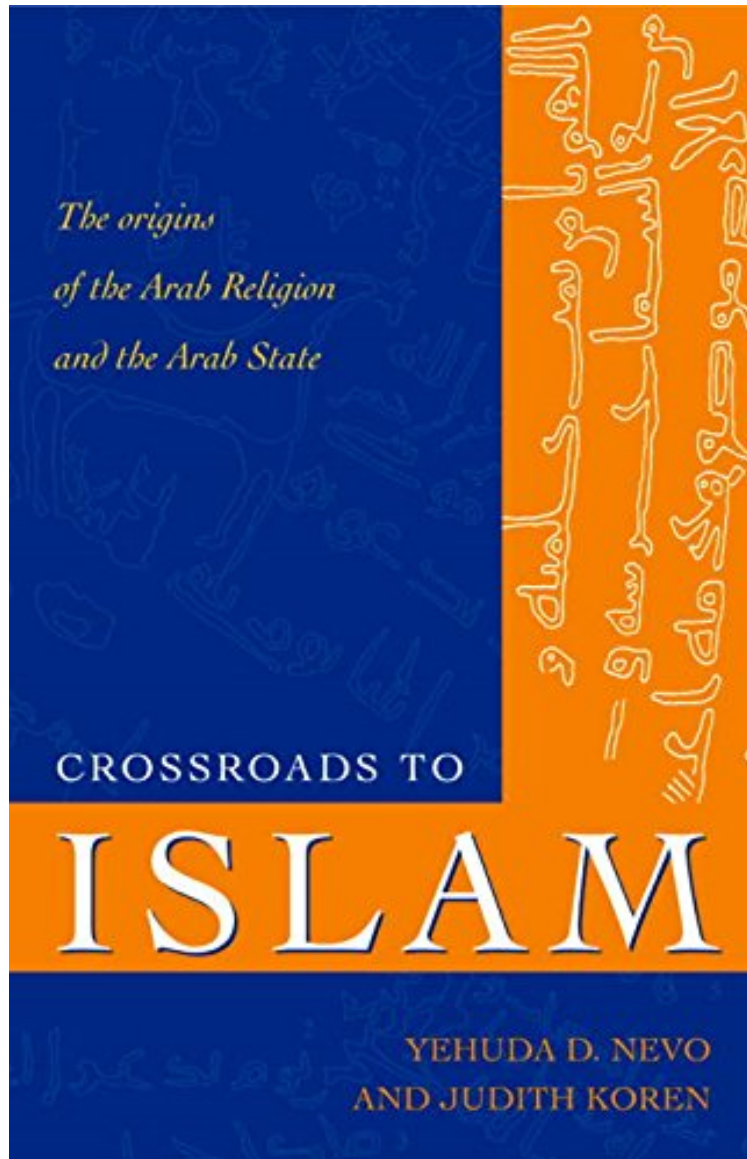


(Free) Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State (Islamic Studies)

Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State (Islamic Studies)

Yehuda D. Nevo, Judith Koren

*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1544458 in Books 2003-06-01 2003-06-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.30 x 1.60 x 6.30l, 1.80
#File Name: 1591020832462 pages | File size: 19.Mb

Yehuda D. Nevo, Judith Koren : Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State (Islamic Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State (Islamic Studies):

32 of 32 people found the following review helpful. An important contribution to a historical-critical reading of the

