



NICOLAI SINAI

# THE QUR'AN

A Historical-Critical Introduction

# **The Qur'an**

**A historical-critical introduction**

The New Edinburgh Islamic Surveys  
Series Editor: Carole Hillenbrand

- Contemporary Issues in Islam* Asma Asfaruddin  
*Astronomy and Astrology in the Islamic World* Stephen P. Blake  
*The New Islamic Dynasties* Clifford Edmund Bosworth  
*Media Arabic* Julia Ashtiany Bray  
*An Introduction to the Hadith* John Burton  
*A History of Islamic Law* Noel Coulson  
*Medieval Islamic Political Thought* Patricia Crone  
*A Short History of the Ismailis* Farhad Daftary  
*Islam: An Historical Introduction (2nd Edition)* Gerhard Endress  
*A History of Christian–Muslim Relations* Hugh Goddard  
*Shi'ism (2nd Edition)* Heinz Halm  
*Islamic Science and Engineering* Donald Hill  
*Muslim Spain Reconsidered* Richard Hitchcock  
*Islamic Law: From Historical Foundations to Contemporary Practice* Mawil Izzi Dien  
*Sufism: The Formative Period* Ahmet T. Karamustafa  
*A History of Islam in Indonesia* Carool Kersten  
*Islamic Aesthetics* Oliver Leaman  
*Persian Historiography* Julie Scott Meisami  
*The Muslims of Medieval Italy* Alex Metcalfe  
*The Archaeology of the Islamic World* Marcus Milwright  
*Twelver Shiism* Andrew Newman  
*Muslims in Western Europe (4th Edition)* Jørgen S. Nielsen and Jonas Otterbeck  
*Medieval Islamic Medicine* Peter E. Pormann and Emilie Savage-Smith  
*Islamic Names* Annemarie Schimmel  
*The Genesis of Literature in Islam* Gregor Schoeler  
*The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction* Nicolai Sinai  
*Modern Arabic Literature* Paul Starkey  
*Islamic Medicine* Manfred Ullman  
*A History of Islamic Spain* W. Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia  
*Introduction to the Qur'an* W. Montgomery Watt  
*Islamic Creeds* W. Montgomery Watt  
*Islamic Philosophy and Theology* W. Montgomery Watt  
*Islamic Political Thought* W. Montgomery Watt  
*The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe* W. Montgomery Watt

[www.edinburghuniversitypress.com/series/isur](http://www.edinburghuniversitypress.com/series/isur)

# **The Qur'an**

**A historical-critical introduction**

**Nicolai Sinai**

EDINBURGH  
University Press

Edinburgh University Press is one of the leading university presses in the UK. We publish academic books and journals in our selected subject areas across the humanities and social sciences, combining cutting-edge scholarship with high editorial and production values to produce academic works of lasting importance. For more information visit our website: [edinburghuniversitypress.com](http://edinburghuniversitypress.com)

© Nicolai Sinai, 2017

Edinburgh University Press Ltd  
The Tun – Holyrood Road  
12 (2f) Jackson's Entry  
Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

Typeset in 11/13pt Baskerville MT Pro by  
Servis Filmsetting Ltd, Stockport, Cheshire  
and printed and bound in Great Britain by  
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 0 7486 9576 8 (hardback)  
ISBN 978 0 7486 9577 5 (paperback)  
ISBN 978 0 7486 9578 2 (webready PDF)  
ISBN 978 0 7486 9579 9 (epub)

The right of Nicolai Sinai to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and the Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003 (SI No. 2498).

# Contents

<i>Expanded table of contents</i>	vii
<i>List of figures</i>	ix
Introduction	1
<b>Part one Background</b>	
1 Some basic features of the Qur'an	11
2 Muhammad and the Qur'an	40
3 The Qur'anic milieu	59
<b>Part two Method</b>	
4 Literary coherence and secondary revision	81
5 Inner-Qur'anic chronology	111
6 Intertextuality	138
<b>Part three A diachronic survey of the Qur'anic proclamations</b>	
7 The Meccan surahs	161
8 The Medinan surahs	188
<i>Bibliography</i>	215
<i>Index of concepts, names, and Arabic terms</i>	234
<i>Index of Qur'anic passages</i>	239



