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Images of Muḥammad in the course of time

Muḥammad, the Prophet of Islam, was undoubtedly one of the most influential persons in history. He was not only the founder of one of the world religions, but has served as a role model for Muslims throughout the ages. The records of his deeds and sayings are among the most important sources in various fields of Islamic learning, and several Muslim festivals commemorate events of his life. In sharp contrast, the non-Muslim views of Muḥammad over centuries have been almost exclusively negative, only gradually improving in the wake of the Enlightenment. Since the nineteenth century, Muḥammad has become a major object of research in Western scholarship on Islam, and there are a huge amount of articles and books devoted to various aspects of his life, the sources for his life and his role in Islamic tradition.

From the emergence and spread of Islam in the early seventh century CE, Muslims and non-Muslims alike have engaged with the personality of Muḥammad and his role in history. The assessment of his role has been addressed and answered in very different ways by Muslims and non-Muslims, usually in the framework of their respective existing or developing theological and dogmatic viewpoints.

With regard to the Muslim view, the Qur'ān may provide an idea of how Muḥammad was seen by his contemporaries. There are, however, some caveats: Muḥammad is not a major topic in the Qur'ān and thus the information on him is scarce. In several cases it is not entirely clear whether the Qur'ān actually speaks about Muḥammad in verses that are commonly understood in this sense,¹ and while the views of the believers as alluded to in the Qur'ān may reflect the historical reality, it is not unlikely that the Qur'ānic views of the unbelievers or 'hypocrites' are distorted and polemical and not necessarily an accurate rendering of their views. Some scholars would go further and even call into question the connection between the Qur'ān and the Prophet.²

Even if we were to accept this connection and may thus get an idea of the earliest Muslims' views of Muḥammad, the issue gets much more difficult for the following generations, and the question of how perceptions of Muḥammad changed in the course of the following one and a half centuries is contentious. The earliest Muslim sources with notable information on Muḥammad that have come down to us date from roughly 150 to 200 years after his death, and the manuscripts

in which they have been preserved often have been copied centuries after the original works are said to have been composed. The question to what degree earlier sources can be reconstructed from the existing texts is highly controversial and has not yet been resolved.³ We are on much safer ground with regard to the Muslims' views of Muḥammad from around the ninth century CE. From at least this time, Muḥammad has been seen as a role model and his behaviour has been regarded as normative, not only in legal matters but also in everyday life. His biography abounds in miracles, and he is presented as knowing about the future, both of which are in sharp contrast to the Qur'ānic view of Muḥammad. These aspects remained important and were elaborated upon in the Muslim perception of Muḥammad in the following centuries. The concept of a pre-existing divine light that is passed on through the prophets down to Muḥammad figures prominently and is linked to cosmological models that identify Muḥammad as the pole of existence.⁴ Muḥammad came to be regarded as the embodiment of the perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and as completely sinless, a concept that originated in Shiite Islam with regard to the Imams and was soon extended to encompass the Prophet.⁵ The stories of his miracles were embellished and aggrandized. They came to be regarded as proofs for his prophethood (*dalā'il al-nubuwwa*) and were collected in works of similar titles. Other works emerged that were devoted to his moral and personal excellence and in which the obligations of the believer towards Muḥammad were developed. In theology, the view that Muḥammad can and will intercede on behalf of the believers at the last judgement became common. The veneration of Muḥammad also began to manifest itself in a number of festivals commemorating events of his life such as his birth (*mawlid* or *mawlūd*)⁶ and the story of his nightly journey to Jerusalem and ascent to heaven (*isrā'* and *mi'rāj*).⁷ The Prophet's mosque in Medina, where he is also buried, became to be considered one of the holiest places for Muslims, second only to the mosque surrounding the Ka'ba in Mecca.⁸ While several of the above views and practices have been challenged and opposed by different groups of Muslims over the course of time, most of them continue to remain important for large numbers of Muslims. In more recent times, a number of Muslim authors have written biographies of Muḥammad that they deemed more suitable to modern times, responding to Western historical-critical studies of Muḥammad and, in general, to the challenges that a more scientific worldview poses to the traditional sources.⁹