Koran By D. Layman This work is an important contribution to a historical-critical reading of the Koran and the origins of Islam. As other reviewers have noted, it should not be read in isolation, and like all revisionist scholarly works, it must be read in an awareness that further sources or documentation might require even further revision. But as it stands, it cannot be ignored. It is certainly NOT "pseudo-scholarship," as one reviewer claims. I have a Ph.D. in religious studies, and am familiar with historical-critical and source-critical methodology as it is used analyzing the origins of religions and biblical studies. It is those who dismiss Nevo who are guilty of "distorting or omitting the important evidence," evidence that is laid out in careful detail. Just the appendices, that lay out the inscriptional data, (in both Arabic and English translation) is worth the price of the book. In evaluating this data, the non-specialist must bear one central fact in mind: there is NO primary, contemporaneous data for the origins of Islam. The Koran/Qur'an gives no such data. Muslim traditions are written 200-300 years later. This is why the careful analysis of the changing themes on the dateable inscriptions are so important. Contrary to "R. Kevin Hill," it is not true that "Much of his evidence is numismatic." Nevo is explicit: numismatic [coin inscription] evidence is "insufficient as the [i]primary[/i] type of evidence on which to ground a historical theory." The core evidence is based on the sequence of ideas in inscriptions, both official and popular. This sequence is as follows: pagan, ending 5th/6th century—a generic ("indeterminate") monotheism, which is based on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus—the recognition of Muhammad as the prophet: 690 in official inscriptions (the Dome of the Rock) and 730 in popular inscriptions—"Muslim" inscriptions, distinguished by the idea of "witnessing," and an explicit affirmation of the absolute unity ("tawhid") of Allah. This is the core of the argument. The methodology is consistent with the use of archeology and historical criticism of the Bible, the origins of ancient Israel, and Christianity. None of the negative reviewers (including the one cited from the Bryn Mawr Classical Review) even recognize it, much less show any flaws. Nevo has raised fundamental questions, that further research should be able to answer: 1. Is Nevo right that there is NO evidence for a pre-Muslim Arab paganism in the Hijaz (the area on the Arabian Peninsula around Mecca and Medina)? 2. Is Nevo right that the real locus for pre-Muslim and early Muslim Arabic religion is in the Negev and al-Sam (apparently the Arabic name for Palestine/Syria), NOT the Hijaz? 3. Is Nevo right that "Mohammed" is not documented as a prophet/religious leader until 690/730? (Sorry, Mr. Hill, an unnamed "false prophet" doesn't count. Prophets were a dime-a-dozen in the fevered religious world of the Middle East.) If Nevo is WRONG, then his assertions ought to be easy to refute. So far, I have seen none. One final point. I agree that Nevo overstates his case for the allegedly INTENTIONAL withdrawal of Byzantium from al-Sam. But he does show two things: 1. Byzantium followed a centuries-long policy that resulted in, intentionally or not, the withdrawal from al-Sam. 2. This allowed Arabic clans and armies to move into the vacuum. 3. Again, if Nevo is wrong, where is the [i]contemporaneous[/i] evidence for a dramatic "Muslim" invasion/conquest of al-Sam circa 630-640. It doesn't appear to exist. Finally read this alongside of such works as Meccan Trade And The Rise Of Islam and the work of J. Wansborough (not linkable here). P.S. Here is the Wansborough [sic] text I wanted to link to: Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An excellent, scholarly book. By Lightning Bolt It has taken a long time for scholars to study the beginning of Islam and the genesis of the Koran from a strictly historical-critical point of view. In the course of such endeavour, we are going to find many lines of attack, and inevitably some will pan out, while others will not. However, this should encourage scholars to open up to various possibilities and to examine this matter in an interdisciplinary fashion, until the different strands coalesce into a coherent whole. Some of the data found relevant by the authors have been dealt with by other historians in the context of the 'Gothic invasion of Europe' and their role in the fall of the Roman Empire. This means that the authors have found valuable pieces of the puzzle, but we will have to wait for further developments in this budding field of research. I found it a valuable source, and greatly enjoyed it, although I advise reading it jointly with other revisionist works, as another reviewer suggests. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Must be Seriously Considered by Scholars of Early Islam. By Jazz It Up Baby. As David Cook of Rice University stated, Nevo's work falls squarely into the "Hagarist" tradition that radically reinterprets early Islamic history. For the most part, scholars of early Islam—even Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, authors of Hagarism [1]—have avoided the full implications of this interpretation because of the almost complete lack of non-Muslim sources and the difficulties in working with the tendentious Muslim ones. Nevo and Koren overcome this problem by focusing upon sources not usually adduced by scholars of Islam: archeology and epigraphy. By examining the archeological remains (and in some cases the lack thereof) of the early Islamic period, the authors call into question the standard accounts of Muslim conquest that are still cited as fact in most history books. They supply a vast selection of inscriptions hitherto unnoticed and uncited in the standard histories, which for the most part are datable to the seventh and eighth centuries, and use them to build a historical theory considerably different from the standard account. Nevo's theory is that Arab history—specifically not Islamic history—is completely a construct and cannot stand up to historical examination on the basis of non-Muslim sources. His theory surmises that paganism was far more deeply rooted in pre-Arabian society than was previously thought and that much of what we now call early Islamic history records the development away from that heritage into a monotheistic belief-system that did not reach perfection until the ninth century at the earliest. For the most part, Crossroads employs a very rigorous, historical methodology, focusing exclusively upon those sources datable from before the ninth century, which usually means non-Muslim ones. These

sources provide a view of Islam that lacks the preeminence of Muhammad and the exclusivity of later Islam. This reviewer finds much of Nevo and Koren's work to be plausible or at least arguable, and it certainly presents a powerful challenge to the mainstream view of the origins of Islam. It is a pity that Nevo and Koren do not include the work of Fred Donner, who also has come (from a more mainstream approach) to reject the early exclusivity of Islam. More broadly *Crossroads to Islam* suffers to some extent from a lack of cited scholarship after the early 1990s, which is a pity. One area, however, where this reviewer disagrees with Nevo and Koren concerns their theory, following John Wansbrough, of the Qur'an as the product of a redaction during the `Abbasid period (eighth-ninth centuries). While agreeing that the historical narratives of the conquests are highly problematic and for the most part probably fanciful, they do represent, according to the historical memory of the Arabs, the supreme confirmation miracle of Islam. If the Qur'an were redacted at such a late date, when numerous datable hagiographical accounts of the conquests already existed, these accounts would surely have been represented within the text of the Qur'an. Their absence pushes the date of the Qur'an back to the earlier period. Other than that, the account given by Nevo and Koren must be seriously considered by scholars of early Islam. [1] *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