# Expanded table of contents

<i>List of figures</i>	ix
Introduction	1
<i>What is the 'historical-critical' method?</i>	2
<i>Plan of the book and some notes on style</i>	5
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	7
<b>Part one Background</b>	
1 Some basic features of the Qur'an	11
<i>Introducing the Qur'anic corpus</i>	11
<i>The Qur'an's dramatis personae</i>	12
<i>Self-referentiality, metatextuality, and formulaic density</i>	14
<i>Verses and rhyme</i>	16
<i>Verses and stichs</i>	20
<i>The arrangement of the Qur'anic corpus</i>	25
<i>Textual variance</i>	30
2 Muhammad and the Qur'an	40
<i>The standard account of the Qur'an's emergence</i>	40
<i>Muhammad in the light of non-Islamic sources</i>	43
<i>Dating the closure of the Qur'anic corpus</i>	45
<i>The Qur'an on Muhammad and his historical context</i>	47
<i>Post-Muhammadan additions to the Qur'an?</i>	52
3 The Qur'anic milieu	59
<i>Whence the Qur'an?</i>	59
<i>The Qur'anic milieu and the late antique world</i>	62
<i>The quest for Arabian paganism</i>	65
<i>Pagan-Biblical syncretism</i>	69
<b>Part two Method</b>	
4 Literary coherence and secondary revision	81
<i>Paragraphing the Qur'an: an exemplary dissection of Q 19</i>	81
<i>The literary coherence of Qur'anic surahs</i>	86



	<i>Reading Qur'anic surahs holistically: Q37 as an example</i>	87
	<i>Tracing processes of literary growth and editorial revision</i>	92
	<i>The long surahs: Q2 as an example</i>	97
5	Inner-Qur'anic chronology	111
	<i>The temporal order of the Qur'anic revelations: Islamic and Western perspectives</i>	111
	<i>Verse length as a chronological marker</i>	113
	<i>The Meccan-Medinan divide</i>	124
	<i>Hard cases</i>	130
6	Intertextuality	138
	<i>The transmission of Biblical knowledge into the Qur'anic milieu</i>	138
	<i>Jewish and Christian traditions in the Qur'an: convergence and divergence</i>	142
	<i>The Qur'anic accounts of the creation of Adam</i>	143
	<i>An intertextual reading of Adam's veneration by the angels</i>	145
	<i>An intertextual reading of God's dispute with the angels</i>	148
	<i>Qur'anic intratextuality</i>	150
<b>Part three A diachronic survey of the Qur'anic proclamations</b>		
7	The Meccan surahs	161
	<i>The early Qur'an's eschatological kerygma</i>	162
	<i>The Christian background of early Qur'anic eschatology</i>	166
	<i>Historical signs</i>	169
	<i>Cosmic signs</i>	172
	<i>The transition to explicit monotheism</i>	174
	<i>Polemics in the later Meccan surahs</i>	176
	<i>Leaving Mecca</i>	179
8	The Medinan surahs	188
	<i>Militancy in the Medinan Qur'an</i>	188
	<i>Qur'anic militancy and the Biblical tradition</i>	192
	<i>Glimpses of ritual symbiosis between the early Medinan Believers and Judaism</i>	196
	<i>The Believers' communal distinctness from Jews and Christians</i>	200
	<i>Qur'anic law</i>	202
	<i>Jerusalemising Mecca</i>	205
	<i>Muhammad the Prophet</i>	206
	<i>Bibliography</i>	215
	<i>Index of concepts, names, and Arabic terms</i>	234
	<i>Index of Qur'anic passages</i>	239

# Figures

1	Verse length in surah 2	21
2	Verse length in surah 80	22
3	Total length of surahs 1 to 65	27
4	Total length of surahs 44 to 114	28
5	The seven canonical readers of the Qur'an	32
6	Paragraph breaks in surah 19 according to Paret, Abdel Haleem, and Neuwirth	83
7	The structure of surah 19	86
8	The structure of surah 37	88
9	The thematic macrostructure of surah 2	98
10	Mean verse length, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for all surahs of the Qur'an	114
11	The surahs ordered by increasing mean verse length, part 1	119
12	The surahs ordered by increasing mean verse length, part 2	120
13	The correlation of mean verse length and characteristic introductory elements	121
14	Meccan and Medinan passages in surah 22 according to Nöldeke and Schwally	129
15	Some Biblical and post-Biblical quotations and near-quotations in the Qur'an	140
16	A synoptic overview of the Qur'anic accounts of the creation of Adam, arranged by ascending mean verse length	144
17	Q 55: 14–15, Q 15: 26ff., and Q 38: 71ff. compared	152



*Shepherd's pleasures, shepherd's delights.*



# Introduction

For most Muslims past and present, the Qur'an constitutes the literal transcript of God's revelatory address to Muhammad, his contemporaries, and humanity at large. It would of course be dangerously fallacious to suggest that an adequate understanding of Islam, in all its historical, regional, and confessional variety and complexity, could be derived exclusively, or even primarily, from the Qur'an. Nevertheless, it is 'the event of the Qur'an'<sup>1</sup> that inaugurated the new religion of Islam; and until today the Qur'an has remained Islam's ultimate scriptural point of reference.

