

SOURCE MATERIAL

ISLAM'S DARK PAST

"The Qur'an escapes from the hearts of men faster than a runaway camel."

Islam provides only one prime source of information on Muhammad and the formation of Islam written within two centuries of the time he lived and it was conceived. Ishaq's *Sira*, or Biography, stands alone—a singular and tenuous thread connecting us to a very troubled man and time. Over the next two hundred years, other Hadith Collections were compiled by the likes of Tabari, Bukhari, and Muslim. Their assemblages of oral reports, or Traditions, were said to have been inspired by Allah. They purport to convey Muhammad's words and example. They also explain the Qur'an—a book so deficient in context and chronology, it can only be understood when seen through the eyes of the Sunnah writers.

Throughout *Prophet of Doom*, I have been less concerned with the validity of these sources than with what they have to say. Their message is all Muslims have. Together, the Sunnah and Qur'an are Islam. Therefore, I was willing to take them at face value.

But you don't have to dig very deep to find the truth. Even a cursory reading of the Qur'an is sufficient to prove that it is a fraud. There is no way the creator of the universe wrote a book devoid of context, without chronology or intelligent transitions. Such a creative spirit wouldn't need to plagiarize. He would know history and science and thus wouldn't have made such a fool of himself. The God who created man wouldn't deceive him or lead him to hell as Allah does. Nor would he order men to terrorize, mutilate, rob, enslave, and slaughter the followers of other Scriptures he claims he revealed, wiping them out to the last. One doesn't need a scholastic review of the Qur'anic text to disprove its veracity. It destroys itself quite nicely.

While that remains true, I believe that I owe it to readers, especially Muslims, to explore the textual evidence for the Sunnah and Qur'an. I'll start with what the Hadith has to say about the Qur'an's origins, but I'm going to dispense in short order with the circular reasoning Islamic scholars use in that they all quote the Sunnah. While there are Hadiths that say Bakr tried to

assemble the Qur'an and others that credit Uthman, Muhammad's third successor, it's like using the results of Carbon-14 dating to prove the validity of Carbon-14 dating. The source is the same.

In Bukhari's Hadith Collection alone we find a sea of disturbing and contradictory claims regarding the compilation of Allah's book. There were differing versions, even in Muhammad's day: "Ibn Abbas asked, 'Which of the two readings of the Qur'an do you prefer?' The Prophet answered, 'The reading of Abdallah ibn Mas'ud.' Then Abdallah came to him, and he learned what was altered and abrogated." This is reasonably clear. The Hadith says that portions of the Qur'an were conflicting, changed, and cancelled.

Tradition tells us that Muhammad had not foreseen his death, and so he had made no preparations for gathering his revelations. He left it up to his followers to sift through the conflicting versions. That's astonishing. Islam's lone "prophet" left his Qur'an as vapor, sound waves that had long since faded.

Bragging one day, the imposter called his surahs a miracle: Bukhari:V6B61N504 "Muhammad said, 'Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed. But what I have been given is Divine Inspiration which Allah has revealed to me. So I hope that my followers will outnumber the followers of the other Prophets.'" If the Qur'an was his only "miracle," why would he leave it in such horrid condition? I believe the answer is clear. Muhammad knew his recitals had been nothing more than a figment of his less-than-admirable imagination, situational scriptures designed to satiate his cravings. Preserving these recitals would only serve to incriminate him, as this Hadith suggests. Muslim:C24B20N4609 "The Messenger said: 'Do not take the Qur'an on a journey with you, for I am afraid lest it would fall into the hands of the enemy.' Ayyub, one of the narrators in the chain of transmitters, said: 'The enemy may seize it and may quarrel with you over it.'"

A number of Bukhari Hadith suggest that Muhammad's companions tried to remember what they could of what he had said, but there was a problem. Like today, those who knew the Qur'an were militants. So Abu Bakr feared that large portions would be forgotten. The best Muslims were dying on the battlefield subduing fellow Arabs. In one battle alone, most of the Qur'an's most knowledgeable reciters were lost, and many Qur'anic passages along with them. Bukhari:V6B60N201 "Zaid bin Thabit, the Ansari said, 'Abu Bakr sent for me after the (heavy) casualties among the warriors (of the battle) of Yamama (where a great number of Muhammad's Companions were killed). Umar was present with Bakr. "The people have suffered heavy casualties at Yamama, and I am afraid that there will be more casualties among those who can recite the Qur'an on other battlefields. A large part of the Qur'an may be lost unless you collect it." I replied to Umar, "How can I do something which Allah's Apostle has not done?" Umar kept on pressing, trying to persuade me to accept his proposal.' Zaid bin Thabit added, 'Umar was sitting with Abu Bakr and was speaking (to) me. "You are a wise young man and we do not suspect you of telling lies or of forgetfulness. You used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah's Apostle. Therefore, look for the Qur'an and

collect it (in one manuscript)." By Allah, if Abu Bakr had ordered me to shift one of the mountains (from its place) it would have been easier for me than the collection of the Qur'an. I said to both of them, "How dare you do a thing which the Prophet has not done?"

Zaid declared that collecting the Qur'an's surahs would be an impossible task. He said that it would be easier to move mountains than to turn Muhammad's string of oral recitals into a book. The reason for this rather troubling statement is obvious: Zaid's search for Qur'anic passages forced him to rely upon carvings on the leg or thigh bones of dead animals, as well as palm leaves, skins, mats, stones, and bark. But for the most part, he found nothing better than the fleeting memories of the prophet's Companions, many of whom were dead or dying. In other words, the Qur'an, like the Hadith, is all hearsay.

There were no Muslims who had memorized the entire Qur'an, otherwise the collection would have been a simple task. Had there been individuals who knew the Qur'an, Zaid would only have had to write down what they dictated. Instead, Zaid was overwhelmed by the assignment, and was forced to "search" for the passages from men who believed that they had memorized certain segments and then compare what he heard to the recollection of others. Therefore, even the official Islamic view of things, the one recorded in their scripture, is hardly reassuring.

Worse still, the Muslim chosen for this impossible task was the one in the best position to plagiarize the Torah and Talmud. Moreover, it's obvious he did. Remember: Tabari VII:167 "In this year, the Prophet commanded Zayd bin Thabit to study the Book of the Jews, saying, 'I fear that they may change my Book.'"

As is typical of the Islamic Traditions, the more one digs, the worse it gets. Bukhari:V6B61N511 "Zaid bin Thabit said, 'I started searching for the Qur'an till I found the last two Verses of Surat At-Tauba with Abi but I could not find them with anyone other than him. They were: 'Verily there has come to you an Apostle from amongst yourselves.'" [9:128] This is incriminating. The 9th surah was the second to last revealed. If only one person could remember it, there is no chance those revealed twenty-five years earlier were retained. Furthermore, this Tradition contradicts the most highly touted Islamic mantra: Most Muslims contend Uthman, not Bakr, ordered the collection of the Qur'an a decade later.

And who knows what version they finally committed to paper, if in fact they ever did? Bukhari:V6B61N513 "Allah's Apostle said, 'Gabriel [whom Muhammad said had 600 wings] recited the Qur'an to me in one way. Then I requested him and continued asking him to recite it in other ways, and he recited it in several ways till he ultimately recited it in seven different ways.'" So there were at least seven Qur'ans.

That wasn't the end of the confusion. In version two of the angelic recital, Muhammad was the reciter, not Gabriel. Bukhari:V6B61N519 "In the month of Ramadan Gabriel used to meet Muhammad every night of the month till it elapsed. Allah's Apostle used to recite the Qur'an for him." Then, we go from every night to once a

year. Bukhari:V6B61N520 "Gabriel used to repeat the recitation of the Qur'an with the Prophet once a year, but he repeated it twice with him in the year he died."

No wonder they couldn't remember who said what to whom. Bukhari:V6B61N549 "Allah's Apostle said, "The example of the person who knows the Qur'an by heart is like the owner of tied camels. If he keeps them tied, he will control them, but if he releases them, they will run away." To release something you have memorized you would have to share it. So this Hadith is apparently telling Muslims not to recite surahs for fear of losing them. And speaking of losing it: Bukhari:V6B61N550 "The Prophet said, 'It is a bad thing that some of you say, "I have forgotten such-and-such verse of the Qur'an." For indeed, I have been caused to forget it. So you must keep on reciting the Qur'an because it escapes from the hearts of men faster than a runaway camel.'"

This frivolity is important because it exposes a lie that sits at the heart of Islam. It's irrational to think God would shift from a reliance on literate Jewish prophets to an illiterate Arab. The foundation of Islamic teaching is based upon the notion that God chose Arabs because they had good memories. Therefore, they reason, the Qur'an wouldn't be changed the way the Bible was corrupted. All Islamic schools from Alazahr to Pakistan are centered around this obvious lie. The Qur'an was forgotten; it was changed and recited by so many people it was corrupted beyond hope before it ever found paper. And since the Bible started out as words on a page, it has remained true to its initial inspiration.

But it's worse than that. Muslims insist on confining the Qur'an to Religious Arabic—a language which is so hard to learn with its complex grammar and antiquated vocabulary, it's ranked second by linguists after Chinese, as the world's least hospitable communication medium. Worse still, even in Arabic much of the Qur'an cannot be understood because many words are missing and others are nonsensical. It's not rational to think that God would choose illiterate people and such a difficult language if he wished to communicate his message to the whole world. It's like using diesel to fuel a lamp and then hiding it in a swamp.

But there is a method to their madness. By confining the Qur'an to Religious Arabic, Islamic clerics and kings can say whatever they want—and they do. An Egyptian doctor who edited Prophet of Doom wrote: "You would be amazed how they can distort facts to deceive others."

In keeping with the camel theme, Allah's divinely inspired messenger announced: Bukhari:V6B61N552 "The Prophet said, 'Keep on reciting the Qur'an, for Qur'an runs away (is forgotten) faster than camels that are released from their tying ropes.'" In the interest of full disclosure, I present: Bukhari:V6B61N559 "The Prophet said, 'Why does anyone of the people say, "I have forgotten such-and-such Verses (of the Qur'an)?" I am, in fact, caused (by Allah) to forget.'" It's a wonder anyone takes Islam seriously.

Continuing to cripple its own claim that the Qur'an was retained as Allah's Pen wrote it: Bukhari:V6B61N561 "Umar bin Khattab [the second Caliph] said, 'I

heard Hisham bin Hakim bin Hizam reciting Surat Al-Furqan ["Al-Furqan," the title of the 25th surah, has no meaning in any language.] during the lifetime of Allah's Apostle. I listened to his recitation and noticed that he recited it in several ways which Allah's Apostle had not taught me. So I was on the point of attacking him in the prayer, but I waited till he finished, and then I seized him by the collar. "Who taught you this Surah which I have heard you reciting?" He replied, "Allah's Apostle taught it to me." I said, "You are lying. Allah's Apostle taught me in a different way this very Surah which I have heard you reciting." So I led him to Muhammad. "O Allah's Apostle! I heard this person reciting Surat-al-Furqan in a way that you did not teach me." The Prophet said, "Hisham, recite!" So he recited in the same way as I heard him recite it before. On that Allah's Apostle said, "It was revealed to be recited in this way." Then the Prophet said, "Recite, Umar!" So I recited it as he had taught me. Allah's Apostle said, "It was revealed to be recited in this way, too." He added, "The Qur'an has been revealed to be recited in several different ways, so recite of it that which is easier for you." If Muhammad were alive today and made this statement, he would be branded an apostate, hunted down and murdered. As we shall soon discover, he just contradicted Islam's holy grail.