Not only Muslims engaged with the personality of Muḥammad; non-Muslims likewise did so from the very beginning of their encounter with Islam, but in a very different manner. For non-Muslims – mostly Christians and to some degree also Jews and Zoroastrians – the success of Muḥammad and his followers posed a challenge to their own claims of truth. In the early Islamic conquests, a significant part of Byzantine and Sasanian territories had fallen to Muslim rule and people had to accommodate the fact that a new and successful religion had started to emerge. Over the following centuries, a number of stereotypical images emerged that were used over and over again in polemics and as reassurance of their own faith, not only in the regions under Muslim rule but subsequently also in Europe.

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They included the view of Muḥammad as pseudo-prophet, as a heretic, an impostor, an epileptic, and the anti-Christ.¹⁰ Some of these views were based on a vague knowledge of the Muslim sources, though often presented in a distorted way, while others were completely independent from them. Throughout the Middle Ages, the European view of Islam and of Muḥammad was largely informed by these stereotypes, and they remained active and can be found in polemical literature until today. In the wake of the Enlightenment, a more neutral or even slightly positive stance towards Muḥammad emerged with some authors seeing in him a significant legislator and starting to acknowledge the political achievements of his career.¹¹ In the nineteenth century, more positive views arose, from the view of Muḥammad as a hero, who was sincere in his aims, to acknowledging his achievements in leading people to monotheism, and even regarding him as a prophet.¹²

Serious academic scholarship on Muḥammad can be said to have begun in the first half of the nineteenth century when historical criticism started to gain popular recognition.¹³ The question of the personality of the Prophet remained central, but now became linked with the question of the reliability of the sources.¹⁴ Initially, despite their late date, the sources were not perceived as particularly problematic, as they claimed to cite earlier authorities, in most cases alleged eyewitnesses. This view started to change at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, when a number of works were published that called the reliability of the sources into question.¹⁵ Their conclusions were deemed too radical and were criticized by other scholars, who tried to defend the overall soundness of the sources,¹⁶ and maintained that with a critical mind and careful approach to the sources it was still possible to write biographies of Muḥammad.¹⁷ On the other hand, these publications led the way to a much more sceptical approach to the biography of the prophet, culminating in the view that the nature of the sources makes it impossible to write any such biography and that Muḥammad might not even have been a historical figure at all.¹⁸ Needless to say that these more radical theses were likewise not universally accepted and sparked refutations of their own.¹⁹

The debate on the reliability of the sources brought about different approaches to the study of Muḥammad. Some scholars tried to confine themselves to the Qur'ān as a source for the life of Muḥammad, as this was regarded by most as the only source originating in his lifetime.²⁰ Others discarded the Islamic sources altogether and attempted to reconstruct the history of early Islam on the basis of non-Muslim sources.²¹ Studies on late antique Arabia and the Jewish and Christian traditions of the Middle East aimed for a better understanding of the context in which Muḥammad was active and to what extent he may have been influenced by these traditions.²²

A different line of research focused on the sources themselves and tried to better understand how and when they were composed, how they related to each other, and how they were transmitted. Several studies focused on individual works or on genres.²³ Those who were still interested in the historical Muḥammad mostly

concentrated on single events or aspects rather than trying to discuss the personality of Muḥammad as a whole.²⁴ Only in recent years have there been attempts to take the broader picture into consideration once more, and to write longer scholarly biographies of Muḥammad.²⁵

A different approach was to exclude the question of the historical Muḥammad and study the development of the Muslim tradition on his life and his reception in the Muslim tradition.²⁶ Initially, these studies were mostly focused on the early tradition, but in recent years the scope has been broadened to include the study of modern Muslim reinterpretations of Muḥammad and specific aspects such as the depiction of Muḥammad.²⁷