Commensurate with the Qur'an's importance as one of the major religious scriptures in world history are the interpretive challenges presented by it and the frequently technical nature of the scholarship devoted to it. The aim of the present book is to induct readers into the current state of the historical-critical study of the Qur'an, understood as the discipline tasked with elucidating the Qur'an's content and literary organisation and with reconstructing how the texts compiled in the Qur'an are likely to have been understood by their original addressees.<sup>2</sup> Thus framed, the historical-critical study of the Qur'an is distinct from the study of later Islamic exegesis (*tafsīr*) or of the Qur'an's role in Islamic ritual, art, and literature. The fact that this book does not address these latter topics should not be taken to mean that I consider them less important, only that I would insist on a principled distinction between interpreting a literary document within its historical context of origin on the one hand and examining its subsequent reception history on the other. The present work is exclusively concerned with the former. The readership I envisage are advanced undergraduate and graduate students of Arabic and Islamic studies as well as students and colleagues from neighbouring fields, such as Biblical studies, Patristics, or Rabbinics. I also aspire to having something useful to say to Muslim readers wanting to gain an understanding of how their scripture is being studied by contemporary Western scholars, many of whom are of course agnostic about whether the Qur'an does or does not constitute divine revelation. Since the book is partly based on original research, I hope that other specialists in Qur'anic studies will also take an interest.

For at least four decades, the study of the Qur'an has been characterised by a far-reaching lack of consensus on basic historiographical questions, such as where and when the Qur'anic corpus originated. Like virtually all other scholars

active in the field, I hold views on these issues that are not unanimously shared. I hope that my relatively detailed engagement with conflicting perspectives and arguments will convey some sense of what others have written, and ultimately empower the reader to navigate the field by herself, and, if need be, to gainsay me. My main aim is less to convey factual certainties than to initiate the reader into the multifaceted methodological toolkit that ought to be applied to the Qur'an no less than to other scriptures. Qur'anic scholarship is still beset by an unfortunate bifurcation between literary approaches and the intertextual analysis of specific Qur'anic passages in the light of earlier Christian and Jewish literature. This involves obvious dangers: a literary perspective unmoored from considerations of historical context can quickly become subjective, while an intertextual approach that ignores the Qur'an's literary features can easily degenerate into atomistic source-hunting. Both viewpoints should therefore be seen as complementary rather than as mutually exclusive. Equally indispensable are an appropriate awareness of the internal heterogeneity of the Qur'anic corpus and some rudimentary reliance on quantitative methods. The present book is thus committed to presenting the historical-critical study of the Qur'an as a genuinely multi-pronged and multi-dimensional endeavour, rather than as the exercise in narrow reductionism that some may intuitively associate with the label 'historical-critical'.

## What is the 'historical-critical' method?

At this point, the reader may legitimately demand to know what, exactly, I understand by approaching the Qur'an from a historical-critical perspective, and why this may at all be a worthwhile endeavour.<sup>3</sup> I shall take the two components of the hyphenated adjective 'historical-critical' in reverse order.

To interpret a literary document *critically* means to suspend inherited presuppositions about its origin, transmission, and meaning, and to assess their adequacy in the light of a close reading of that text itself as well as other relevant sources. A pertinent example would be the demand voiced by Thomas Hobbes (d. 1679) that discussion of the question by whom the different books of the Bible were originally composed must be guided exclusively by the 'light ... which is held out unto us from the books themselves', given that extra-Biblical writings are uninformative about the matter; according to Hobbes, an impartial assessment of the literary evidence refutes the traditional assumption that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.<sup>4</sup> While critical interpretation in this basic sense is perfectly compatible with believing that the text in question constitutes revelation, it may nonetheless engender considerable doubts about the particular ways in which that text has traditionally been understood. Benedict Spinoza (d. 1677), one of the ancestors of modern Biblical scholarship, goes yet further. In his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* he criticises earlier interpreters of the Bible for

