

as a function of geography, from variation that is in fact sociolinguistic in nature. Thus they write (p. xii) that “in retrospect, the whole project, right from the beginning, should have been organised as a sociolinguistically orientated project and not as a project of traditional ‘dialect geography’”. They note (p. xii) that for many localities there is nevertheless a reasonable sociolinguistic spread of informants (generally each locality is represented by between two and five informants, often with a mix of genders and ages). But since this was never done systematically with sociolinguistic aims in mind, the outcome could be seen as the worst of both worlds: no serious investigation of sociolinguistic variables is possible but, at the same time, the appearance of dialect-geographical differences in the realization of a given feature risks in fact being a reflection of sociolinguistic differences between the informants that happened to be consulted.

It is not always straightforward to interpret the symbols and special formatting used on the maps. For example, the meaning of italic font on the maps (namely that the dialect whose number is italicized is a Bedouin variety) can only be found by consulting the list of abbreviations, which is not the most intuitively obvious place for this information. On a few maps (e.g. map 66 on interdentials), braces are used, but the meaning of their inclusion at one location versus their absence at another is not explained in the keys of the maps in question or anywhere that I could see in the introductory material. The precise meaning of the tilde used on some maps (e.g. map 79) is hard (for me) to discern. I was unable to understand the explanation (p. xiv) that “the tilde means that these forms are used in other places as parallel forms”.

Clearly, then, this work is not without its flaws. But the wealth of detail and information it contains means there can be no doubt that the field of Arabic dialectology is far richer with it than without it. It should be used judiciously, however, and readers should beware of treating the maps it contains as a straightforwardly reliable depiction of the contemporary Arabic dialects of the Galilee.

Christopher Lucas

SOAS University of London, UK

CARLOS A. SEGOVIA (ed.):

Remapping Emergent Islam: Texts, Social Settings, and Ideological Trajectories.

245 pp. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020. ISBN 978 90 485 4010 5.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X21000537

In the words of its editor, Carlos Segovia, *Remapping Emergent Islam* aims to advance “the scholarly discussion on Islam’s origins” (p. 7). In the first of four parts, Aaron Hughes explores the Jewish background of the Quran by probing the “overlay” of non-normative Judaism (as well as “Christian, Zoroastrian, and Manichaean elements”, p. 33) over an autochthonous South Arabian monotheism. In the following chapter, José Costa identifies the Quran’s Jewish substratus by highlighting its lack of messianism beyond vague passages mentioning the al-Masīh. Costa argues that while early Quranic layers present a Jewish-inspired “non-messianic eschatology”, later layers include a “non-eschatological Messiah” attributable to the influences of Ebionite

Christology. Accordingly, he conceives “early Islam as both an eschatological and a non-messianic (or non-Messiah-centred) Jewish-oriented movement” (p. 65).

In the book’s second part, Daniel Beck investigates the Manichaean parallels of early surahs depicting the moon as an eschatological sign. He claims that “early quranic theology retains a cosmology in which heavenly bodies play important soteriological functions” (p. 101). In the following chapter, Carlos Segovia surveys the Quran’s East-Syrian background by applying “structuralist-Marxist epistemology, and Lacanian psychoanalysis”, as well as “internal, textual criteria” (p. 111). In doing so, he situates the earliest Quranic layers in line with the early seventh-century Messalian crisis of Syrian monasticism.

The third part features Basil Lourié’s and Gilles Courtieu’s contributions. Lourié analyses the earliest Islamic liturgical calendar and its origins, showing the influences of Jewish and early Christian structures in Islamic festivals. Meanwhile, Courtieu examines the banquets held at the Persian court to show how the Quran’s descriptions of paradise have an Iranian “profane origin” (p. 149). He thus points to Mesopotamia and to “the vassal kingdom of the Lakhmids” (p. 152) as “as a site of excavation for the original quranic milieu” (p. 149).

The last section opens with Ali Amir-Moezzi’s analysis of the Shiite mystic sources attributing divine characteristics to ‘Alī and identifying him as a “Second Christ”. He argues that when “a new collective memory” (p. 190) was forged under the Umayyads, ‘Alī lost his “apocalyptic dimension” while maintaining “his theophanic nature” which make him “the Imam par excellence” (p. 193). In the following chapter, Tommaso Tesei illustrates the intertextual links between the Quran and pseudoepigraphical literature by exploring the depiction of the fallen angels in the Quran. In the last chapter, Emilio González Ferrín discusses the Quran’s canonization and questions its status as “a single book”. The volume concludes with a chiasmic reversal: “it is not the Qur’ān which created or launched Islam, but vice versa” (p. 242).