Examining these Hadith we discover that the first "manuscript" wasn't even in Muhammad's tongue, requiring it to be translated. Bukhari:V4B56N709 "Uthman called Zaid, Abdallah, Said, and Abd-Rahman. They wrote the manuscripts of the Qur'an in the form of a book in several copies. Uthman said to the three Quraishi persons, 'If you differ with Zaid bin Thabit on any point of the Qur'an, then write it in the language of the Quraysh, as the Qur'an was revealed in their language.' So they acted accordingly." Because there was such confusion, Uthman ordered competing versions to be burned. But by destroying the evidence, he destroyed the Qur'an's credibility. Now all Muslims have is wishful thinking.

Since "wishful thinking" isn't sufficient, and since the Islamic Hadith is more conflicting than helpful, I am going to turn to reason and fact to determine what is true and what is not.

First, let's establish what Muslims believe so that we can direct our attention to determining whether or not it is accurate, or even reasonable. As evidenced by the official Islamic introduction to the Qur'an, Islamic scholars contend: "The Qur'an is one leg of two which form the basis of Islam. The second leg is the Sunnah of the Prophet. What makes the Qur'an different from the Sunnah is its form. Unlike the Sunnah, the Qur'an is quite literally the Word of Allah, whereas the Sunnah was inspired by Allah but the wording and actions are the Prophet's. The Qur'an has not been expressed using any human words. Its wording is letter for letter fixed by Allah. Prophet Muhammad was the final Messenger of Allah to humanity, and therefore the Qur'an is the last Message which Allah has sent to us. Its predecessors, such as the Torah, Psalms, and Gospels have all been superseded." Funny thing, though, the Allah-inspired Sunnah just confirmed that the Qur'an used "human words" and that it wasn't "fixed letter for letter by Allah." Muslims ought to read their own scriptures.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, including their own, Islamic scholars

contend that today's Qur'an is an identical copy of Allah's Eternal Tablets, even so far as the punctuation, titles, and divisions of chapters are concerned. Maududi, one of the most esteemed Qur'anic scholars said, "The Qur'an exists in its original text, without a word, syllable nor even letter having been changed." (Towards Understanding Islam, Maududi) Abu Dhabi, another leading Muslim said, "No other book in the world can match the Qur'an. The astonishing fact about this Book of Allah is that it has remained unchanged, even to a dot, over the last fourteen hundred years. No variation of text can be found in it." That's factually untrue, every word of it.

The Qur'an says of itself: "Nay this is a glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) on a Preserved Tablet." (85:21) "A Scripture Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; a Qur'an in Arabic." (41:3) "We have coined for man in this Qur'an. (It is) a Qur'an in Arabic, without any crookedness (therein)." (39:27) Richard Nixon tried that line too. It didn't work any better for him than it does for Allah. Over the course of these pages you'll discover why.

Y V Z M

This appendix follows twenty-five chapters of Islamic scripture, all punctuated by my analysis, so I thought you'd be best served if this section was driven by most qualified Islamic scholars. While their findings are shocking, don't say you weren't warned. I dedicated the opening of the "Heart of Darkness" chapter (pages 115-8) to this very problem.

The best-researched scholastic analysis of the validity of the Qur'an and Sunnah was presented in 1995 by Jay Smith. In his debate at Cambridge University, he said, "Most Westerners have accepted Islamic claims at face value. They have never had the ability to argue their veracity, because the claims could neither be proved nor disproved, as their authority was derived solely from the Qur'an itself. There has also been a reticence to question the Qur'an and the prophet due to the adverse response directed upon those who were brave enough to attempt it in the past. [Muslims kill their critics.] So Westerners have been content to assume that Muslims have some evidence to substantiate their beliefs." We are about to discover that they have no such data. And what little exists serves only to destroy Islam's credibility.

According to Wansbrough, Schacht, Rippin, Crone, and Humphreys: "Almost universally, independent scholars studying the Qur'an and Hadith, have concluded that the Islamic scripture was not revealed to just one man, but was a compilation of later redactions and editions formulated by a group of men, over the course of a few hundred years. The Qur'an which we read today is not that which was in existence in the mid-seventh century, but is a product of the eighth and ninth centuries. It was not conceived in Mecca or Medina, but in Baghdad. It was then and there that Islam took on its identity and became a religion. Consequently, the formative stage of Islam was not within the lifetime of Muhammad but evolved over a period of 300 years."

While these are strong words, rest assured: the scholars prove their case.

What's interesting here is that apart from the Islamic Hadith, virtually nothing is known about the formation of Islam and the creation of the Qur'an. The scholars agree: "Source material for this period is sparse. The only manuscripts available to historians are Muslim sources. What is more, outside the Qur'an, the sources are all late. Prior to 750 A.D., and Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul Allah*, we have no verifiable Muslim documents which can provide a window into Islam's formative period. Even then, his manuscript has been lost so we are dependent upon those who wrote fifty to one hundred years thereafter. And no independent secular document exists with which to corroborate any Hadith," says Smith on behalf of Crone, Humphreys, Schacht, and Wansbrough.

"During the ninth century, Islamic sages in Baghdad attempted to describe Islam's beginnings from their viewpoint. But much like an adult writing about their childhood, the account is colored and biased. The picture that Islam was fully developed religiously, politically, and legally by an illiterate man in one of the most primitive places on earth isn't feasible," Smith claimed in his Cambridge debate.

Sure, Muhammad's scripture was feeble—equal parts delusional, dimwitted, and demented, regurgitated, plagiarized, and twisted—but there was too much of it to have been comprised and retained in the vacuum of the Hijaz. Central Arabia wasn't part of, or even known to, the civilized world at the time. And the Islamic Traditions themselves refer to this period as *Jahiliyyah*, or Period of Ignorance, implying its backwardness. "Arabia did not have an urbanized culture, nor could it boast of having the sophisticated infrastructure needed to create, let alone maintain the scenario painted by the later Traditions. There is no historical precedence for such a scenario."

Fortunately, historical experts have recently converged on Islam. They include: Dr. John Wansbrough of the University of London, Michael Cook, Patricia Crone of Oxford, now lecturing at Cambridge, Yehuda Nevo from the University of Jerusalem, Andrew Rippin from Canada, and others, including Joseph Schacht. They sought out, examined, and probed every source concerning the Qur'an and Sunnah to ascertain clues as to their origins.

In his debate, Smith said, "In order to critique the Qur'an we must go back to the beginning, to the earliest sources which we have at our disposal, to pick up clues as to its authenticity. One would assume that this should be quite easy to do, as it is a relatively new piece of literature, having appeared on the scene, according to Muslims, a mere '1,400 years ago.'"

However, the first century of Islam is dark, a veritable black hole from which nothing emerges. "The primary sources which we possess are 150 to 300 years after the events which they describe, and therefore are quite distant from those times and characters," say Nevo, Wansbrough, and Crone. "For that reason they are, for all practical purposes, secondary sources, as they rely

on hearsay material. The first and largest of these sources is what is called the 'Islamic Traditions' or 'Hadith.'"

Jay Smith was kind enough to publish his research in advance of his Cambridge debate. So as not to turn this appendix into a book, I have elected to abridge his findings. While I have come to the same conclusions, the words that follow are either his or quoted from cited sources. "Islamic Traditions are comprised of writings which were compiled by Muslims in the late eighth to early tenth centuries concerning what the prophet Muhammad said and did back at the dawn of the seventh century. There is also one early commentary on the Qur'an. These comprise the sole body of material which we have on Islam's formation. The Qur'an by itself is difficult to follow, as it leaves readers confused while it jumps from story to story, with little background narration or explanation. So the Traditions are critical as they provide the context of place, circumstance, and time which otherwise would be lost.

"In some instances the Hadith prevails over the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an refers to three daily prayers (surahs 11:114, 17:78, 30:17). The Hadith demands five. Muslims prostrate themselves in accordance with Muhammad's Sunnah orders rather than Allah's Qur'anic command.

"A number of genres exist within the Islamic Traditions. Their authors were not writers themselves, but were compilers and editors who drew together information passed to them. There were many compilers, but the four who are considered by Muslims to be the most authoritative in each genre lived and assembled their material between 750-923 A.D. (or 120-290 years after Muhammad's death). Here is a list of their works, along with their dates: The Sira (Arabic for "Biography") is an accounting of the life of the prophet, including his raids. The earliest and most comprehensive Sira was composed by Ibn Ishaq, who died 765 A.D. His manuscript has been lost. Consequently, we are dependent on the Sira of Ibn Hisham, who died in 833. He edited Ishaq, and by his own admission, he omitted Hadith which he thought might have caused offense."

While Smith quoted Crone as his source, I'd like you to read what Hisham wrote. Ishaq:691 "For the sake of brevity, I am confining myself to the Prophet's biography and omitting some of the things which Ishaq recorded in this book in which there is no mention of the Apostle and about which the Qur'an says nothing. I have omitted things which are disgraceful to discuss, matters which would distress certain people, and such reports as al-Bakkai [Bukhari?] told me he could not accept as trustworthy—all of these things I have omitted." Since the character, deeds, and words of Muhammad presented in Hisham's edits of Ishaq are revolting, I can't imagine what would have been too "disgraceful to discuss." And in case you're wondering, the "matters that would distress certain people" comment speaks volumes. Hisham is telling us that Wansbrough, Cook, Crone, Humphries, Rippin, Margoliouth, and Muir are right. The Hadith that comprise the Sunnah were composed and compiled in

a highly politicized environment 200 years after Muhammad's death. A compiler's life was dependant upon not offending the cleric-kings.

While the Sira is nothing more than a collection of Hadith arranged in chronological order, the most "official" Islamic Hadith collection was compiled by al-Bukhari, who died in 870 A.D. "These include two thousand short reports or narratives (akhbar [news]) on the sayings and deeds of the prophet. Of the six most famous collections of Hadith, those of al-Bukhari and Muslim are considered to be the most authoritative.

"The Ta'rikh (which means "History" in Arabic) provides chronologies of the prophet's life and the formation of Islam. The earliest and most famous was written by al-Tabari, who died in 923 A.D." Some portions of Ishaq's original manuscript, discarded by Hisham, were retained by Tabari. Of particular interest is Ishaq's recording of Muhammad's Islamic creation accounts and his entanglement in the Quraysh Bargain and Satanic Verses. As such, the Ta'rikh, or History of al-Tabari is the oldest surviving uncensored account of Muhammad and Islam.

According to the Islamic scholars, "The Tafsir [which means explanation or interpretation in Arabic] comprise the fourth most reliable Islamic source documents. They are commentaries and exegesis on the Qur'an. The earliest, most universally respected, and best known was also written by Tabari."