having proceeded on the basis of the postulate that scripture is ‘everywhere true and divine’. This assumption, Spinoza insists, is to be rigorously bracketed.<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that scripture should conversely be assumed to be false and mortal, but it does open up the very real possibility that an interpreter may find scripture to contain statements that are, by his own standards, false, inconsistent, or trivial. Hence, a fully critical approach to the Bible, or to the Qur’an for that matter, is equivalent to the demand, frequently reiterated by Biblical scholars from the eighteenth century onwards, that the Bible is to be interpreted in the same manner as any other text.<sup>6</sup>

Moving on to the second constituent of the adjective ‘historical-critical’, we may say that to read a text *historically* is to require the meanings ascribed to it to have been humanly ‘thinkable’ or ‘sayable’ within the text’s original historical environment, as far as the latter can be retrospectively reconstructed. At least for the mainstream of historical-critical scholarship, the notion of possibility underlying the words ‘thinkable’ and ‘sayable’ is informed by the principle of historical analogy – the assumption that past periods of history were constrained by the same natural laws as the present age, that the moral and intellectual abilities of human agents in the past were not radically different from ours, and that the behaviour of past agents, like that of contemporary ones, is at least partly explicable by recourse to certain social and economic factors.<sup>7</sup> Assuming the validity of the principle of historical analogy has significant consequences. For instance, it will become hermeneutically inadmissible to credit scripture with a genuine foretelling of future events or with radically anachronistic ideas (say, with anticipating modern scientific theories). The notion of miraculous and public divine interventions will likewise fall by the wayside. All these presuppositions can of course be examined and questioned on various epistemological and theological grounds, but they arguably form core elements of the rule book of contemporary historical scholarship. The present volume, whose concerns are not epistemological or theological, therefore takes them for granted.

The foregoing entails that historical-critical interpretation departs in major respects from traditional Biblical or Qur’anic exegesis: it delays any assessment of scripture’s truth and relevance until after the act of interpretation has been carried out, and it sidesteps appeals to genuine foresight and miracles.<sup>8</sup> Why should one bother to engage in this rather specific and perhaps somewhat pedestrian interpretive endeavour? A first response would be to affirm the conviction that making historical sense of the world’s major religious documents, such as the Bible or the Qur’an, is intrinsically valuable. This answer, of course, may fail to satisfy a believing Jew, Christian, or Muslim. After all, the results of a historical-critical approach to the Bible or the Qur’an could well turn out to stand in tension to her existing religious commitments. What, then, may be said specifically to a religious believer in support of a historical-critical approach to the Bible or the Qur’an? I would venture the following two considerations.



First, Spinoza justifies his demand for a new Biblical hermeneutics by observing that traditional exegetes, who operate on the basis of the a priori assumption that scripture is 'true and divine', frequently succumb to the temptation of merely wringing their own 'figments and opinions' from the text.<sup>9</sup> Spinoza here expresses the insight that by far the most convenient, and therefore continuously enticing, way of making sure that scripture's meaning is true, consistent, and relevant is to simply project on to it, more or less skilfully, what one happens to believe anyway. By contrast, historical criticism's deliberate suspension of judgement regarding scripture's truth, coherence, and contemporary significance effectively safeguards the text's semantic autonomy, its ability to tell its readers something that may radically differ from anything they expected to hear: historical criticism undercuts the instrumentalisation of scripture as a mere repository of proof texts in support of preset convictions and views – and thereby also undercuts the potentially disastrous use of such proof texts as ammunition in religious and political conflicts. Arguably, this is a feature of historical criticism that may be appreciated not only by secular agnostics but also by believing Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Historical criticism, then, is a radical way – quite a risky one, to be sure – of truly letting oneself be addressed by scripture instead of making scripture conform to one's existing convictions and values.

Second, while some results of historical-critical scholarship may indeed prove to be religiously destabilising (depending, obviously, on the particular set of religious beliefs at stake), this is by no means the case for all, or perhaps even most, of them. As this book hopes to show in some detail, the philologically rigorous analysis of the Qur'anic text that is demanded by a historical-critical methodology discloses intriguing literary features and can help discern how the Qur'an harnesses existing narratives and traditions to its own peculiar messages. Precisely because such findings are arrived at in a manner that does not presume a prior acceptance of the Bible or the Qur'an as 'true and divine', believing and practising Jews, Christians, and Muslims may find – and, indeed, have found – it stimulating and enriching to view their canonical writings from a historical-critical perspective.

