classify the Qurʾan's stories within a more general narratology that accords with a developing theology.

The diachronic reading of the Qurʾan is Neuwirth's principle throughout her book, and it helps in understanding the oral development of the Qurʾan during the Muslim community's growth engendered by it. But it has to be admitted that such a diachronic reading cannot be fully valid until a rearrangement of the Qurʾan's suras in a chronological sequence is completed—which has not yet been done. In Western studies of chronology since Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930), literary form and linguistic structure have been the principles helping to distinguish between earlier and later suras, and Neuwirth herself has contributed to these studies, only for Meccan suras, in her book *Der Koran* (Insel, 2010). At any rate, scholarship has to go on with present data and methods with the hope of having more in the future—though the true chronology may never be known.

Meanwhile, Neuwirth's book reviewed here is a good contribution to a reading of the Qurʾan in its *Sitz im Leben* with an appreciation of its literary character as scripture, and it is a good study of how the Qurʾan helped make a community, even while it was itself orally growing and being canonized as a scripture of a new religion. Her book is recommended to all scholars of the Qurʾan and is even useful to scholars in Biblical studies and in comparative religious studies. ❧

Issa J. Boullata
McGill University

KARL-HEINZ OHLIG, ED. *Early Islam: A Historical-Critical Reconstruction on the Basis of Contemporary Sources.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2013. 647 pages. Cloth US$45.95 ISBN 978-1-61614-825-6.

This anthology, translated from German, continues the revisionist program of The Inārah Institute for Research on Early Islamic History and the Koran. Alongside some interesting ideas, it contains a great deal of dross and pays insufficient attention to relevant evidence and prior scholarship.

The foreword to the English edition by Markus Gross and the introduction by Karl-Heinz Ohlig position the volume's contributors as outsiders to an overly credulous Orientalist establishment. They regard the traditional Islamic salvation history about the Qurʾan and the rise of Islam as a fictitious back-projection, and propose instead to rely solely on non-Muslim sources. This is like tracing the history of Catholicism through Protestant polemics

and finding it rife with devil worship. Enemies tend to introduce distortions even larger than a group's own exaggerations and cover-ups.

Volker Popp's "From Ugarit to Sāmarrāʾ: An Archaeological Journey on the Trail of Ernst Herzfeld" argues that the Islamic Empire was actually a joint project of Persians and Aramaic-speaking Christians until legal scholars Islamicized it in the ninth century. Popp's rambling account combines interesting facts and documents with so many oddities—like the outlandish association of the Umayyad Caliph Marwān with the Persian city of Marv— that it would be impossible to address them here. Its main failing is that it ignores entire swaths of Islamic historiography, even concerning the Abbasid period, which is hardly shrouded in obscurity.

Karl-Heinz Ohlig's "Evidence of a New Religion in Christian Literature 'Under Islamic Rule'?" casts doubt on the dating, provenance, and relevance of various non-Muslim sources to show that there is no solid independent evidence for seventh-century invasions by Arab adherents of a new religion following an Arabian Prophet named Muḥammad (who, if he existed, may have been the leader of a Christian sect). Sowing doubt is easy, and in this case, disingenuous. Refusing to see the terms Saracens, Arabs, Ishmaelites, or Hagarenes as references to Muslims is like doubting that the Crusaders were Catholics simply because Arabic texts call them *Ifranj.*

Ohlig's "From *muḥammad* Jesus to Prophet of the Arabs: The Personaliza-tion of a Christological Epithet" argues that *muḥammad*, meaning "blessed" or "chosen," was applied originally to Christ—though this was subsequently forgotten among both Christians and Muslims—and only later to the Prophet Muḥammad. This suggests that the "Islamic" invasion of the Near East was originally a Christian movement.

Christoph Luxenberg's "Relics of Syro-Aramaic Letters in Early Qurʾān Codices in *Ḥiǧāzī* and *Kūfī* Ductus" argues that the Qurʾan employed a mixed language heavily influenced by Aramaic, that its current script was affected by Syriac script, and that its early transmission was not oral but written and involved Syriac copyists. Luxenberg offers several emendations and readings based on the idea that *lām* and *ʿayn* are easily confused in Syriac script, and that final *yāʾ* in Qurʾanic orthography can resemble Syriac final *nūn*. Few of these suggestions help with textual difficulties, and most can be refuted easily. The emendation *libadā* (72: 19) > *ʿābidīn* would ruin both rhyme and rhythmical parallelism. *Lumazah* (104:1) > *ghammāzah* would ruin rhythmical parallelism, and other examples of *yalmizu* > *yaghmizu* (9:58, 9:79, 49:11) would only be worth considering if the original word were problematic. *Li-dulūki sh-shamsi* (17:78) likewise makes sense without being