In this controversial exploration of the early history of Islam, archaeologist Yehuda D. Nevo and researcher Judith Koren present a revolutionary theory of the origins and development of the Islamic state and religion. Whereas most works on this subject derive their view of the history of this period from the Muslim literature, *Crossroads to Islam* also examines important types of evidence hitherto neglected: the literature of the local (Christian) population, archaeological excavations, numismatics, and especially rock inscriptions. These analyses lay the foundation for a radical view of the development of Islam. According to Nevo and Koren, the evidence suggests that the Arabs were in fact pagan when they assumed power in the regions formerly ruled by the Byzantine Empire. They contend that the Arabs took control almost without a struggle, because Byzantium had effectively withdrawn from the area long before. After establishing control, the new Arab elite adopted a simple monotheism influenced by Judaeo-Christianity, which they encountered in their newly acquired territories, and gradually developed it into the Arab religion. Not until the mid-8th century was this process completed. This interpretation of the evidence corroborates the view of other scholars, who on different grounds propose that Islam and the canonized version of the Koran were preceded by a long period of development. This new view turns on its head the traditional history of the rise of Islam, which claims that Islam began with Muhammad in Mecca and Medina around 622; then spread throughout Arabia under his charismatic leadership; and finally, after Muhammad's death (632), inspired his followers to conquer widespread territories both in the East and West. By contrast, Nevo and Koren suggest that the rise of the Arab state created a need for a state religion, eventually called Islam. This absorbing and controversial rethinking of Islam's early history is must reading for students and scholars of Islamic history and anyone interested in the origins of the world's second largest religion.

From Publishers Weekly In the consensus view of early Muslim history, the Arab tribes, united and inspired by Muhammad's teachings, embarked on a military jihad that wrested Syria and Palestine from a weakened Byzantine Empire in the years after 630 A. D. But according to this radical revisionist treatise by the late Israeli archaeologist Nevo and Koren, an "information specialist," every particular of this orthodoxy is wrong. Basing their arguments on a detailed examination of archaeology, contemporary texts, linguistic analyses and evidence from coins, the authors arrive at a thesis that will surely be incendiary to Islamic believers. The authors argue that Byzantium voluntarily transferred her eastern provinces to Arab client states in continuance of an imperial policy stretching back for centuries. The Arabs who took over the region after 630 A.D. were not Muslims, but a mixture of pagans and adherents of a Judeo-Christian "indeterminate monotheism" from which Islam evolved over succeeding decades. Muhammad was not a historical person, they argue, but a mythical figure who became, starting in the 690s, a "National Arab Prophet" of a new official religion for the consolidating Arab state. In addition to the Muslim ire that the authors' religious debunking will raise, specialists in the field may have objections to their treatment as well. Especially unconvincing is their rational-actor account of Byzantine policy towards the eastern provinces, where, they assert, the Byzantine government deliberately fomented and then persecuted heresies, stoked hatred of the emperor himself and left its territories open to military incursions by rival powers, all in order to reconcile the inhabitants to their long-planned abandonment by the empire. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. "informative survey of the origins of the Arab religion and state; an important addition to the literature on Arab-American history" -- The Bookwatch, November 2003 From the Inside Flap In *CROSSROADS TO ISLAM*, Yehuda Nevo and Judith Koren offer a controversial exploration of the early history of Islam, presenting a revolutionary theory of the origins and development of the Islamic state and religion from the early 7th to the mid-8th century C.E. Many Western scholars recognize the difficulties of accepting the validity, as historical evidence, of the huge body of Muslim literature, with its detailed account of the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and the subsequent, religiously inspired Invasion of the settled lands beyond; for this literature only started to be written 150 years after the period it purports to describe. But until now, there was little with which to replace it. Nevo and Koren examine in detail the available contemporary

evidence, most of which has not been seriously taken into account by most historians of early Islam. It includes official documents and inscriptions of the early Arab State; archaeological excavations and artifacts; legends on coins; and hundreds of Arabic rock inscriptions. Based on their analysis of this evidence, Nevo and Koren outline an absorbing and compelling rethinking of the early history of Islam. They argue that the Byzantine Empire withdrew before the Arab Takeover; that the resulting power vacuum led to competition among local Arab chiefs to widen their sphere of control; and that Muawiyah was the first historical caliph. They document the evidence that the Arabs were initially pagan and trace the development of Islam from a simple "Indeterminate Monotheism," adopted by Muawiyah, to the Muslim faith of the late 2nd century A.H. ("after the hijra": the Muslim era, which counts from 622 C. E., year Muhammad fled to Madinah according to the Muslim sources), in which period they also place the canonization of the Quran. The origin of the Arab Prophet, introduced by the caliph Abd al-Malik around 690 C.E., is another central issue addressed by the authors' new theory.