While these studies in general originated from a preoccupation and engagement with the written sources, other approaches arose from a study of later Muslim thought and practice. They enquired about the origins and development of dogmatic positions regarding Muḥammad, such as the finality of his prophethood, his illiteracy, or his sinlessness,²⁸ or they were interested in the background of the veneration of Muḥammad or his role in Sufism.²⁹

These investigations are complemented by the study of the image of Muḥammad in the non-Muslim tradition, from the earliest contacts through the Middle Ages to early modern views, depictions and dramatisations and the history of the academic study of Muḥammad.³⁰

This collection

This collection of articles aims at providing an overview of several aspects of scholarship on Muḥammad, the sources on his life, and his reception in Muslim as well as in non-Muslim thought. Naturally, a series like this has specific requirements that limit the choice and thereby influence the selection and arrangement of the articles. In this case, the focus on journal articles and the confinement to publications in English had a significant impact, as this excluded on the one hand a large amount of excellent scholarship on Muḥammad in particular in German and French, but also in other languages. On the other hand, scholarship on Muḥammad did not only take place in journal articles but was often published in monographs devoted to specific aspects. The collection thus can in no way claim to be comprehensive. It nevertheless offers insights into various topics on different aspects of the study of Muḥammad. Where possible, an attempt was made to offer different views on a topic to show the various approaches scholars took and the different conclusions they reached.

The first two volumes are closely linked and complement one another. They are both broadly concerned with the historical Muḥammad, the sources on his life and the problems these sources pose for any research on Muḥammad, but they focus on different aspects: while the contributions of Volume I mostly discuss the sources on the life of Muḥammad, their development, their interrelation and the broader question of their authenticity and originality, the contributions of Volume II focus more on single aspects of the life of Muḥammad and the question of the

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historicity of the events. A number of contributions cover both aspects, however, and in these cases their major focus and their connection to other articles in the collection guided the decision to include them in one volume or the other. The third and fourth volumes, in contrast, are concerned with the image of Muḥammad in the perception of later generations. Volume III sheds light on the reception of Muḥammad in the classical Muslim tradition. It includes studies on some doctrinal aspects, the veneration of Muhammad as well as his position in Sūfī thought and practice. Volume IV includes, on the one hand, contributions that discuss modern Muslim reinterpretations of Muḥammad and, on the other hand, articles that deal with the image of Muḥammad in the eyes of non-Muslims.

Volume I

The opening volume deals with the sources on Muhammad's life. It includes studies on some of the major biographical sources (*sīra* and *maghāzī*) as well as the Qur'ān and non-Muslim sources on the life of Muhammad. The first two chapters, by Watt and Cook, give two very different assessments of the major sources of Muḥammad's life – while Watt argues for the overall reliability of these sources, later tendencies that may have shaped them notwithstanding, Cook holds a more sceptical view and points to the major inconsistencies within and contradictions between the different types of sources.

The chapters that form the remainder of the volume address the different sources in more detail, namely the Qur'ān, the *sīra* or *maghāzī* tradition that comprises most of the biographical material on Muḥammad, the Ḥadīth – the collection of the reports of Muḥammad's sayings and deeds – and the non-Islamic sources on Muḥammad. For most scholars, the Qur'ān represents the oldest and most reliable source about Muḥammad. Chapter 3, in which Welch tries to gather all the information that the Qur'ān reveals about Muḥammad, can thus be seen as an attempt to reconstruct the earliest layer of information on Muḥammad, assuming that in most cases in which the Qur'ān uses the address 'you', it refers to the Prophet. Rippin, on the other hand, argues that this is not necessarily always the case and that one may need to be more careful when using the Qur'ān as a source for the life of Muḥammad.³¹

The next two chapters discuss the relationship between the Qur'ān and the *sīra*. While, in Chapter 5, Lammens argues that the *sīra* is for the most part secondary and the result of exegetical endeavours to understand certain verses of the Qur'ān, Rubin, examining the traditions about the *hijra*, argues to the contrary; namely that there was an independent *sīra* tradition and that this was only aligned with the Qur'ān and enriched by exegetical traditions at a later point.