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changed conjecturally to *li-du ʿūki sh-shamsi. Shayʾ* is extremely common and need not be emended to the much less frequent *shaʾn* or *shān.* The verb *hayyin, yuhayyin* does not provide an improved reading over *hayyaʾa, yuhayyiʾu* (18:10, 16). *ʾĪ wa-rabbī* (10:53) appears correct, and there is no evidence for *ʾēn wa-rabbī;* the similar expression *ʾī waʾllāhi* produces the dialectal form *aywa,* so perhaps *ʾī* should be *ʾay.* Luxenberg's claim that the emphatic particle *la-* derives from Aramaic is unconvincing; *la-* was probably different from *lā* and was lost early on in the other West Semitic languages but retained in Arabic (David Testen, *Parallels in Semitic Linguistics: The Development of Arabic La- and Related Semitic Particles* [Brill, 1998]). Only three of Luxenberg's points seem worth considering. First, *libadā* does indeed beg an explanation. Second, as previously proposed by Horovitz, Jeffrey, and others, the form *Yaḥyā* (3:39; 19:7) probably does derive from *Yuḥannan,* perhaps by confusion of *-n* with *–ā;* this would not require a Syriac script. Finally, given the oddity of the phrase *lā yajidūna illā juhdahum* (9:79), it does seem worth considering whether it might be a calque on an Aramaic expression.

Goldziher's essay "L'Islamise et le Parsisme" proposes several borrowings from Zoroastrianism: Persian influence on Abbasid administration and court culture, historical writing inspired by the royal annals of the Sassanians, the theocratic and confessional character of the Abbasid Empire, the idea that religious merit can be measured in specific weights, the emphasis on purity, and the impurity of dead bodies and unbelievers. He also notes reactionary influence: Muslims adopted a negative view of dogs, which was at odds with Arab tradition, in order to distinguish themselves from Zoroastrians' esteem for dogs.

Volker Popp's "The Influence of Persian Religious Patterns on Notions in the Qurʾan" suggests Persian influence on the Qurʾan's depictions of paradise. He accepts Luxenberg's view that these reflect Syriac descriptions, and adds that the clothing mentioned, for instance, is characteristic of Persian gentry. The parallels he points out, however, are not specific enough to indicate influence. He links Qurʾanic and Zoroastrian angels, and connects the term *dīn* to the Persian *dēn* "wisdom" (?). The latter suggestion may have some merit, since the translation "religion" seems anachronistic and only some Qurʾanic instances of *dīn* fit the meaning "religious law" or the Hebrew meaning "judgment."

In "New Ways of Qurʾānic Research: From the Perspective of Comparative Linguistics and Cultural Studies," Markus Gross makes several points about language in support of Luxenberg. He gives examples of mixed languages, but does not give evidence of the mixed Arabo-Aramaic language posited by Luxenberg. He argues against the view—which few scholars would affirm—

that the Qurʾan, like the Rig-Veda, was preserved with great accuracy through oral transmission. He claims that all Qurʾanic variants can be explained by written transmission; but while some variants can only be explained that way (he could have mentioned *yaqḍī bi'l-ḥaqq* for *yaquṣṣu l-ḥaqq* in Q 6:57), many others clearly arose orally (e.g., *sirāṭ* vs. *ṣirāṭ* in Q 1:7). The importance of rhyme and repetition suggest that the Qurʾan originated in oral performance, which is not precluded by evidence of written transmission. Gross also denies the Qurʾan's poetic qualities: Against the entire Arabic poetic tradition, he finds it "phonetically unthinkable" (416) that long -ū- could rhyme with long -ī-, and he finds poetic devices rare (425–7) even though roughly 86% of Qurʾanic verses exhibit end-rhyme and many others employ rhetorical figures or poetic license. While the Qurʾan does not have the same kind of meter as Arabic poetry, other forms of quantitative meter are found in the sections that resemble *saj* ʿ (rhymed and rhythmical prose). Gross ignores all this evidence, as well as the scholarship in which it has been discussed—a failing that, unfortunately, characterizes this volume as a whole.

Devin J. Stewart
Emory University

RUDOLPH PETERS AND PERI BEARMAN, EDS. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Islamic Law.* Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2014. xi + 345 pages, epilogue, glossary, index. Cloth US$142.45 ISBN 978–1409438939.

*T*he Ashgate Research Companion to Islamic Law is a collection of essays that attempt to give a comprehensive overview of modern scholarship on the historical development of Islamic law, its substantive content, and its encounter with the modern nation-state. It is divided into an introduction and four parts: the first exploring the origins, sources, and participants of Islamic jurisprudence; the second on substantive legal issues such as equality, gender, and political order; the third examining the modern state, legislative powers, colonialism, and Islamization; and the last discussing current discourse about Islamic finance, ethics, and the state of shariʿa today. An epilogue by Abdullahi An-Naʿim tackles the normative question of the future of the shariʿa in secular political orders within Muslim majority countries.

A major theme of these essays is the suggestion that Islamic law should be regarded as a private normativity, genuinely religious in its origin and its function, rather than the kind of law that could be implemented