As an interesting aside; I am routinely threatened by Muslims who assail my character in colorful ways. They claim that I know nothing about Islam and that my words are offensive, repulsive, disgraceful, bigoted, hateful, intolerant, mean spirited, and #%\$&*. But little do they know, they are not my words. All I have done is report what Islam has to say about itself. Apart from the Sira-Ta'rikh-Hadith collections of Ishaq, Tabari, Bukhari, and Muslim, nothing is known about Muhammad or Islam. The Qur'an literally disintegrates without them, since without context and chronology, it is gibberish.

This puts Muslims in a hellish predicament. If the Hadith compilations of Ishaq, Tabari, Bukhari, and Muslim are true, their prophet was the most evil man who ever lived—a bloodthirsty pirate, a ruthless terrorist, and a sexual pervert. His Islam was nothing more than the Profitable Prophet Plan. Allah was just one of many moon rocks. That's not good. But if the Hadith compilations of Ishaq, Tabari, Bukhari, and Muslim are not true, Islam evaporates.

Returning to Smith's debate paper, we find: "Obviously, the first question which we must ask is why these Traditions were written so late, 150 to 300 years after the fact? We simply do not have any account from the Islamic community during the initial 150 years or so. Not a single document has been found that can be traced to the period between the first Arab conquests of the early seventh century and the appearance of the Sira-Ta'rikh-Hadith collections of Ishaq, Tabari, and Bukhari towards the late eighth and ninth century. 'As historians and scholars, we would expect to find, in those intervening two

centuries, at least remnants of evidence for the development of Islam; yet we find nothing,' say Nevo, Crone, and Wansbrough. And that means the totality of the Islamic conquests from Spain to India were complete before the first verse of Islamic scripture was written or retained.

"A few Muslims disagree, maintaining that there is evidence of an earlier Tradition called the Muwatta by Malik ibn Anas. He died in 795 A.D. Yet even a cursory review shows this collection was comprised of 'schooled texts,' transmitted and developed over several generations. More incriminating still, they follow 'Shafi'i's law' which demands that all Hadith be traced to Muhammad by way of isnad. Yet the law and its observance did not come into effect until after 820 A.D."

Shafi'i was one of four Islamic Imams, who along with Malik Ibn Anas, Abu Hanefa, and Ibn Hanbul, was credited with creating Islamic Law, or Feqh. Each had their own interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith. The most extreme, militant, and radical was Ibn Hanbul, nicknamed Hunbali. In the Middle East, his name is used to describe a highly religious or obsessed person. The Hunbali School, which is similar to that of Ibn Taymea, forms the basis of Saudi Arabian Wahabism.

The Oxford accredited curator of Ancient Islamic Manuscripts for the British Museum, Martin Lings, a devout Muslim, confirmed in his *Muhammad, His Life Based Upon the Earliest Sources*, that Ibn Ishaq's *Sirat Rasul Allah* was Islam's earliest and most reliable accounting of Muhammad's life. His "Key References" list the books upon which *Prophet of Doom* was based: "The Qur'an, the *Ta'rikh* of al-Tabari, and the topical Hadith collections of Bukhari and Muslim." Lings does, however, acknowledge two additional sources. The first is Waqidi's *Kitab al-Maghazi*, a compilation of Muhammad's raids. While interesting, Waqidi doesn't help explain Islam as he focused on battles and invasions. He doesn't even venerate Muhammad as a prophet. Lings also referenced Ibn Sa'd's *Kitab at-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, even though its portrait of Islam's prophet was especially vulgar.

Sir John Glubb has written eleven books on Islam and lived among Muslims for the better part of his life. Under the heading "Sources" in his *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, he wrote: "There are three sources for the life of Muhammad: the Qur'an, the biographies and the traditions." Glubb said, "The Qur'an's value as a source is limited for it was not intended to be a narrative of events." Glubb's next assertion is also universally acknowledged: "The second source at our disposal is the biographies and histories of the first Arab writers. The earliest of these is Muhammad ibn Ishaq, who wrote his *Life of Allah's Apostle*, the *Sirat Rasul Allah*, about 120 years after the prophet's death. The only edition of Ibn Ishaq which has survived is that edited by Ibn Hisham, who died some 200 years after Muhammad. Another early narrative is the *Al Mughazi* of Waqidi, who died 197 years after the prophet." A "mug-

hazi" is an Islamic raid or invasion inspired by Muhammad, so Waqidi's work is only valuable if one is looking to judge Muhammad's skill as a combatant, not a prophet. "The third source of information on the life of Muhammad is the traditions, called in Arabic Hadith. This word really means a conversation or verbal report. After the death of Muhammad, his companions took great pleasure in describing him, recounting his sayings and sharing their experiences in his company. New converts listened to these stories and passed them on, until an immense quantity of such anecdotes was in circulation. The two most reliable and famous tradition collectors are Bukhari and Muslim. Bukhari compiled his massive work *The True Traditions* which is consisted of ninety-five books or sections, about 220 years after the death of Muhammad. Muslim published his Hadith collection some five or six years later."

The 20th century's most universally respected Islamic scholar is Dr. Arthur Jeffery. He headed the Department of Middle East Languages at Columbia University and taught linguistics at the School of Oriental Studies in Cairo. He wrote: "The briefest investigation suffices to reveal that the problem of Islamic sources is relatively simple, for most volumes represent little more than the working over (with fabulous and irrelevant additions and modifications) of perhaps half a handful Arabic texts of primary importance. The earliest *Life of Muhammad* of which we have any trace was written by Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, who died in 768 C.E. i.e., 130 years after the death of the prophet. The *Sirat Rasul Allah* of Ibn Ishaq, however, has perished, and all we know of it is what is quoted from it (and these quotations are fortunately considerable) in the works of later writers, particularly Ibn Hisham and al-Tabari. This work of Ibn Ishaq, in addition to being the earliest known attempt at a biography, has a further importance in that, whether because the writer was somewhat of a free thinker, or because he had not come under the influence of later idealizing tendencies, his work contains very much information of a character that is distinctly unfavorable to Islam's prophet."

To validate his point, Jeffery quotes Dr. Margoliouth's review of Muhammad's character from the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Volume 8, p. 878) that I have shared with you twice before. It begins: "The character attributed to Muhammad in the biography of Ibn Ishaq is exceedingly unfavorable." Moving on, Arthur Jeffery concludes his review of Islamic source material by confirming the validity of what we have read from others. In his *The Quest of the Historical Muhammad*, he writes: "The first important source that has actually come down to us, therefore, is Waqidi's *Kitab al-Maghazi*, or *Book of the Raids*. Al-Waqidi died 822 C.E. and his book may best be consulted in the translation of the important parts of it given in Wellhausen's *Muhammad in Medina* (Berlin, 1882). Waqidi's work, however, has the serious limitation that it deals only with Muhammad's campaigns.... Later Arabic biographies are of very secondary value as compared with these. And even these works are

not primary sources, as they are themselves based on two sources, Tradition and the Qur'an. The most important collections of Tradition are those of Bukhari (who died in 870 C.E.), and Muslim (who died in 874 C.E.). What value can be placed on the Traditions is questionable because the dates of the Hadith collections are even later than those of the biographies."

For a little more contemporary view, let's review the sources used by F. E. Peters, as he is considered to be one of today's most learned scholars on the subject of early Islam. He is Professor and Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages, Literature and History at New York University and has authored four insightful books on Islam. Recognizing that the process of defining the sources that comprise Islam is less than inspiring, Peters put his source evaluation in an appendix at the end of his, *Muhammad and the Origins of Islam*. In it we read: "The earliest integral example we possess of a biography is the *Life of the Apostle of Allah* composed out of earlier materials [Hadith, or oral traditions] by the Muslim scholar Ibn Ishaq (d. 767). In some ways this, by now standard Muslim *Life*, looks like a Gospel, but the appearance is deceptive. Ibn Ishaq's original, before a certain Ibn Hisham (d. 833) removed the 'extraneous material' from the work, was more in the nature of a 'world history' than a biography. The story began with Creation, and Muhammad's prophetic career was preceded by accounts of all the prophets who had gone before him. This earlier, 'discarded' section of Ishaq's work can to some extent be retrieved." Ishaq's discarded Hadith depicting Islamic Creation and Muhammad's presentation of Biblical patriarchs was retained in Volumes I-V of *The History of al-Tabari*.

Speaking of the Qur'an's deficient presentation of Muhammad, Peters said: "We do not have material in the Qur'an to compose a biography of Muhammad because the book is a disjointed discourse, a pastiche [imitation, spoof, parody] of divine monologues that can be assembled into a homily [lecture, sermon] or perhaps a catechism [snippets of dogma] but that reveals little or nothing about the life of Muhammad and his contemporaries.... The Qur'an give us no assurance that its words and sentiments are likely to be authentic in the light of the context they were delivered and in the manner of their transmission. There are no clues as to when or where or why these particular words were being uttered.... The Qur'an is of no use whatsoever as an independent source for reconstructing the life of Muhammad. The Qur'an is not terribly useful even for reconstructing the Meccan milieu much less the life of the man who uttered its words; it is a text without context."

Peters debunks the myth that "the formation of Islam was played out in the clear light of history." He writes: "For Muhammad, unlike Jesus, there is no Josephus to provide a contemporary political context, no literary apocrypha for a spiritual context and no Qumran Scrolls to illuminate a sectarian milieu. From the era before Islam there is chiefly poetry whose contemporary

authenticity is suspect, but was nevertheless used as the main vehicle of Arab history in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods. The fact remains that between the contemporary Greek and Roman sources about Arabia and the later Islamic Traditions about the same place, there is a total lack of continuity. Despite volumes of information supplied by later [9th and 10th century] Muslim literary [and thus not historic] sources, we know pitifully little for sure about the political or economic history of Muhammad's Mecca or of the religious culture from which he came."

F.E. Peters acknowledges, as do all serious scholars, that "the earliest 'biographers' of the Prophet, whose work is preserved by Ibn Ishaq and Tabari, were little more than collectors of oral reports or Hadith on the raids conducted by or under Muhammad. Yet, despite these obvious and serious disabilities, Ibn Ishaq's Biography of Allah's Apostle, is on the face of it a coherent and convincing account and gives the historian something to work with, particularly if the latter closes his eyes to where the material came from."

While I could share the source evaluations of another score of Islamic scholars with you, suffice it to say, nothing would change. The Qur'an is regarded as deficient due to its lack of context and chronological order. Ishaq's Sira is the oldest and most reliable source, but sadly it's composed only of oral reports a century removed from their authors. Moreover, the Sira has been edited for political consumption so we are reliant on Tabari's Ta'rikh. It thus provides the oldest uncensored narrative of Muhammad's words and deeds, his ambition, god, and religion. Bukhari and Muslim are additive but their lack of historical grounding, their late date, and their constant contradictions render them considerably less valuable. But as bad as these are, they are the best Islam has to offer.

Bemoaning the dearth of accurate and contemporaneous source material, Humphreys says: "Muslims, we would suppose, would have taken great care to record their spectacular achievements, and the highly literate and urbanized societies which they subjugated could hardly avoid coming to grips with what had happened to them. Yet all we find from this early period are sources which are either fragmentary or represent very specific or even eccentric perspectives, completely annulling any possibility of reconstructing Islam's first century." "We have no reliable proof that any Hadith Tradition actually speaks of the life of Muhammad, or even of the Qur'an," Joseph Schacht attests after putting the Hadith through the most rigorous scholastic investigation in history.