For the sake of clarity, the preceding paragraphs have highlighted the difference in assumptions and method that separates the historical-critical approach from pre-modern Jewish, Christian, and Islamic scriptural exegesis. This opposition must not be overstressed. While my approach to the Qur'an diverges in important respects from Islamic *tafsīr*, historical-critical students of the Qur'an do well to acknowledge their debt to the philological labour of numerous Muslim exegetes and textual critics. Even more profoundly, the type of Qur'anic scholarship exemplified by the present book shares with traditional Islamic exegesis a fundamental commitment to close and patient reading and an abiding fascination with the text of the Qur'an. The book thus inscribes itself, with an acute

sense of modesty, in more than a millennium of Qur'anic interpretation defined by the work of such luminaries as al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and al-Biqā'ī.

## Plan of the book and some notes on style

The plan of the book is, it is hoped, straightforward. Part One, 'Background', introduces some basic characteristics of the Qur'anic corpus, assesses its probable date of codification, and offers a sketch of the historical habitat from which it is likely to have emerged. Part Two, 'Method', presents the chief dimensions of a historical-critical analysis of the Qur'an and in so doing lays out what I have referred to as the Qur'anic scholar's interpretive toolkit. This encompasses an appreciation of the compositional structure of Qur'anic surahs, the ability to recognise later additions and expansions in them, and due attention to the novel functions and inflections that often characterise the Qur'anic adaptation of existing narratives and concepts. Part Two also addresses the crucial question of whether we can make defensible judgements about the temporal, or diachronic, sequence in which Qur'anic surahs or passages were first proclaimed. Based on the historical and methodological groundwork laid in the first two parts, Part Three, 'A diachronic survey of the Qur'anic proclamations', then studies the main themes and literary features of the Qur'anic proclamations, treated in their putative diachronic order. Given that the discussion of Qur'anic militancy presented in Chapter 8 treads on politically charged ground, it may not be amiss to remind the reader that my aim throughout is a purely historical one. I do not wish to be recruited as an ally either by Jihadists or Islamophobes, and I do not believe that the scriptural data I discuss is incapable of being suitably navigated by contemporary Muslim theologians.

The present volume was originally conceived as an English translation of a concise German introduction to the Qur'an written for a general readership.<sup>10</sup> Even before setting to work on the English version, however, I decided in favour of thoroughly rewriting the original and expanding it into a more comprehensive and ambitious textbook. Nonetheless, certain sections in the present monograph still show some overlap with passages from my German book. Other sections overlap with, and sporadically reproduce passages from, articles and book chapters that I have written over the last few years, some of which were produced with the express purpose of unburdening the present work from overly technical disquisitions. In such cases, I note the publication in question but dispense with awkward self-quotations. My justification for occasionally having covered the same territory twice, once in a specialised publication and then again in the present book, is that the latter will, it is hoped, convey an idea of how these more narrowly focused studies cohere and how they relate to work that other scholars have done. At regular intervals, claims made in the

course of my argument seemed to call for a more advanced defence or qualification than I found appropriate to include in the main text. Such comments I have relegated to the notes, some of which can consequently be comparatively extensive. They can readily be skipped by most readers but may be useful to some colleagues.

References to the Qur'an (abbreviated as 'Q') give the number of the respective surah and verse, or verses. Non-neighbouring verses of the same surah are separated by a dot; thus, 'Q 74: 31.56' refers to surah 74, verses 31 and 56, and 'Q 89: 15–16.23–24.27–30' means surah 89, verses 15–16, 23–24, and 27–30. Like other contemporary scholars, I cite what is commonly referred to as the °Uthmānic text of the Qur'an, in the reading of Ḥaḥḥaf ḥan °Āḥḥim and according to the orthography and verse division of the 1924 Cairo edition. This is the version of the Qur'anic text that has achieved virtually exclusive dominance in modern printings. My renderings of Qur'anic passages tend to be based on the translation by Alan Jones, although I have felt free to modify it, sometimes by drawing on the translations by Richard Bell and M. A. S. Abdel Haleem. In citing Qur'anic passages, I adopt Jones's helpful convention of distinguishing singular and plural uses of the second person, which are morphologically distinct in Arabic, by superscript letters ('you<sup>s</sup>', 'you<sup>p</sup>'). Quotations from the Bible generally follow the New King James Version, sometimes with modifications. For ascertaining inner-Qur'anic parallels to a given verse I have relied on the print concordances by Muḥammad Fu'ād °Abd al-Bāqī and Rudi Paret, on <http://corpus.quran.com>, and on Hans Zirker's searchable transliteration of the Qur'anic text into Latin letters (available at <http://duepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de/servlets/DocumentServlet?id=10802>). My notes do not adequately convey how fundamental these four resources have been to the research that has gone into the present book.