These contributions lead us to the *sīra* or *maghāzī* tradition, which constitutes the bulk of the material on Muḥammad's life. The contributions of Jones (Ch. 7) and Conrad (Ch. 8) in an exemplary manner point to two of the features of this literature that make it so difficult to use as a historical source. On the one hand, there are the discrepancies and contradictions that abound in the material, for

instance with regard to the dating of events.³² On the other hand, the literature is full of *topoi* and elements that have a symbolical function rather than a historical value.³³ These features, among others such as the salvation-historical character of many of the accounts, need to be taken into account when using the *sīra* as a historical source.

The following ten contributions all focus on specific parts of the *sīra* literature. Görke and Schoeler, in Chapter 9, try to reconstruct the *sīra* traditions of ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. c. 94/712), which are among the earliest traditions to have come down to us, although they have been embellished and changed over the course of time. Boekhoff-van der Voort follows this when she analyses the *maghāzī* material contained in ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaḥ* to unearth earlier sources, in her case going back to Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri (d. 124/742). Both contributions employ the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis and thus also provide an insight into this method.³⁴ The value of this method, aimed at reconstructing earlier layers of the Muslim tradition, and the results gained by employing it have recently been challenged, sparking a sometimes polemical debate on the issue.³⁵

Schacht’s article on Mūsā b. ‘Uqba’s *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* (Ch. 11) displays a more sceptical view on the reliability of the sources. Following his studies of legal traditions and the conclusions that most of these emerged only in the second century after the *hijra*,³⁶ he argues that this also applies for most of the historical traditions as evidenced in Mūsā b. ‘Uqba’s work, and that the lines of transmission (*isnād*) often appear to have been improved or invented at a later date, some by a process he dubbed ‘spreading’.³⁷ Subsequently, Schoeler challenges Schacht’s conclusions and argues that a comparison of different independent versions of the same historical traditions in other works shows that they are much older than Schacht assumed and that the lines of transmission appear to be genuine.³⁸

Robson likewise argues for the reliability of the *isnāds* as adduced by Ibn Ishāq, a contemporary of Mūsā b. ‘Uqba’s, and the most important single source for the life of Muḥammad. According to Robson the uncertainties or gaps in the lines of transmission as found frequently in this work are best explained by assuming that Ibn Ishāq is honest in his statements.

Watt, in Chapter 14, takes a closer look at the material of which the *sīra* is composed, based on a study of Ibn Ishāq’s work, but applicable to other works as well. While his assessments of the reliability of this material have been challenged,³⁹ the discussion of the different types of material that make up the biography of Muḥammad remains important.

In Chapter 15, Landau-Tasseran studies the account of a delegation of the Tamīm tribe to Muḥammad in different sources and shows how compilers used and shaped the material in various processes of redaction. While the compilers partly drew on similar sources, as a result of these processes, namely of selecting and arranging the material, they produced rather different accounts whose relation and careful composition cannot always easily be discerned.

Lecker’s study of al-Wāqidi’s account of the murder of Ka‘b b. al-Ashraf likewise focuses on the redactional processes that shaped the early Islamic

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tradition, and in particular on the technique of combining different reports into a single narrative. He argues that for our understanding of the Islamic historiographical tradition, the distinction between ‘edited’ and ‘non-edited’ texts is at least as important as, and probably more important than, the distinction between ‘early’ and ‘late’ sources.

In his study of the accounts of the death of Muḥammad’s father, in Chapter 17 Lecker argues against the idea of a continuous growth of the Muslim tradition as advanced for instance by Cook (see Chapter 2 in this volume). According to Lecker, the fact that later sources provide more information than earlier sources is not necessarily based on this additional information being invented in the meantime, but rather on the compilers’ different selection of materials.

Faizer, in Chapter 18 on the issue of authenticity in al-Wāqidi’s work, re-examines both of Lecker’s articles and proposes a different interpretation of the data: in his view, al-Wāqidi uses the combined report as one of several techniques to deliberately distort and manipulate traditions in order to present his reinterpretation of the life of Muḥammad.