Schacht was ingenious. He used the court records from the early ninth century to show that neither defense nor prosecution used Hadiths that have since become the backbone of Islamic law. There is no chance men would have been convicted or exonerated in an Islamic court without referencing the most appropriate Hadith unless they simply didn't exist at the time. Schacht,

therefore, dates the creation of a Hadith to the time they were first used at trial. Not only did he find late dates for most Hadiths, he discovered something very sinister. Hadith with the best isnads were the most suspect.

Humphreys said: "We are asked to believe that these documents written hundreds of years later are accurate, though we are not presented with any evidence for their veracity, outside of isnads, which are nothing more than lists purporting to give the names of those from whom the oral traditions were passed down. Yet even the isnads lack any supportive documentation with which to corroborate their authenticity." Simply stated, insights into Islam's formation, the Qur'an's creation, and Muhammad's life are as black as the message they proclaim.

"Muslims maintain that the late dates of the primary sources can be attributed to the fact that writing was simply not used in such an isolated area or at that time. This assumption is completely unfounded, however, as writing on paper began long before the seventh century. Paper was invented in the fourth century, and used extensively throughout the civilized world thereafter. The Umayyad dynasty of Islam's first one hundred years was headquartered in the former Byzantine area of Syria, not Arabia. Thus, unlike Arabia, it was a sophisticated society which used secretaries in the Caliphal courts, proving that manuscript writing was well developed. Yet nothing has been found to support the religion of Islam. Not a single Hadith or Qur'an fragment dates to this time or place. The Muslims who had managed to conquer and tax much of the world during Islam's first 100 years couldn't manage to write a single scroll, surah, Sira, or Sunnah during those same 100 years.

"So we must ask how we came by the Qur'an if there was no Muslim scribe, cleric, or scholar capable of putting pen to paper before the eighth century? Muslims claim the existence of a number of codices of the Qur'an shortly after the death of Muhammad. The Uthmanic text, for example, had to have been written, otherwise it wouldn't be a text, right? Writing was available, but for some reason, no record was written prior to 750 A.D." As I am sure you're aware, these are very serious accusations. And ultimately they will lead us to a singular, undeniable, and very dire conclusion.

"Muslim scholars maintain that the absence of early documentation can be blamed on old age. They believe that the material upon which the primary sources were written either disintegrated over time, leaving us with no examples, or wore out and so were destroyed. But this argument is dubious. In the British Library we have ample examples of documents written by individuals in communities near Arabia. And they predate Islam by centuries. On display are New Testament manuscripts such as the Codex Syriaticus and the Codex Alexandrinus, both of which were written in the fourth century, 400 years before the period in question! Why have they not disintegrated with age?

"Where this argument is especially weak, however, is when we apply it to

the Qur'an itself. The 'Uthman text,' the final canon supposedly compiled by Zaid ibn Thabit under the direction of the third Caliph, is considered by all Muslims to be the most important piece of literature ever written. According to surah 43:2, it is the 'Mother of all Books.' It is considered to be an exact replica of the 'Eternal Tablets' which exist in heaven (surah 85:22). Muslim Traditions claim that all other competing codices and manuscripts were destroyed after 650 A.D. Even Hafsah's copy, from which the final recension was taken was burned. If this Uthmanic text was so important, why then was it not written on paper, or other material which would have lasted? And if the earliest manuscripts wore out with usage, why were they not replaced with others written on skin, like so many other older documents which have managed to survive?

"'We have absolutely no evidence of the original Qur'an,' say Schimmel, Gilchrist, Ling, and Safadi. 'Nor do we have a surviving fragment from the four copies which were made of this recension and sent to Mecca, Medina, Basra and Damascus.' Even if these copies had somehow disintegrated with time, there would surely be some fragments we could refer to. By the end of the seventh century Islam had expanded right across North Africa and up into Spain, and east as far as India. The Qur'an (according to tradition) was the centerpiece of their faith. Within that enormous sphere of influence, there should be some Qur'anic documents or manuscripts which have survived. Yet, there isn't even a scrap from that period. There is literally nothing from the first three generations of Islam to suggest that the Qur'an existed.

"While Christianity can claim more than 5,500 known Greek fragments and manuscripts of the New Testament, 10,000 Latin Vulgates and at least 9,500 other early versions, adding up to 25,000 New Testament sources still in existence (McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*), most of which were written between 25 to 350 years after the death and resurrection of Christ (or between the 1st and 4th centuries), Islam cannot provide a single manuscript until well into the eighth century (Lings, Safadi, Schimmel). If Christians could retain so many thousands of ancient documents, all of which were written centuries earlier, at a time when paper had not yet been introduced, forcing the dependency on papyrus which disintegrated more rapidly, then one wonders why Muslims were unable to forward a single manuscript from this much later period? This renders the argument that all the earliest Qur'ans simply disintegrated with age, absurd to the extreme."

The evidence, or lack thereof, leads us to a solitary rational conclusion. The reason no one has found a single surviving Qur'an or Hadith fragment, manuscript, or scroll dating to within a hundred years of the time they were allegedly revealed is they never existed. The Qur'an and Hadith, and therefore Islam, were born in Baghdad, not Mecca or Medina in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, not at the cusp of the seventh.

If you waited to read this appendix until you were finished with much or

all of Prophet of Doom, you may be horrified knowing that what you have read from the Qur'an and Sunnah was fabricated. While that's true, it has been my contention all along that it doesn't matter. First, something happened to turn good men bad. For the first 3,000 years of recorded history the Bedouins of Arabia were self-reliant, peace- and freedom-loving peoples. They conquered no one. Then at the dawn of the seventh century everything changed. These Arabs, now Muslims, became the planet's most ruthless militants. They conquered the civilized world, plundering and taxing it for booty. They left oceans of blood and dictatorial tyrannies in their wake. Someone and something changed them. If not this man and these words, who and what?

Second, it doesn't matter what actually happened in the searing sands of the Arabian Desert. What counts is what Muslims believe happened. It is why they terrorize us, shouting: "Allahu Akbar!" While neither the Qur'an nor Sunnah are accurate reflections of Muhammad, Allah, and Islam, they are the only reflections. The faith of a billion people is based upon them. If we want to understand why they kill, if we want to stop them, we must come to understand what they believe. And to their shame, the characters, deeds, and words presented in Islam's Hadith and Qur'an provide a believable and realistic portrayal of what turned good men bad.

I have, therefore, taken the Qur'an and Sunnah at face value, sharing the Hadith as if it were an accurate accounting of Muhammad's words and deeds. I have exposed the Qur'an as if Muhammad actually recited it. I did this for many reasons. First, it is the only means we have to understand the motivation for terror. Second, the words contained in these books are sufficient in and of themselves to demonstrate the deceitful, hateful, intolerant, immoral, and vicious nature of Muhammad, Allah, and Islam. So by reviewing them we have killed three birds with the same stone. I have proved that Islam is without merit, rotten to its core. The motivation for Islamic terror has been exposed. We know why good Muslims are 2,000% more violent than the rest of us. And by comparing the Islamic scriptures to Mein Kampf, we have been warned: we ignore Islam at our peril.

Returning to the Cambridge debate, Smith said: "In response, Muslims contend that they have a number of the Uthman Qur'ans, original copies from the seventh century, still in their possession. I have heard Muslims claim that there are originals in Mecca, in Cairo, and in almost every ancient Islamic settlement. I have often asked them to furnish me with the data which would substantiate their antiquity; a task which, to date, nobody has been able to do." Smith's experience is typical. Islam has bred a community of liars.

"There are two documents, however, which hold some credibility, and to which many Muslims refer. These are the Samarkand Manuscript, which is located in the State Library at Tashkent, Uzbekistan (in the southern part of the Russian Federation), and the Topkapi Manuscript, which can be found in

the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, Turkey. These two documents are old, and there has been ample etymological and paleographical analysis on them by scriptologists, as well as experts in Arabic calligraphy to warrant discussion.

"The Samarkand Manuscript is not a complete document. Out of the 114 surahs found in today's Qur'ans, only parts of suras 2 to 43 are included. Of these much of the text is missing. The actual inscription of the text in the Samarkand codex presents a real problem, as it is very irregular. According to Gilchrist's research, 'Some pages are neatly and uniformly copied while others are quite untidy and imbalanced. On some pages the text is expansive, while on others it is severely cramped and condensed. At times the Arabic letter KAF has been excluded, while on other pages it is the dominant letter on the page. Because so many pages differ so extensively from one another, the assumption is that we have a composite text, compiled from portions of different manuscripts. Also within the text, one finds artistic illuminations between the surahs, usually made up of colored bands of red, green, blue and orange medallions.' 'These illuminations have compelled the scriptologists to give the codex a ninth century origin, as it is grossly unlikely that such embellishments would have accompanied a seventh century Uthmanic manuscript sent out to the various provinces,' say Lings, Safadi, and Gilchrist.

"The Topkapi Manuscript in Istanbul is also written on parchment. It is devoid of the diacritical points needed for vocalization and word discernment. Like the Samarkand text, it is supplemented with ornamental medallions indicating a later age. Some Muslims claim that it must be one of the original copies, if not the original one compiled by Zaid ibn Thabit. Yet one only needs to compare it with the Samarkand codex to realize that they most certainly cannot both be Uthmanic originals. For instance, the Istanbul's Topkapi codex has 18 lines to the page whereas the Samarkand codex in Tashkent has only half that many; the Istanbul codex is inscribed throughout in a very formal manner, while the text of the Samarkand codex is often haphazard and considerably distorted. One cannot believe that both were copied by the same scribes.

"Experts in manuscript analysis use three tests for ascertaining age. They test the age of the paper on which the manuscript is written, using such chemical processes as carbon-14 dating. Precise dating of between +/-20 years is possible. There has been a reticence to use it, however, even though a refined form of carbon-14, known as Accelerator Mass Spectrometry, requires only 0.5 mg. of material for testing. Yet, to date, neither of these manuscripts have been tested by either method.

"Experts also study ink, analyzing its makeup, discerning where it originated, or if it had been erased and copied over. But the inaccessibility of these manuscripts for detailed research has precluded that. Those who guard them are afraid of what the tests will reveal. Thus specialists must go to the script

itself to determine whether the manuscript is recent or old. This study is known as paleography. 'Styles of letter formation change over time. These changes tend to be uniform as manuscripts are written by professional scribes. Thus penmanship tends to follow easy to delineate conventions, with only gradual modifications,' says Vanderkam, an expert in the field. 'By examining handwriting in texts whose dates are known and noting their development over time, a paleographer can compare them with other undated texts and thereby ascertain the time period to which they belong.'

"When experts apply the paleographical test to the Samarkand and Topkapi manuscripts they arrive at some interesting conclusions. The evidence proves that neither could be from Uthman's time. What most Muslims do not realize is that both manuscripts were written in Kufic Script, a script which according to modern Qur'anic experts, such as Martin Lings and Yasin Hamid Safadi, did not appear until late into the eighth century (790s or later). It was not in use at all in Mecca or Medina in the seventh century.

