnings to empire. A sense of history over and above immediate preoccupations is a crucial constituent of this transition to Islam, and what made this both possible and imperative was empire.

REFERENCES

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. 2007. *The Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography*. Budapest: Central European University Press. .

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. 2013. "Implausibility and Probability in Studies of Qur'ānic origins." Available at: https://iqsaweb.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/baltimore_keynote_aa_t1.pdf (accessed November 2017).

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. 2014a. *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. 2014b. *The Arabs and Islam in Late Antiquity: A Critique of Approaches to Arabic Sources*. Berlin: Gerlach Press.

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. In press-1. "Modelling the Paleo-Muslim Qur'ān." In *Fragmentation and Compilation*, edited by Asma Hilali. Oxford and London: Oxford University Press and the Institute for Ismaili Studies.

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. In press-2. "Paleo-Muslim preternatural beings." In *Angels and Mankind: Nature, Role and Function of Celestial Beings in Near Eastern and Islamic Traditions*, edited by Stefan Leder. Beirut and Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Athanassiadi, Polymnia. 2006. "Antiquité tardive: Construction et deconstruction d'un modèle historiographique." *Antiquité Tardive* 14, 311–324.

Barton, John. 2003. "Unity and Diversity in the Biblical Canon." In *Die Einheit der Schrift und die Vielfalt des Kanons*, edited by John Barton and Michael Wolter, 11–26. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Belayche, Nicole. 2010. "Deus Deum ... Summorum Maximus: Ritual Expressions of Distinction in the Divine World in the Imperial Period." In *One God. Pagan Monotheism in the Roman Empire*, edited by Stephen Mitchell and Peter van Nuffelen, 141–166. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boisliveau, Anne-Sylvie. 2014. *Le Coran par lui-même. Vocabulaire et argumentation du discours coranique autoréférentiel*. Leiden: Brill.

Bowersock, Glen. 2004. "Riflessioni sulla periodizzazione dopo 'esplosione di tardoantico' di Andrea Giardina." *Studi Storici* 45, 7–14.

Bowersock, Glen W. 2013. *The Throne of Adulis: Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Boyarin, Daniel. 2009. "Rethinking Jewish-Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category." *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99, 7–36.

Brown, Peter. 1997. "The World of Late Antiquity Revisited." *Symbolae Osloenses* 72, 5–90.

Cahen, Claude. 1967. "Considérations sur l'utilisation des ouvrages de droit musulman par l'historien." In *Atti del terzo congresso di studi arabi e islamici (Ravello, 1966)*, 239–247. Naples: Instituto Universitario Orientale.

Cameron, Averil. 2008. "A. H. M. Jones and the end of the ancient world." In *A.H.M. Jones and the Later Roman Empire*, edited by David Gwynn, 232–249. Leiden: Brill.

Cameron, Averil. 2013. "Introduction." In *Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam*, edited by Averil Cameron. Aldershot: Variorum.

Cameron, Averil. 2014. *Byzantine Matters.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cameron, Averil. forthcoming. "Late Antique Apocalyptic: A Context for the Qur'ān?" In *Visions of the End: Apocalypticism and Eschatology in the Abrahamic Religions,* edited by Hagit Amirav, Emmanouela Grypeon, and Guy Stroumsa. Leuven, Peeters.

Chabbi, Jacqueline. 1997. *Le seigneur des tribus: L'Islam de Mahomet.* Paris: Noesis.

Chapman, Stephen B. 2003. "How the Biblical Canon Began: Working models and Open Questions." In *Homer, the Bible and Beyond. Literary and Religious Canons in the Ancient World,* edited by Margalit Finkelberg and Guy Stroumsa, 28–51. Leiden: Brill.

Chelhod, Joseph. 1958. "Note sur l'emploi du mot Rabb dans le Coran." *Arabica* 5, 159–167.

Donner, Fred M. 2010. *Muhammad and the Believers. At the Origins of Islam.* Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Folkert, Kendall W. 1989. "The 'canons' of 'scripture'." In *Rethinking Scripture,* edited by Miriam Levering, 170–179. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Fowden, Garth. 1993. *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fowden, Garth. 2014. *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fowden, Elizabeth Key. 2016. "Schreine und Banner: Paläomuslime und ihr materielles Erbe." In *Denkraum Spätantike. Reflexionen von Antiken im Umfeld des Koran,* edited by Nora Schmidt, Nora K. Schmidt, and Angelika Neuwirth, 405–430. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Frolov, Dmitry. 2013. "Three Levels of the Composition of the Qur'ān: Oral Revelations." In *Islam and Globalisation. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Proceedings of the 25th Congress of l'Union Européenne des Arabisants et des islamisants,* edited by Agostino Cilardo. Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oosterse Studies.

Gajda, Iwona. 2009. *Le royaume de Ḥimyar à l'époque monothéiste. L'histoire de l'arabie du Sud ancienne de la fin du IVᵉ siècle de l'ère chrétienne jusqu'à l'avènement de l'islam.* Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.

Giardina, Andrea. 1999. "Esplosione di Tardoantico." *Studi Storici* 40, 157–180.

Hourani, Albert. 1976. "History." In *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humaities and Social Sciences,* edited by Leonard Binder, 97–136. New York and London: John Wiley & Sons.

Hoyland, Robert. 2011. "The Jews of the Hijaz in the Qur'ān and in Their Inscriptions." In *New Perspectives on the Qur'ān,* edited by Gabriel Said Reynolds, 91–116. London: Routledge.