In the following chapter, in his comparison of Ibn Ishāq’s and al-Wāqidi’s accounts on the Jews in Medina, Faizer stresses the importance of focussing on the compilers and their agenda to understand the traditions they cite and the way they present them, rather than focussing on single traditions taken out of their context. In this he brings in a perspective decidedly different from what Noth and others had suggested.⁴⁰ His discussion can likewise be seen as a comment on a number of articles included in Volume II, namely those on the so-called ‘Constitution of Medina’ and on aspects of the relation between Muḥammad and the Medinan Jews (in particular Chapters 26–29 and 32–34 in Volume II).

The next two chapters deal with the relationship between *sīra* or *maghāzī* material and Ḥadīth. Different concepts of this relationship have been advanced, ranging from the idea that the biography of Muḥammad basically consists of *ḥadīths* – possibly of exegetical or legal origin – chronologically arranged,⁴¹ to the opposing view that the historical traditions of the *sīra* were stripped of their context and reduced to their legal or theological content to become normative *ḥadīths*.⁴² In Chapter 20, Zaman studies three Ḥadīth compilations containing historical traditions and concludes that they are of very different character and that it thus is not possible to regard any one collection as representative of the Ḥadīth tradition. He observes a development or shift in the interest of the Ḥadīth collectors.⁴³ Görke follows on by arguing that the fields of the biography of the Prophet and the Ḥadīth, although closely connected, were distinct fields and that one cannot be seen as secondary to and dependent on the other.

In the final contribution of Volume I, Hoyland (Ch. 22) takes a look at the non-Muslim sources – several of which predate the Muslim narrative sources considerably – and what they tell us about Muḥammad. He points to certain recurring motives and to the issues where these sources can complement their Muslim counterparts.⁴⁴

Volume II

The second volume deals with the central aspects of Muḥammad's life. As the contributions of Volume I made clear, any study of events from the life of Muḥammad has to take into consideration the problems the sources pose, such as the late date of the major narrative sources, the often contradictory accounts in these sources, the political and theological tendencies that have shaped and influenced these accounts as well as the vagueness of the Qur'ān and its differences from the narrative sources, or, in some cases, the contradictions to the non-Muslim sources.

The first three chapters deal with the story of Muḥammad's night journey and ascent to heaven, one of the major events and miracles of Muḥammad's life prior to the *hijra*.⁴⁵ In Chapter 23, Busse systematically discusses several aspects of this story and, following a position first held by Schrieke,⁴⁶ argues that the earliest versions did not involve a journey to Jerusalem but rather took Muḥammad from Mecca straight to heaven and that the identification of the Qur'ānic *Masjid al-Aqṣā* (Q. 17:1) with Jerusalem was established only after the Muslim conquest of the Holy Land. Rubin holds the opposite view, namely that the Qur'ānic vocabulary is linked to the Old Testament and post-biblical apocalyptic literature and therefore clearly places the *Masjid al-Aqṣā* in an earthly Jerusalem. Van Ess introduces a new aspect and new perspectives in Chapter 24, when comparing Muḥammad's ascent to heaven with Jesus' and looking at the theological implications of Qur'ānic verses that were linked to Muḥammad's visions.

The so-called 'Constitution of Medina' is widely regarded as being the source for the life of Muḥammad with the highest claim for authenticity apart from the Qur'ān. It has thus attracted a considerable amount of attention.⁴⁷ The articles selected here focus on various aspects. In Chapter 26, Serjeant argues that the 'Constitution' is in fact a series of eight documents and not a single treaty.⁴⁸ Gil, on the contrary, argues for the unity of the document and sees it as a preparation for war against Jewish tribes of Medina rather than a treaty concluded with them.⁴⁹ A detailed discussion of several key terms in the 'Constitution', its signatories, the historical setting of the individual parts and allusions in the Qur'ān to this document can be found in Serjeant's study 'The *Sunnah Jāmi'ah*'. Rubin takes a closer look at the Jewish groups included, and also those not included, in the treaty and argues that the document was partly suppressed and partly reshaped in the developing historical tradition. Lecker, in Chapter 30, revisits Gil's article and, in contrast to him, argues that Muḥammad did indeed conclude treaties with the Jewish tribes of Medina – as not only the sources but also the economic and military situation hint at. Arjomand studies the 'Constitution' as a document for proto-Islamic public law. He agrees with Lecker's division of the 'Constitution' into two main parts, but identifies a later supplement to the second part and thus proposes a tripartite document.