"The reasons for this are quite simple. The Kufic script, properly known as al-Khatt al-Kufi, derives its name from the city of Kufa in Iraq. It would be rather odd for this to be the official script of an Arabic Qur'an as it takes its name from a city that had just been conquered by Muslims." Arabic was a foreign language to the Persians. Further, for most of Islam's first century, the new empire was ruled from Syria, the very place where written Arabic had recently evolved from Aramaic via Syriac. Baghdad and Damascus were vying for power, and at the time, the Syrians were in charge.

"We know in fact, that the Kufic script reached its perfection during the late eighth century, one hundred and fifty years after Muhammad's death. Thereafter it became widely used throughout the Muslim world. This makes sense, since after 750 A.D. the Abbasids controlled Islam, and due to their Persian background, they moved the Islamic capital to Kufa and then Baghdad. They would thus have wanted their script to dominate, having been themselves dominated by the Umayyads who were based in Damascus for 100 years. It would be quite understandable that an Arabic script which originated in their area of influence, such as the Kufic script, would evolve into that which we find in these two documents mentioned here. (Kufa, Najaf, and Karbala are the most important towns for Shia Muslims even today.)

"Another factor which points to the late dates for these manuscripts are the format in which they are written. Due to the elongated style of the Kufic script, they both use sheets which are wider than they are tall. This 'landscape' format was borrowed from Syriac and Iraqi Christian documents of the eighth and ninth centuries. 'Earlier Arabic manuscripts were all written in the upright format,' explained Dr. Hugh Goodacre of the Oriental and India Office of Collections. 'Because the Topkapi and Samarkand Manuscripts were written in the Kufic script, and because they use the landscape format,

they could not have been written earlier than 150 years after Uthman's Recension was supposedly compiled,' Gilchrist confirmed.

"So what script would have been used in Central Arabia at that time? 'The first Arabic scripts in Mecca and Medina were al-Ma'il and Mashq,' say Lings and Safadi. The Ma'il Script came into use at the end of the seventh century and is easily identified, as it was written at a slight angle.' The word al-Ma'il means 'slanting.' The Mashq Script emerged at the same time. It is more horizontal and can be distinguished by its cursive and leisurely style. If a Qur'an had been compiled in Mecca or Medina in the seventh century, it would have had to have been written in the Ma'il or Mashq script.

"Interestingly, we have a Qur'an written in the Ma'il script, and many considered it to be the earliest Qur'an in our possession. Yet it is not found in either Istanbul or Tashkent, but, ironically, resides in the British Library in London. It has been dated towards the end of the eighth century by Martin Lings, the former curator for the manuscripts of the British Library, who is himself a practicing Muslim. Therefore, with the help of script analysis, scholars are certain that there is no known manuscript of the Qur'an which can be dated to within a century of the time it was allegedly revealed.

"Furthermore, none of the earliest Qur'an fragments can be dated earlier than 100 years after the time of Muhammad, either. In her book *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, Annemarie Schimmel underscores this point as she talks about the recently discovered Sana'a Qur'ans. 'The earliest datable fragments go back to the first quarter of the eighth century.'

"The Sana'a Qur'ans still remain a mystery, as the Yemen government has not permitted the Germans who were called to investigate them to publish their findings. There have been suggestions that the actual words in these early eighth century Qur'ans do not correspond to those which we have today. We still wait to know the whole truth." I will cover the Sana'a fragments and deal with the most recent findings surrounding them later in this appendix. Jay Smith's intuition was proved correct.

There is much discussion amongst secular historians and Islamic clerics as to the credibility of the Hadith compilations. "It now seems obvious that the early ninth century schools of law authenticated their own agenda by asserting that their doctrines came initially from the companions of the prophet and then from the prophet himself," Joseph Schacht reported.

Schacht maintains that the inspiration for his investigation was Islamic scholar al-Shafi'i, who died in 820 A.D. He stipulated that all Traditions of law must be traced back to Muhammad in order to retain their credibility. Schacht explains: "A great mass of legal traditions invoking the authority of the prophet originated during the time of Shafi'i and later. Consequently, they all express Iraqi doctrines, and not those from early Arabia or even Syria. The Iraqi legal and political agenda imposed by each school demonstrates

that most Hadith were conceived in the ninth and tenth centuries, invalidating the authenticity of the Sunnah."

In his debate, Smith said something readers of Prophet of Doom already know. "Certain compilers wrote reports which contradict other reports which they had themselves collected. Tabari, for instance, often gives conflicting accounts of the same incidents. Ishaq informs us that Muhammad stepped into a political vacuum upon entering Yathrib, but then later tells us that he snatched away authority from an established ruler. He says the Jews in Medina were supportive of their Arab neighbors, and yet were molested by them. Which are we to believe? Crone points out, 'The stories are told with complete disregard for what the actual situation in Medina may have been.'

"Contradictory accounts are also given by different compilers. Many are variations on a common theme. For example, there are fifteen different versions of Muhammad being blessed by a representative of a non-Islamic religion who 'recognized' him as a future prophet. Some place this encounter during his infancy, others when he was nine; some say he was twenty-five at the time. One Tradition maintains he was recognized by Ethiopian Christians, several by a Syrian monk, many by Yathrib Jews, one by a local Hanif, while others maintain it was a sorcerer. Some even suggest it was the belly of a dead animal. Crone concludes: 'What we have here is nothing more than fifteen equally fictitious versions of an event that never took place.'

"To make matters worse, the later the Hadith, the more detail it contains. Take for instance of the death of Abdallah, Muhammad's father. Ishaq and Tabari were agreed that Abdallah died early enough to leave Muhammad an orphan; but as to the specific details of his death, 'Allah knows best.' Waqidi, who wrote a half-century later, tells us not only when Abdallah died, but how he died, where he died, what his age was, and the exact place of his burial. According to Michael Cook, 'This evolution in the course of fifty years from uncertainty to a profusion of precise detail suggests that a fair amount of what Waqidi knew was not knowledge. This is rather typical of Waqidi. He was always willing to give precise dates, locations, names where Ishaq had none. But given that this information was all unknown earlier to Ishaq its value is doubtful in the extreme. And if spurious information accumulated at this rate in the three generations between Ishaq and Waqidi, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that even more must have accumulated in the four generations between Muhammad and Ishaq.'

"The sheer number of Hadith which suddenly appear create a good deal of skepticism. Bukhari claims that by 850 A.D. there were 600,000 Hadith about the prophet. They were so numerous the ruling Caliph asked him to pick the 'true' sayings of the prophet out of the sea of false ones. Bukhari never spelled out the criteria which guided his choice, except for vague pronouncements of 'unreliability' or 'unsuitability.' In the end, he retained only

2,602 Hadith (9,082 with repetition)—a mere 0.5%! Of the 600,000 Hadith 597,398 were false, and had to be scrapped.” Thus, by the time they were collected, 99.5% of the Oral Traditions upon which Islam was based were considered spurious.

Muslim scholars maintain that the primary means for choosing between authentic and spurious Hadith was a process of oral transmission called an *isnad*. This, Muslims contend, was the science which was used by Bukhari, Tabari and other ninth and tenth century compilers to authenticate their compilations. The compilers provided a list of names, which supposedly traced back the authorship through time to the prophet himself. For the early Muslim, an *isnad* was considered essential, because it was considered to be the signature of those from whom the document came. “Unfortunately, we have no evidence the *isnads* are legitimate. Rather it seems that *isnads* were simply applied to Hadith that approved or outlawed matters of interest to the Iraqi community in generations after Muhammad had died. These *isnads*, and the Hadith that they supposedly authenticate, merely testify to what the exegetes chose to enact rather than to what can be deemed historical fact. *Isnads* weaken that which they sought to confirm. We are left with the realization that without any continuous transmission between the seventh and eighth centuries, the Traditions can only be considered a snapshot of the later ninth and tenth centuries and nothing more.

“Humphreys asserts: ‘The “science” of *isnad* set about to authenticate *isnads* in the tenth century, long after the *isnads* in question had already been compiled, and have little relevance. Consequently, the larger the list, which includes the best known historical names, the more suspect its authenticity.’”

Therefore, from a credibility standpoint, the Islamic Hadith is no better than the Qur'an. There isn't a single glimmer of light from Islam's first one hundred and fifty years. Archeologists haven't found a scrap of paper, a papyrus scroll, a parchment, even a rock carving to suggest a single Hadith was coined within a century of Muhammad's death. Then, all of a sudden, two hundred and fifty years later, there are 600,000 of them that emerge out of thin air. Once again there is a singular rational explanation. They didn't exist previously. The Islamic Sunnah upon which Islam is based, upon which the Five Pillars are comprised, upon which suicide bombers blast their way into infamy is a farce. Like the Qur'an, the Sunnah was created in Baghdad.

But that does not mean that they are completely untrue. I believe much of what has come down to us in the Sunnah and Qur'an is a somewhat accurate depiction of what Muhammad said and did. First, it is inconceivable that Islamic clerics just made it all up. Somebody conquered them, and something made them Muslims. Second, somebody and something motivated Arabs to stream out of Arabia wielding swords. The portrayal of Muhammad presented in the Hadith provides a perfect explanation of what caused the first

Muslims to behave so badly. While the glove was woven in Mecca and decorated in Baghdad, the hand that fits inside belongs to the real Muhammad.

Third, attributing rape, incest, pedophilia, deceit, thievery, kidnapping, ransom, the slave trade, torture, and terrorist raids to a religious prophet in a land subjected to his doctrine, is unimaginable if not true. If you were going to conceive a “prophet” out of thin air, you wouldn’t include the Quraysh Bargain, the Satanic Verses, the Pledge of War at Aqaba, the Naklah raid, the real motivation for Badr, the Qurayza genocide, the Khaybar rape, or Bakr’s pan-Arabian war over taxes. The Persians were way too smart for that.

What I believe happened is embellishment. The Qur’an was insufficient religiously, so eighth century scholars buffed it up. You’ll soon discover where they got their material. The Hadith gained fables, miracles, exaggerations, laws, religious rituals and dogma—the kind of stuff the ruling elite in Baghdad needed to control and fleece those who were now under their spell.

Having demonstrated that there isn’t a shred of credible evidence (outside of Islamic behavior) to support the validity of the Qur’an and Hadith historically, scientifically, archeologically, or rationally, Smith turned his attention to its content. He began by positioning the Islamic claims so that his rebuttal would be on target. He said: “Muslims claim that the superiority of the Qur’an over all other revelations is due to its sophisticated structure and eloquent literary style. They quote from suras 10:37-8, 2:23, or 17:88, which say: ‘Will they say Muhammad has forged it? Answer: Bring therefore a surah like it, and call whom you may to your assistance, besides Allah, if you speak truth.’ This boast is echoed in the Hadith: ‘The Qur’an is the greatest wonder among the wonders of the world. This book is second to none in the world according to the unanimous decision of the learned men in points of diction, style, rhetoric, thoughts and soundness of laws and regulations to shape the destinies of mankind.’

“Muslims conclude that since there is no literary equivalent in existence, this proves that the Qur’an is a miracle sent down from God, and not simply written by any man. It is this inimitability, or uniqueness, termed *i’jaz* in Arabic, which Muslims believe proves its divine authorship and thus its status as a miracle. It confirms Muhammad’s prophetic claims as well as the entire veracity of Islam.”