Hoyland, Robert. 2012. "Early Islam as a Late Antique Religion." In *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity,* edited by Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, 1053–1077. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hoyland, Robert G. 2015. *In God's Path. The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ibn Ḥabīb. 1964. *Kitāb al-Munammaq fī akhbār Quraysh*, edited by Khurshid Ahmad Faruq. Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Mʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya.

Liebeschuetz, Wolf. 2004. "The Birth of Late Antiquity." *Antiquité Tardive* 12, 253–261.

Marsham, Andrew. 2009. "The Early Caliphate and the Inheritance of Late Antiquity." In *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, edited by P. Rousseau with J. Raithel, 479–492. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Marsham, Andrew. 2011. "Public Execution in the Umayyad Period: Early Islamic Punitive Practice and its Late Antique Context." *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 11, 101–136.

Martin, René. 1976. "Qu'est-ce que l'antiquité 'tardive'? Réflexions sur un problème de périodisation." In *Aiôn. Le temps chez les Romains*, edited by R. Chevallier, 261–304. Paris: Éditions A. & J. Picard.

Morony, Michael G. 1984. *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Munt, Harry. 2014. *The Holy City of Medina. Sacred Space in Early Islamic Arabia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Neuwirth, Angelika. 2010. *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike: Ein europäischer Zugang*. Berlin: Verlag der Weltreligionen.

Pavlovich, Pavel. 1982. "Qad kunna lā naʿbudu I-lāha wa lā naʿrifuhu. On the Problem of the Pre-Islamic Lord of the Kaʿba." *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 2, 49–74.

Rezvan, Efim. 1996. "The Qur'ān and its World, I." *Manuscripta Orientalia* 2, 30–34.

Rezvan, Efim. 1997. "The Qur'ān and its World, II." *Manuscripta Orientalia* 3, 26–32.

Robin, Christian Julien. 2012. "Arabia and Ethiopia." In *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, edited by Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, 247–332. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Robin, Christian Julien. 2014. "The Peoples Beyond the Arabian frontier in Late Antiquity: Recent Epigraphic Discoveries and Latest Advances." In *Inside and Out. Interactions between Rome and the Peoples on the Arabian and Egyptian Frontiers in Late Antiquity*, edited by Jitse H. F. Dijkstra and Greg Fisher, 33–79. Leuven-Paris: Peeters.

Robin, Christian Julien. 2016. "Die Kalender der Araber vor dem Islam." In *Denkraum Spätantike. Reflexionen von Antiken im Umfeld des Koran*, edited by Nora Schmidt, Nora K. Schmidt, and Angelika Neuwirth, 299–386. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Sawyer, John. 1999. *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts*. London and New York: Routledge.

Shoemaker, Stephen J. 2012. *The Death of a Prophet. The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginning of Islam*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Shoemaker, Stephen J. 2014. "'The reign of God has come': Eschatology and Empire in Late Antiquity and Early Islam." *Arabica* 61, 514–558.

Simon, Robert. 1991. "Allah or God? The Semantic and Religious Meaning of 'Allah' on the Eve of Islam and in the Qur'an." *Acta Classica* 27, 129–134.

Sinai, Nicolai. 2006. "Qur'anic Self-Referentiality as a Strategy of Self-Authorization." In *Self-Referentiality in the Qur'an*, edited by Stefan Wild, 103–134. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Sinai, Nicolai. 2011. "Religious Poetry from the Qur'ānic Milieu: Umayya b. Abi l-Salt on the fate of the Thamūd." *BSOAS* 74, 397–416.

Sizgorich, Thomas. 2009. *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity. Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. 1989. "Scripture as Form and Concept: Their Emergence for the Western World." In *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective*, edited by Miriam Levering, 29–57. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Van Ess, Josef. 1992. "'Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock. An Analysis of Some Texts." In *Bayt al-Maqdis. 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, edited by Jeremy Johns and Julian Raby, 89–104. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Van Ess, Josef. 1999. "Vision and Ascension: *Surat al-Najm* and its Relationship with Muhammad's *Mi'rāj*." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 1/1, 47–62.

Vessey, Mark. 1998. "The Demise of the Christian Writer and the Remaking of 'Late Antiquity': From H.-I. Marrou's Saint Augustine (1938) to Peter Brown's Holy Man (1983)." *JECS* 6, 377–411.

Villeneuve, François. 2011. "La résistance des cultes bétyliques d'Arabie face au monothéisme: De Paul à Barsauma à Muhammad." In *Le problème de la christianisation du monde antique*, edited by Hervé Inglebert, Sylvain Destephen, and Bruno Dumézil, 219–231. Paris: Picard.

Welch, Alford T. 1980. "Allah and Other Supernatural Beings: The Emergence of the Qur'anic Doctrine of *Tawhid*." *JAAR* 47/4 (Thematic issue S), 733–758.

Wenning, Robert. 2001. "The betyls of Petra." *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 324, 79–95.

FURTHER READING

Al-Azmeh, Aziz. 2014. *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Berkey, Jonathan. 2003. *The Formation of Islam*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cameron, Averil (ed.). 2013. *Late Antiquity on the Eve of Islam*. Variorum reprints. Farnham: Ashgate.

Donner, Fred M. 1998. *Narratives of Islamic Origins. The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*. Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press.

Fowden, Garth. 1993. *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hoyland, Robert G. 2001. *Arabia and the Arabs*. London: Routledge.
Hoyland, Robert G. 2015. *In God's Path. The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an First Muslim Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Marsham, Andrew. 2009. *Rituals of Islamic Royalty. Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Morony, Michael G. 1984. *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Wellhausén, Julius. 1973. *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*, trans. Margaret Graham Weir. London: Curzon Press.