The next three chapters deal with the massacre of the Banū Qurayza, one of the Jewish tribes of Medina. To begin with, Watt, in Chapter 32, argues that the tradition was not reshaped at a later time in order to remove the responsibility of

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the murder from Muḥammad and blame Sa'd b. Mu'ādh instead,⁵⁰ but that Sa'd's prominent role belongs to the historical core. Arafat, in contrast, argues that the whole tradition of the massacre of the Banū Qurayza is inspired by, and modelled after, the story of the Jewish revolt against the Romans in 73 CE and the subsequent siege of Masada. Kister rounds off the section in Chapter 34 when he re-examines and refutes Arafat's arguments and, drawing on a large number of sources, offers more insights into the background and details of this event.

The next section has four chapters that study the socio-economic and political background of Muḥammad's success in Medina. Donner, in Chapter 35 on Mecca's food supplies, argues on the basis of some comments in the exegetical literature that the relative ease with which Muḥammad was able to conquer Mecca only a few years after he was ousted was partly due to a blockade of Mecca's trade routes that caused or aggravated a famine in the city. In his following chapter on Muḥammad's political consolidation, he studies Muḥammad's tribal policies and how they eventually, despite initial failures, helped him to win his cause. Kister likewise examines the events surrounding the blockade of Mecca and tries to make sense of several reports that refer to a co-operation between the Meccan leader Abū Sufyān and Muḥammad. Rubin rounds off with Chapter 38, in which he revisits the results of the previous three chapters and attempts to provide a date for the blockade.

The concluding four chapters of Volume II all deal with the question of the historical Muḥammad, in distinction to the figure of Muḥammad as he is presented in the sources.⁵¹ They can in some way be regarded as presenting different approaches, taking into account many of the single studies included in Volumes I and II. Peters begins by discussing the methodological challenges of the study of the historical Muḥammad, pointing to the differences of the more established studies of the historical Jesus and showing different approaches to the question. Crone follows on from what can be called a scepticist or revisionist position regarding the reliability of the sources on Muḥammad's life. In this respect, it is remarkable that she argues strongly for the historicity of Muḥammad and, after discussing the main sources for his life – the Muslim tradition, the Qur'ān, and a growing number of archaeological findings in Arabia that help to understand the background – comes to an optimistic outlook with regard to what can be known about Muḥammad. Berg and Rollens compare the sources, methodologies and findings of historical Jesus scholars and historical Muḥammad scholars and discuss what they can learn from each other. Görke finishes off the section by focusing on the *sīra* material and examining the prospects and limits of four approaches that have been used to unearth historical facts in this material.

Volume III

The third volume is devoted to the role of Muḥammad in the Muslim tradition. The first two chapters study the emergence and development of the Prophetic *sunna*. Newby, in Chapter 43, looks at the different ways that Muḥammad was remembered

in the narrative biographical tradition (*sīra*) on the one hand, and the fragmented, normative statements of the *sunna* on the other hand, and how these two models interacted with each other. Lowry focuses on the development of the perception of Muḥammad as a legal authority and the resulting emergence of the *ḥadīth* corpus and the sciences around it that were necessary to define that corpus. He also examines how *ḥadīths* – despite re-emerging controversies over the centuries – continue to keep their status as a basic source for Muslim thought and practice.