Yet, the Qur’an is a horrid book by any criterion. It promotes terrorism. It condones rape, incest, thievery, kidnapping for ransom, the slave trade, mass murder, and worst of all, world conquest by way of the sword. It is nauseatingly repetitive, foolishly plagiarized, contradictory, and false scientifically and historically. And it’s a literary disaster with grammatical errors, missing words, and meaningless words. One out of every five verses is senseless. The speaker ducks in and out of first, second and third person and doesn’t know if he is one or many. He doesn’t even know his name. There are no intelligent transitions. And it’s jumbled together haphazardly, lacking any pretence of

sensible organization by subject, context, or chronology. It's little more than a childish rant revealing the demented, decadent, and delusional nature of its author. It is unsound in every way.

Pfander reports, "It is by no means the universal opinion of unprejudiced Arabic scholars that the literary style of the Qur'an is superior to that of other books in the Arabic language. Many doubt whether in eloquence and poetry it surpasses the *Mu'allaqat* by Imraul Quais, or the *Maqamat* of Hariri, though in Muslim lands few people are courageous enough to express such an opinion." Pfander elaborates by comparing the Qur'an with the Bible. "When we read the Old Testament in the original Hebrew, scholars hold that the eloquence of Isaiah and the Psalms, for instance, is far greater than that of any part of the Qur'an. Hardly anyone but a Muslim would deny this." Although, that isn't saying much; all coherent writing is superior to the Qur'an.

"A comparison with the Bible brings other problems to light. When anyone familiar with it begins to read the Qur'an, it becomes immediately apparent that the Qur'an is an entirely different kind of literature, whatever its poetic merits. Whereas the Bible provides a historical context for everything, the Qur'an contains almost none. Whereas the Bible goes out of its way to explain unfamiliar terminology or territory, the Qur'an remains silent. In fact, the very structure of the Bible, consisting of a library of 66 books, written over a period of 1,500 years reveals that it is ordered according to chronology, subject, and theme. The Qur'an, on the other hand, reads more like a jumbled and confused collection of statements and ideas, many of which bear little relationship to preceding chapters and verses. Scholars admit that the Qur'an is so haphazard in its make-up it requires the utmost sense of duty for anyone to plow through it."

The German secular scholar Salomon Reinach states: "From the literary point of view, the Qur'an has little merit. Declamation, repetition, puerility, a lack of logic and coherence strike the unprepared reader at every turn. It is humiliating to the human intellect to think that this mediocre literature has been the subject of innumerable commentaries, and that millions of men are still wasting time in absorbing it." I have also struggled with this thought. Muhammad and his scripture are so moronic and repulsive, I feel like I am wasting my time. Then I think of the billion people who are victimized by Islam. Without a voice willing to proclaim the truth, no matter how disgusting it is, they will never be freed from its clutches. Then I think of victims of Islamic terror and my soul cries out, hoping to limit future carnage. Finally, I read Isaiah's prophecies, and those by Ezekiel, Daniel, and John. If I am interpreting them correctly, within a quarter century one quarter of the earth's people are going to die as a result of Islam. That's motivation enough.

McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia maintains: "The Qur'an is exceedingly incoherent and sententious, the book being without any logical order of

thought either as a whole or in its parts. This agrees with the desultory and incidental manner in which it is said to have been delivered." Even the Muslim scholar Dashti laments the literary defects: "Unfortunately the Qur'an was badly edited and its contents are very obtusely arranged. All students of the Qur'an wonder why the editors did not use the natural and logical method of ordering by date of revelation."

Fortunately, you know the answer. By arranging the Qur'an in the order it was revealed and by infusing it with the context of the Sira, the message becomes very dark and sinister. A correctly ordered Qur'an proves that the whole of Muhammad's recital was composed to serve a covetous, immoral, criminal, and murderous agenda.

"Another problem is that the reader of the Qur'an must endure endless repetition of the same material." The stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, Pharaoh, Jesus, and Mary are collectively retold one hundred times. "The frequency with which we find alternative versions of the same passage in different surahs is troublesome."

The Qur'an has other literary difficulties. "The subject matter within surahs jumps from one topic to the next, with duplications and inconsistencies in grammar, law, and theology," Rippin suggests. "The language is semi-poetical, while its grammar, due to omission, is so elliptical as to be obscure and ambiguous. There is grammatical discord such as the use of plural verbs with singular subjects, and variations in the treatment of the gender nouns (2:177; 3:59; 4:162; 5:69; 7:160; & 63:10). Many times sentences leave verbs out. The Qur'an is replete with dangling modifiers. It has few explanations. Consequently the Qur'an is difficult to read and impossible to comprehend."

As an example, Qur'an 3:60 omits the words "This is." The verse begins: "the truth from your Lord, so be not from those who doubt." But it gets worse. The Arabic "word" used for "doubt" is "momtreen." It is not used anywhere else in the Arabic language except in this verse. Islamic Imams are clueless as to what momtreen means so the translators simply guessed "doubt." In Qur'an 7:160 "Fanbagesat" is a nonexistent, and thus meaningless word, as well.

Similarly, "al Sa'boon" in Qur'an 5:69 isn't a word. The only place it's used in all of the Arabic language is in this one verse. No one knows what al Sa'-boon means. And there are a hundred more mystery "words" like these.

The oft quoted and superficially tolerant verse: 005.069 "Surely, those who believe and those who are Jews, Sabians and Christians, whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, and works good, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve," was abrogated. The Noble Qur'an says: "This verse should not be misinterpreted. It was abrogated by 3:85 [which is impossible since the 3rd surah was revealed before the 5th surah]. After the coming of Prophet Muhammad no other religion except Islam will be accepted from anyone."

An example of a grammatical error can be found in Qur'an 63:11. "Ethny Asher Asbatan" according to Arabic grammar rules should be: "Ethny Asher

Sebtan" not "Asbatan." As it was written it says: "Allah will not delay in taking a soul in it is time." He meant to say: "when it dies."

These aren't the only problems. Patricia Crone points out: "Within blocks of verses trivial dislocations are surprisingly frequent. Allah may appear in the first and third persons in the same sentence. There are omissions, which if not made good by interpretation, render the sense unintelligible."

In response to these accusations, the theologian-grammarian al-Rummani argued that the ellipses and grammatical irregularities were really positive rhetorical devices rather than evidence of rushed or sloppy writing. It's another Islamic first: the Qur'an is so poorly written only God could have bungled it.

Muir discovered: "Al-Kindi, a Christian polemicist employed in the Caliphal court, had discussions with Muslims as early as 830 A.D., immediately after the Qur'an was canonized based upon the historical evidence. He seemed to understand the agenda and the problem. Anticipating the claim that the Qur'an itself was proof for its divine inspiration he responded by saying: 'The result of all of this process by which the Qur'an has come into being is that it's patently obvious to those who have read these scriptures that your histories are all jumbled together and intermingled. It is an evidence that many different hands have been at work therein, and caused discrepancies, adding or cutting out whatever they liked or disliked. As such, the conditions are right for a new revelation to be sent down from heaven.'" Interestingly, Al-Kindi's pronouncement as early as the ninth century agrees with the conclusion of Wansbrough over eleven hundred years later; both maintaining that the Qur'an was the result of a haphazard compilation by later redactors a century or more after the alleged revelation.

"Another difficulty with the Qur'an is scope. Some verses state that it is a book only for Arabs (surahs 14:4; 42:7; 43:3 & 46:12), while others imply it's a revelation for all mankind (34:28; 33:40). This also speaks to the problem of choosing Arabic. If God wanted to communicate to mankind in the seventh century, Greek or Latin would have been vastly superior choices.

According to Dr. Crone, "There were other people in existence at that time, who lived close by and have left us material which we can use to evaluate the Qur'an. The non-Muslim evidence is found in Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Coptic literature from the time of the conquests in the seventh century onwards," Nevo shares, "We also have a large body of Arabic inscriptions, which pre-date the Muslim Traditions. Yet, these materials all contradict the Islamic Hadith and Qur'an." This evidence is particularly troubling. If Muslims wish to save Islam, they will need to come up with a ready defense. Attacking the messenger and putting their heads in the sand will not suffice.

Patricia Crone discovered: "A papyrus dated 643 A.D. speaks of the year 'twenty-two,' suggesting that something happened in 622 A.D. This coincides

with the year of the Hijra according to Islamic Traditions." But in reality, all the papyrus did was undermine Islam. It demonstrated that written Arabic existed by 643, eleven years after Muhammad's death. And it proves that a fragment could have survived from that period. So, since we have this meaningless fragment, why don't we have even a single document referencing the supposedly meaningful Qur'an or Hadith?

At Cambridge, Smith revealed: "Crone finds interesting support for a Hijra outside Arabia. She documents 57 attestations which come from within and without the Muslim Tradition, which point to a Hijra, or exodus, not from Mecca to Medina, but from more prominent places to garrison cities in the north. This is indeed interesting, as much of what we will learn from here on will parallel and corroborate her findings." What we are about to discover is that the Sunnah and Qur'an are not the only things to have disappeared in time. There is no evidence for Mecca either.

"According to archaeological research carried out by Creswell and Fehervari, the floor-plans of the Umayyad mosques in Iraq, one built by the governor Hajjaj in Wasit (the oldest surviving mosque), and another attributed to roughly the same period near Baghdad, have Qiblahs (the direction the mosques face to accommodate prayer) which do not point to Mecca, but are oriented to the north. The Wasit and Baghdad mosques are off by 33 and 30 degrees, respectively."

As an interesting aside, Hajjaj (Al Hajjaj Ibn Yoseef Althaqafi) was one of the most brutal Islamic governors, even by Muslim admission. He ruled at the time of Omar Ibn Abd Al Azez, and appointed Kora Ibn Shoreek Alasady as his correspondent in Egypt. They extracted the money used to build the Dome of the Rock. To "encourage" Christians to pay "their fair share" they killed all those they felt were miserly. Al Hajjaj speeches still echo throughout the Islamic world. They remain as famous and as menacing as Hitler's maniacal diatribes in Nazi Germany.

Returning to the misaligned Qiblahs, Baladhuri testifies: "The Qiblah of the first mosque in Kufa, Iraq, supposedly constructed in 670 A.D., lay to the west, when it should have pointed almost directly south. The original floor plan of the Fustat mosque of Amr b. al As, outside Cairo, shows a Qiblah pointed too far north. If you take a map you will soon find where all these mosques were pointing. The Qiblah was not towards Mecca, but to Jerusalem." Yet Muslims, ever ready with an excuse, say one should not take these findings too seriously as many mosques have misdirected Qiblahs. But the, if the Muslims were so incapable of ascertaining directions, they should all happen to be pointing to a singular location: Jerusalem?

"We find further corroboration for this direction of prayer by the Christian traveler Jacob of Edessa, who, writing in Syriac as late as 705 A.D., was a contemporary eyewitness in Egypt. In a letter, which can be found in the

British Museum, he refers to the Mahgraye [the name applied to Muslims before the creation of the Qur'an and Hadith in the eighth century], saying, 'It is clear that it is not to the south that Jews and Mahgraye here in the regions of Syria pray, but towards Jerusalem their Ka'aba, the patriarchal places of their races.' (The mention of a Ka'aba does not infer Mecca since there were many Ka'abas at the time, usually in market towns. It was profitable to build a Ka'aba in trading centers so that people coming to market could also do their pilgrimage or penitence to the idols contained within.)