All references employ short titles, with full details given in the bibliography. The expanded second edition of Theodor Nöldeke's *History of the Qur'ān*, now available in an English translation, is quoted according to the pagination of the three-volume German original published 1909–38 (*Geschichte des Qurāns*), which is indicated in the margins of the English version. My transliterations of Arabic words and passage use *j* (rather than *ǧ*) for the letter *jīm*, *sh* (rather than *š*) for *shīn*, and so forth. When cited in isolation, individual Arabic words and even genitive constructs are mostly transliterated without full inflectional endings. I do not represent assimilation of the definite article (thus, *al-nās*, as written, rather than *an-nās*, as pronounced). In transcribing entire phrases rather than isolated words I omit *hamzat al-waḥḥl* and do not take into account the contextual shortening of vowels, which embroils me in slight inconsistency (thus, I transcribe *fī l-arḥ*, as opposed to *fī 'l-arḥ* or *fī al-arḥ*, as written, or *fī l-arḥ*, as pronounced). The pausal form of the regular feminine singular ending is rendered as *-ah*. Transliterations of Qur'anic passages normally reproduce the

vocalisation of current printed editions of the Ḥaḥṣ̣ ‘an ‘Āṣim text, with the exception that all verse-final words have been changed to their corresponding pausal form, as is generally required by the conventions of Qur’anic rhyme.<sup>11</sup> For words and names that have entered into general English usage, I adopt a simplified anglicising spelling (for example, ‘Muhammad’, ‘the Qur’an’, ‘Mecca’, and ‘the hijrah’).

## Acknowledgements

In the long term, this introduction would not have been written had I not as a student at the Free University of Berlin encountered Angelika Neuwirth’s notoriously infectious and inspirational enthusiasm for the literary and intertextual complexity of the Qur’an. More immediately, this book is inspired by the first six years that I spent teaching Islamic Studies at the University of Oxford’s Oriental Institute and at Pembroke College. Foremost among the many colleagues from whom I have been fortunate to learn here is Christopher Melchert, whose meticulous scholarship, aversion to verbal smokescreens, and exacting sense of argument were a constant challenge and inspiration. Devin Stewart generously agreed to go through a draft of the book and contributed numerous corrections and suggestions. Another mistake was pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, while Jan Joosten and Catherine Pennacchio obliged me by speedily answering last-minute queries. I furthermore owe an immense debt of gratitude to Marianna Klar, who was a constant interlocutor, critic, and companion during the gestation of this work, and who scrupulously corrected much of its final draft. Lastly, completion of the book and of the research underpinning it would not have been possible without a research leave funded by the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council (grant reference AH/M011305/1), without my colleagues’ willingness to accommodate my temporary absence from teaching and administrative duties, without the moral and financial support of my parents Barbara and Michael, and without the forbearance of Jakob, Helena, and Susanne.

## Notes

1. Thus the title of Cragg, *Event*.
2. The formulation is indebted to the Egyptian scholar Amīn al-Khūlī; see Jansen, *Interpretation*, pp. 66–7.
3. The following section abbreviates some of the ideas developed in Sinai, ‘Spinoza and Beyond’; id., ‘Historical-Critical Readings’; id., ‘Gottes Wort’.
4. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 252.
5. Spinoza, *Opera*, vol. 3, p. 9.
6. See, e.g., Reventlow, ‘English Deism’, pp. 860–1; Kümmel, *New Testament*, pp. 50, 58, 61, and 87; Stroumsa, *New Science*, pp. 49–61.

8 The Qur'an: a historical-critical introduction

7. See Hayes, 'Historical Criticism', p. 998.
8. For an exemplary illustration, see Sinai, 'Gottes Wort', pp. 154–7.
9. Spinoza, *Opera*, vol. 3, p. 97.
10. Sinai, *Der Koran*.
11. See in more detail Chapter 1.