Segovia claims that no “unifying pattern in terms of methodology and style” was imposed on the authors’ contributions (p. 7) and indeed the volume offers many elements of reflections on the emergence of Islam. However, “the respective conceptual choices and analytical tools” are less “miscellaneous” than expected and the volume appears cohesive. A series of cross-references links the various contributions (e.g., Costa and Amir-Moezzi refer to each other while highlighting the messianism strand of Muhammad’s preaching). The lack of epigraphic material (with the exception of the South Arabian corpus mentioned in the first chapter and in a brief paragraph of the second) also gives coherence to the volume. Beck promises the reader to compare “archaic quranic cosmology, ancient North Arabian devotional epigraphy, and Manichaean cosmology” (p. 85), but he only mentions one Dadanitic inscription dated from the first century BCE, more than half a millennium earlier than the rise of Islam. This inscription is used to claim that *badr* (Q 3.123) did not originally refer to the battle of the same name but, in line with Manichaean soteriology, to “a full moon” which was purged from the text “by the later Meccan period” (p. 108). In another passage, Beck sees Q 105 as “an Arabic peripheralisation of prior Christian anti-Sasanian narratives” (p. 102) and the companions of the elephant as “a Sasanian military force” (p. 92), in contrast to the existing literature connecting the passage with the expedition of the South Arabian ruler Abraha. These are only a few of the volume’s bold suggestions (Segovia labels them as “creative”). Many more resuscitate John Wansbrough’s “revisionist” theories (e.g., González Ferrín gives reference to Wansbrough but also Crone and Nevo when he claims that the Quran “as we know it today” was composed after the ninth century, p. 225). However, a more fruitful approach would have focused more on “internal”

archaeological material to reconstruct the historical milieu of Muhammad, or at least use it as a corrective reading to well-studied literary accounts.

It is debatable whether modern scholarship is less biased than the traditional Muslim picture that scholars abhor from Wansbrough onwards (Grasso, “Review of S.J. Shoemaker, *The Apocalypse of Empire. Imperial Eschatology in Late Antiquity and Early Islam*”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 71, 2020, 618–20). Although the discussion on the origins of the Quran is nowadays seen within a broader context, the contemporary debate still focuses too much on attributing it to *one* community located in *one* space. The needle thus frantically oscillates between Jewish and Christian communities (but also, more recently, Manichaeans, Zoroastrians and Christian Aksūmites – the latter being the “great outcast” of the volume’s narrative/s), as well as between North and South, East and West. This is a consequence of what I call “the emptying of Arabia”, a process well-exemplified by Cortieu’s statement that “central Arabia appears a vacuum” (p. 152), and by his proposal to “follow the compass out of Arabia” and not on “the usual path to the West” (p. 169). Yet, the most convincing chapter, the first one, highlights scholars’ unfamiliarity with the syncretism of late antique beliefs. Hence, instead of using a map, Hughes paints a fluid picture of the late antique Arabian milieu, reaching a conclusion which is similar to my own (Grasso, “A Late Antique kingdom’s conversion: Jews and sympathizers in South Arabia”, *Journal of Late Antiquity* 13, 2020, 352–82). Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and it is worth remembering that no archaeological expedition is currently taking place in either Mecca or Medina. We should thus avoid the temptation of transplanting (or “remapping”) the origins of Islam where our sources are more abundant (or more original). At the same time, we should also refrain from moving our compass eastwards motivated by political correctness or boredom. Only by accepting the fluidity of boundaries, identities and traditions and only after having placed the Arabic Quran in Arabia and Arabia in its broader historical and socio-political context, we will be able to advance the debate on the origins of Islam.

Valentina A. Grasso
University of Cambridge

LEOR HALEVI:

Modern Things on Trial: Islam’s Global and Material Reformation in the Age of Rida, 1865–1935.

xi, 367 pp. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. \$75. ISBN 978 0 23118866 1.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X21000653

Why another book on Rashīd Riḍā? His central role in the intellectual history of Islam around 1900 and as pioneer of transnational Islamic publishing are textbook knowledge. Leor Halevi demonstrates in his monograph how many important aspects have been overlooked by readjusting the focus towards materiality, an aspect which – as he claims – the centrality of belief in the study of religion has obscured.

Using fatwas as the main source for his “microhistorical” approach Riḍā’s partially affirmative answer to the question of whether Muslims are supposed to clean their anus with paper after defecating serves as a peg for the analysis of his