"The Ka'aba Jacob of Edessa was referring to in his letter was situated at 'the patriarchal places of the races.' Both the Jews and Muslims (Mahgraye) maintain a common descent from Abraham who was known to have lived and died just outside Jerusalem, as has been corroborated by recent archaeological discoveries. Therefore, according to Jacob of Edessa, as late as 705, the direction of prayer towards Mecca had not yet been established." It was to Jerusalem instead. If this is correct, as all of the archeological evidence seems to indicate, there is no chance the Qur'an was canonized before 705 A.D., as the 2nd surah expressly forbids the Jerusalem Qiblah and mandates that all Muslims turn to Mecca.

This is devastating for Islam. If there is no historical or archeological evidence for the existence of a seventh century Qur'an ordaining Mecca, or even a seventh century Mecca, what is left of Muhammad and Islam besides blood, taxes, fables, and folklore?

"New research carried out by Patricia Carlier on the Umayyad Caliphal summer palaces notes that the mosques at these palaces also had Qiblahs pointing towards Jerusalem. According to Dr. Hawting, who lectures on Islam at the University of London, no mosques have been found from the seventh century which face towards Mecca. Yet, the Qur'an devotes a score of verses on the importance of Mecca as the only acceptable Qiblah; it's called a test for Muslims. And the 2nd surah was allegedly revealed in 623 A.D.

"According to Crone, Cook, Carlier, and Hawting, the combination of the archaeological evidence from Iraq along with the literary evidence from Syria and Egypt points unambiguously to a sanctuary in Jerusalem, not Mecca. So why is there such a glaring discrepancy between the Qur'an and that which archaeology has revealed, especially as late as 705 A.D?" Smith asks.

"Muslims argue that perhaps the early Muslims didn't know the direction of Mecca. Yet these were desert traders, caravaneers! Their livelihood was dependant on traveling the desert, which has few landmarks, and, because of the sandstorms, no roads. They, above all, knew how to follow the stars. Their lives depended on it. Certainly they knew the difference between north and south. Furthermore, the mosques in Iraq and Egypt were built by civilized and sophisticated people who were adept at finding directions. If they miscalculated their Qiblahs by so many degrees they couldn't have performed the

obligatory Hajj. And why are all of the earliest mosques facing Jerusalem?"

Muslims maintain that Mecca is the center of Islam, and the center of history. "It's Allah's Home on Earth." According to Qur'an 3:96: "The first sanctuary appointed for mankind was in Mecca, a blessed place, a guidance for the peoples." In surahs 6:92 and 42:5 we find that Mecca is the "Mother of all Settlements." The Hadith claims Adam placed the Black Stone in the original Ka'aba, while according to the Qur'an (2:125) it was Abraham and Ishmael who built/rebuilt the Ka'aba. Thus, by implication, Muslims consider Mecca to be the first and most important holy city in the world. But there is no documentary or archaeological evidence that Abraham ever went to Mecca. In fact, there is no evidence the little town existed before the creation of the Islamic scriptures in Baghdad during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries of our era.

"From research carried out by Crone and Cook, the first and only pre-Islamic allusion to a town some have mistakenly thought was Mecca is a reference to a city called 'Makoraba' by the Greco-Egyptian geographer Ptolemy in the mid-2nd century A.D. Though it appears that this citation by Ptolemy didn't actually refer to Mecca, because the three Arabic root letters for Mecca (MKK) do not correspond with the three Arabic root letters for Makoraba (KRB), as the letters 'ma,' which precede 'koraba,' signify 'the place of.' With that report thereby discredited, there is absolutely no other mention of Mecca or its Ka'aba in any authenticated ancient document prior to the eighth century. In fact, says Crone and Cook, 'The earliest references are those found in one Syriac version of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius.' However, while the Apocalypse itself dates from the very late seventh century, the references to Mecca are only found in much more recent copies. They are not present in the European or older Syrian traditions, and make no appearance in the Vatican Codex,' which is considered by etymologists to be the earliest text.

"The next allusion to Mecca occurs in the *Continuatio Byzantia Arabica*. It dates from the reign of the Caliph Hisham, who ruled between 724-743 A.D. Therefore, the earliest corroborative evidence we have for the existence of Muhammad's home town is a century after Islam was allegedly formed. If it was so important a city, someone, somewhere would have mentioned it; yet we find nothing prior to the eighth century." How is it possible that three of Islam's four most enduring symbols—Mecca, Qur'an, and Sunnah—show no indication whatsoever that they existed at the time they were said to exist? The trail simply vanishes the closer one gets—just like a mirage.

For Muslims, the dilemma only gets worse. Their "scriptures" fall apart at the seams if Mecca wasn't a thriving trade center. Otherwise Muhammad and Allah wouldn't have been justified in rebuking the Quraysh for their money-grubbing behavior. If the Meccans weren't rolling in riches while neglecting the needy, the Qur'an's first 90 surahs serve no purpose. If Mecca wasn't on a major trading route, if the Quraysh weren't mighty merchants, if Allah's

Ka'aba wasn't something special, then the Qur'an and Sunnah are tales of a pirate and terrorist, nothing more.

Trying to salvage their illusion, Muslims the world over steadfastly maintain that Mecca was a great and prosperous city, a thriving commercial center at the crossroads of world trade—a place on par with Jerusalem. Yet, according to all historical and archeological research, none of that is true. Bulliet, an expert on the history of trade in the ancient Middle-East, claims that Mecca wasn't on any trading route. The reason for this, he contends, is: 'Mecca is tucked away at the edge of the Peninsula. Only by the most tortured map reading can it be described as a natural crossroads for any north-south traffic and it could never have been used going from east to west.'

His findings are corroborated by the research of Groom and Muller, who contend that Mecca simply could not have been on a trading route, as it would have entailed a detour from the natural course. In fact, they maintain the trade route must have bypassed Mecca by some one hundred miles. A great distance across jagged mountains and searing desert sands.

Patricia Crone, in her *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, adds a practical reason which is too often overlooked. "Mecca was a barren place, and barren places do not make natural halts. This is especially true when there are famously green environments close by. Why should caravans have made a steep descent into the barren valley of Mecca when they could have stopped at Ta'if? Mecca may have had a modest well and humble sanctuary, but Ta'if not only had vastly superior ones, they had a ready food supply, too."

"Furthermore," Crone says, "there was no commodity available in Arabia that could be transported such a distance, through such an inhospitable environment, and still be sold at a profit large enough to support the growth of a city in a peripheral site bereft of natural resources." Dr. Crone points out: "Some Muslims maintain it was camel herding; yet that's not possible in a barren environment." Jay Smith agreed: "According to the latest research by Kister and Sprenger, the Arabs engaged in the trade of leather and clothing; hardly items which could have founded a commercial empire of international dimensions. Moreover, Mecca couldn't have been a center for either as there was insufficient pasture and water for animals or crops. But the real problem with Mecca is that there simply was no international trade taking place in Arabia, let alone in Mecca, in the centuries prior to Muhammad's birth.

"The Greek and Roman trade between India and the Mediterranean was entirely maritime after the first century A.D. One need only look at a map to understand why. It made no sense to ship goods across such distances by land when a waterway was available close by. Patricia Crone shares: 'In Diocletian's Rome it was cheaper to ship wheat 1,250 miles by sea than to transport it fifty miles by land. The distance from Najran, Yemen in the south, to Gaza in the north was roughly 1,250 miles. Why would the traders ship their goods

from India by sea, and unload it Aden, where it would be put on the backs of much slower and more expensive camels to trudge across the inhospitable Arabian desert to Gaza, when they could simply have left it on the ships and followed the Red Sea route up the west coast of Arabia?"

"There were other problems as well. Greco-Roman trade collapsed by the third century A.D., so that by Muhammad's time there simply was no overland route, and no Roman market to which the trade was destined. Of even more significance, the Romans and Greeks to whom the trade went, had never heard of a place called Mecca. If, according to the Islamic Hadith, Mecca was so important, certainly those to whom the trade was going would have noted its existence. Yet, we find absolutely nothing."

Crone says: "Greek trading documents refer to the towns of Ta'if (which is close to present-day Mecca), and to Yathrib (later Medina), as well as Khaybar in the north, but no mention is ever made of Mecca. Even the Persian Sassanids, who had incursions into Arabia between 300 and 570 A.D. mentioned the towns of Yathrib and Tihama, but not Mecca. That indeed is troubling. The fact is, the overland route was not used after the first century A.D., it certainly was not in use in the fifth or sixth centuries, and much of what has been written concerning Mecca should have been corrected long before now."

We are left in a quandary. If Mecca was not the great commercial center the Muslim Traditions would have us believe, if it was not known by the people who lived and wrote from that period, and, if it could not even qualify as a city during the time of Muhammad, it certainly could not have been the center of the Muslim world, much less Allah's world. What city, therefore, was? The answer is not difficult to guess. It seems Jerusalem, not Mecca, was the center and sanctuary of the Maghrebites until around 700 A.D.

"In the center of Jerusalem sits an imposing structure called the Dome of the Rock, built by Abd al-Malik in 691 A.D. One will note, however, that the shrine is not a mosque, as it has no Qiblah (no direction for prayer). It is built as an octagon with eight pillars, suggesting it was used for circumambulation. Thus, it was built as a sanctuary—a Ka'aba. Today it is considered to be the third most holy site in Islam, after Mecca and Medina. Muslims contend that it was built to commemorate the night when Muhammad went up to heaven to speak with Moses, Abraham, Jesus, and Allah concerning the number of prayers required of believers. The wild ride is known as the Mi'raj.

"Yet according to the research carried out on the inscriptions by Van Berchem and Nevo, the earliest dated writings in the edifice say nothing of the Mi'raj, but relate merely polemical quotations which are somewhat Qur'anic, and aimed primarily at Christians. In defense, Muslims are quick to point out that both surahs 17:1 and 2:143, which speak of the 'inviolable place' and the 'change of Qiblah,' can be found on the inscriptions on the drum of the dome and the doorway facing south. But they would do well to

read the history of those inscriptions. What they will find is that neither are original, nor are they old. The entire dome was rebuilt by al Zaher Li-L'zaz in 1022 A.D. due to an earthquake in 1016. It was rebuilt again in 1318. But the inscriptions (both the lower surah 36 and the upper surah 17) were not added until 1876 by Abdul Hamid II. The present doors (where surah 2:144 is found) were not erected until 1545. The southern portico where surah 2:143 is written was not built until 1817 by the Sultan Mahmud.

Van Berchem and Nevo attest: "The earliest inscriptions speak of the Messianic status of Jesus, the acceptance of prophets, Muhammad's receipt of revelation, and the use of the terms 'Islam' and 'Muslim.' It must be noted, however, that even their early dates are in doubt due to a different design attributed to the supporting pillars from an account by the Persian Nasir Khusran in 1047 A.D."

"If the sanctuary was built to commemorate such an important event in the history of the prophet's life (the Mi'raj), why don't any of the earliest inscriptions refer to it? They don't mention the Night's Journey, Heaven, the Winged Buraq, nor Abraham, Moses, Gabriel, or Allah. There isn't even a mention of the required five prayers, which was the purpose of the event. How can this be rationalized?"

Driving home his point, Jay Smith said, "The best explanation is that the story of the Mi'raj either didn't exist or wasn't known at this time, but was redacted later on during the Abbasid period. This becomes apparent when one realizes that the idea of five prayers also emanated from this time. The only Qur'anic references to prayer occur in suras 11:114; 17:78; 20:130; and 30:17, and they require three, not five prayers. If the Qur'an is from Allah, why doesn't he know how many prayers a Muslim is required to perform? And why, if the Dome of the Rock were built to commemorate that momentous event, does it say nothing about it until a 1000 years later?"

"It's obvious this building was originally constructed for purposes other than commemorating the Mi'raj. The fact that such an imposing structure was built so early suggests that this was deemed to be Allah's House and therefore the center of the Islamic world up until at least the dawn of the eighth century. From what we read earlier of Muhammad's intention to fulfill his and Ishmael's birthright, by taking back the land of Abraham—Israel—it makes sense that Abd al-Malik would build this structure as the centerpiece of that fulfillment. Is it no wonder then, that when Abd al-Malik built the dome in which he proclaimed the prophetic mission of Muhammad, he placed it over the temple rock itself. [Actually he built it upon the foundation of the Temple to Jupiter, the Roman sun god, but that's another story.]

"According to Islamic Tradition, the Caliph Suleyman, who reigned as late as 717 A.D., went to Mecca to ask about the Hajj. Hadiths composed in the ninth century claim that he was not satisfied with the response he received

there, and so chose to follow 'abd al-Malik's ritual rite of circumambulating the Dome of the Rock.' This fact, according to Dr. Hawting at the University of London, confirms: 'There was considerable confusion as to where Allah's Ka'aba was as late as the early eighth century.'"

Having seen three of Islam's four most enduring symbols vanish, we are about to lose the fourth. Apart from the Sunnah, Muhammad is yet another mirage. "The earliest Islamic documents," according to Dr. John Wansbrough, "say nothing of Muhammad's prophethood. The Maghazi, stories of his battles and campaigns, are the earliest Islamic documents we possess. Yet they tell us little about Muhammad's life or teachings. In fact, nowhere in these documents is there a veneration of Muhammad as a prophet!" The earliest comprehensive history of Muhammad's life, Ishaq's Sira steadfastly refrains from calling Muhammad a "prophet," too.

"In order to know who Muhammad was, and what he did, we must, therefore, go back to the time he lived, and look at the evidence which existed then, and still exists, to see what it can tell us about this infamous figure. The most prolific artifacts are Arabic rock inscriptions scattered all over the Syro-Jordanian deserts and the Peninsula, especially in the Negev. The man who has done the most research on these rock inscriptions is Yehuda Nevo. In his *Towards a Prehistory of Islam*, he explains that the Arab religious carvings dating from this period show a monotheistic creed. However, he contends that this creed 'is demonstrably not Islam, but a dogma from which Islam could have developed.'" Sounds like Qusayy's religious scam to me.

Nevo found: "In the Arab religious documents during the Sufyani period [661-684] there is a complete absence of any reference to Muhammad. Neither the name Muhammad nor any Muhammadan formulae (that he is the prophet of Allah) appears in any inscription dated before the Dome of the Rock—and even those are dubious. This is true whether the purpose of the inscription is religious, or whether it was used as a commemorative carving."

Muhammad's name is absent from all seventh century inscriptions, even religious ones. Since the Sira, Ta'rikh, and Hadith, which comprise the Sunnah, are made up almost entirely of narratives on the prophet's life, making him the example all Muslims must follow, why don't we find this same emphasis in earlier Arabic inscriptions which are closer to the time he lived? Even more troubling, why is there no mention of him at all? His name isn't found in Arab inscriptions until the eighth century. What's more, the first dated occurrence of the phrase "Muhammad Rasul Allah" (Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah) was discovered on an Sassanian coin of Xalid from the year 690, which was struck in Damascus, not Arabia.

The first occurrence of what Nevo calls the "'Triple Confession of Faith,' which includes the Tawhid (Allah is one), the phrase, Muhammad Rasul Allah, and the denial of Christ's divinity (Rasul Allah Wa-Abduhu), is in Jerusalem,

not Arabia. Before this inscription, the Muslim confession cannot be attested at all." So neither Muhammad, his prophetic status, his god, nor their profession of faith are even so much as mentioned in their land or in their century.

Nevo explains, "Religious content on rock inscriptions does not become pronounced until after 700 A.D. And though they bear religious messages, they don't mention the prophet or his message. This means that the official Arab religious confession did not include Muhammad or his claim to being a prophet within 100 years or more after his death. What they did contain was a monotheistic form of belief, belonging to a certain body of sectarian literature with developed Judeo-Christian conceptions in a particular literary style, but one which contained no features specific to any known monotheistic religion, including Islam.

"The Muhammadan formulae only began to be used on rock inscriptions of the Negev around 740 A.D. And even these," according to Nevo, "though they are Muhammadan, are not Muslim. The Muslim texts only begin to appear at the beginning of the ninth century, around 820 A.D., coinciding with the first written Qur'ans, as well as the first written Sunnah compilations."

The terms "Muslim" and "Islam" are also an enigma. While the Qur'an says in surah 33:35, that the faithful were Muslims and their religion was Islam, neither term was used until the late seventh century. According to Crone and Cook: "Islam and Muslim in the sense of 'submission' and 'one who submits' was borrowed from the Samaritans. The verb *aslama* has cognates in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac, but whereas neither Jewish nor Christian literature provides satisfactory precedent for the Islamic usage, we find exact parallels in the *Memar Marqah*, which is the most important Samaritan text of the pre-Islamic period. The sense of submission can readily be seen as intended to differentiate the Hagarene covenant from Judaism."

While hunting for archeological inscriptions, Cook found: "The quotations from the Qur'an on both the 690 coin and Dome of the Rock differ from that which we find in today's Qur'an." Van Berchem and Grohmann are etymologists who have done extensive research on the Dome inscriptions. They maintain: "The earliest contain variant verbal forms, extensive deviances, as well as omissions from the current Qur'anic text. If these inscriptions had been derived from the Qur'an, the variants they contain prove that the Qur'an could not have been canonized prior to the late seventh century."

These sources also seem to suggest that the Qur'an was put together rather hurriedly. Dr. John Wansbrough reports, "The book is strikingly lacking in overall structure, frequently obscure and inconsequential in both language and content, perfunctory in its linking of disparate materials, and given to the repetition of whole passages in variant versions. On this basis it must be argued that the book is the product of the belated and imperfect editing of materials from a plurality of traditions."

I believe the reason is obvious. Muhammad's companions plundered the world on verbal instructions. And the next two generations of Muslims were too busy wielding swords and accumulating booty to be bothered with scripture. But then things settled down. The war capital of Islam moved to the more civil city of Baghdad. There, the new Caliphs had to control and fleece those others had conquered. The best way to do that was with religion. So they invented one, complete with a prophet, god, and scripture. They took the pirate who had inspired the conquests and dressed him up in fancier clothes.

Crone and Cook say, "It was under governor Hajjaj of Iraq in 705 A.D. that we have the most logical historical context for the formation of the Qur'an. In an account attributed to Leo by Levond, the governor is shown to have collected all the old Hagarene writings and replaced them with others 'according to his own taste, and disseminated them everywhere among his nation.'" This is particularly provocative considering that Hajjaj was ruthless. Some would say he was Hitleresque in his behavior and demeanor.

"All these findings give us good reason to question the authority of the Qur'an as the word of God. Archaeology, as well as documentary and manuscript evidence indicates that much of what the Qur'an maintains does not coincide with the factual data at our disposal. From the material amassed from external sources in the seventh and eighth centuries, we can conclude: that the Qiblah was initially toward Jerusalem and not fixed toward Mecca until the eighth century; that the Dome of the Rock was the first Islamic shrine; that Muhammad was not classified as Allah's prophet until the late seventh century; that the terms Muslim and Islam were not used until the end of the seventh century; that five daily prayers as well as the Hajj were not standardized until the eighth century; that the earliest Qur'an does not appear until the mid-eighth century; and that the earliest Qur'anic writings do not coincide with the current text." Besides that Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?

"All scientific, historical, and archeological data contradicts the Qur'an. The ramifications of this assertion are astounding indeed. Whichever way one chooses to interpret the facts, they leave no doubt that the Qur'an was the product of an evolving revelation, canonized during the early Abbasid period towards the mid to end of the eighth century, in what is today Iraq." It gives an altogether different insight into Revelation's "Whore of Babylon."

"Wansbrough takes the position that the Qur'an was compiled even later than the Hadith, and was used as an authoritative stamp to authenticate later rites and laws by those who were responsible for imposing Islam. If he is correct, then one would wonder whether Muhammad would even recognize the Qur'an which we possess today."

Jay Smith concluded by quoting Wansbrough: "Readers are faced with many structural and literary difficulties which bode ill for a document claiming to be the final and perfect word of God. We are presented with spurious

Biblical accounts, which parallel known second century heretical Talmudic and Apocryphal documents. And while we wonder how these very human documents found their way into a supposedly non-human scripture, we are introduced to scientific peculiarities which have also found their way into its pages. These problems all point away from a divine authorship and toward a more plausible explanation: the Qur'an is simply a collection of disparate sources borrowed from surrounding pieces of literature, folk tales, and oral traditions present during the seventh and eighth centuries, and accidentally grafted in by unsuspecting later compilers of the Abbasid period."

Y V Z M

The oldest surviving Qur'an fragments were discovered by accident in 1972, during the restoration of the Mosque of Sana'a in Yemen. Workers found a paper grave between the mosque's inner and outer roofs. While it looked to be an unappealing pile of old parchment in Arabic, fused together over the millennia, and gnawed at by rats and insects, it was really a stash containing Qur'ans. Seven years later, the curator of the mosque managed to interest a German scholar in the discovery.

The best investigative study of the Sana'a find was conducted by Toby Lester. Writing for the Atlantic Monthly, he reports: "Some of the parchment pages from the paper grave seem to date back to the eighth century, making them the oldest Qur'ans in existence. What's more, some of these fragments reveal intriguing aberrations from the standard text—devastating in that Muslims are told that the Qur'an, as it has reached us today, is the perfect and unchanging Word of God—letter for letter how he wrote it."

The first scholar to examine the Yemeni fragments was Gerd Puin, a specialist in Arabic calligraphy and Qur'anic paleography. His inspection revealed unconventional verse orderings, textual variations, and artistic embellishments. Scripture was written in a rare and early Hijaz Arabic script. And newer scripts were very clearly written over earlier, worn-out versions. Therefore, the text evolved. It wasn't simply revealed in its entirety to the prophet Muhammad in the early seventh century, as alleged.

More than 15,000 sheets of the Yemeni Qur'an's have been flattened, cleaned, treated, sorted, and assembled. They await further examination in Yemen's House of Manuscripts. Yet that is something Islamic authorities seem unwilling to allow. Puin suggests, "They want to keep this thing low-profile, as we do, although for different reasons."

Puin, and his colleague Graf von Bothmer, an Islamic historian, have published short essays on what they discovered. They continue to feel that when the Yemeni authorities realize the implications of the find, they will refuse further access. Von Bothmer, however, in 1997 shot 35,000 microfilm pictures