In Chapter 45, Muranyi examines the emergence of holy places connected to the life of the Prophet. He argues that, in contrast to previous scholarship, the commemoration of such places already began in the first century of Islam.⁵²

The next three chapters examine the Prophet's epithet *al-nabī al-ummī*, usually understood in the Muslim tradition as 'the illiterate Prophet'. Goldfeld, on the basis of an analysis of exegetical works, argues that the understanding of *ummī* as 'illiterate' only emerged in the second century and only became prevalent in the third century. Athamina extends the scope and includes other literary genres in his examination and comes to the conclusion that the Qur'ānic epithet cannot originally have referred to illiteracy. Günther argues that *ummī* in the Qur'ān does not have a single meaning at all, but covers a spectrum of ideas, including the ethnic origin and the originality of the Prophet, of which the latter goes well together with the notion of illiteracy.

Evstatiev concludes the section by taking a look at the doctrine of the *Seal of the Prophets* (*Khātām Al-Nabiyyīn*) and its development. In Chapter 49, he argues that initially this was understood by some to be a confirmation of Muḥammad's prophethood rather than a statement of its finality and that this latter notion only became prevalent after the third century, but has since become a cornerstone of Sunnī Islam.

The veneration of Muḥammad is dealt with in the following five chapters. Rubin starts off by examining the notion of the pre-existence of Muḥammad and the Muḥammadan light and how it is conceptualized in the – mostly Shi'i – sources.⁵³ Kaptein then examines how the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid*) developed in Mecca from the sixth/twelfth to the tenth/sixteenth centuries and discusses its devotional, ceremonial and political significance. He shows that, despite some opposition to specific elements, the celebrations were firmly established and included the religious and political elite.⁵⁴ In Chapter 52, Schussman looks at the debates regarding the permissibility of the celebration of this festival. She analyses a *fatwā* issued in 1993 and concludes that the *fatwā* appears to be a concession to popular religion rather than presenting an informed scholarly view. De la Puente discusses the emergence, development and significance of the *taṣliyah*, the prayer upon Muḥammad usually uttered by Muslims after mentioning the prophet. She looks at the various interpretations of its meaning and argues that, despite being based on a Qur'ānic revelation, it was transformed over the course of time in close connection with the evolution of the veneration of Muḥammad.⁵⁵ Richman concludes the section by discussing the appropriation and adaptation of a traditional Tamil genre of poetry, the *piḷḷaittamīl*,

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usually devoted to a deity or famous person addressed in the form of a child, to address and praise the Prophet Muḥammad. She explores how the particularities of the genre shape the depiction of Muḥammad, while at the same time Muslim concerns shape the structure and features of the poem.⁵⁶

The five chapters in Part 6 conclude Volume II by examining Muḥammad's position in Sufi thought and practice. In her chapter, 'Devotion to the Prophet Muḥammad and his family in Egyptian Sufism', Hoffman points to the importance of fieldwork in studies of contemporary Islam, which she argues is an essential supplement to textual studies when examining contemporary popular piety. Her results point to a close connection between Egyptian Sufism and Shiite Islam in devotion to the family of Muḥammad, the *ahl al-bayt*, but also indicate important differences, notably in the passion motif that is largely absent in Egyptian Sufism but of highest importance in Shiite Islam. In her next chapter, she examines the emergence and development of the Sufi concept of 'Annihilation in the Messenger of God (*fanā' fi'l-rasūl*)'. She argues that this concept, in contrast to a common notion, is not a 'neo-Sufi' element that only emerged in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, but can be traced back to Ibn 'Arabī and is thus very much part of a long-standing Sufi tradition. With her findings, she also challenges the usefulness of the term 'Neo-Sufism'.⁵⁷ The next two chapters examine the adaptation of the story of Muḥammad's night journey and ascent to heaven, dealt with earlier in Chapters 23–25 of Volume II, in the Sufi literature.⁵⁸ El-Azma explores how the story was transformed and adapted by al-Biṣṭāmī and Ibn 'Arabī by changing key elements, and was employed to symbolize the Sufi path with its various stages and states. Colby, on the other hand, studies al-Sulamī's work *Laṭā'if al-mi'rāj* ('The subtleties of the ascension') and argues that al-Sulamī in this work carefully selected and arranged sayings by Sufi masters on various aspects of Muḥammad's ascension in an attempt to harmonize Sufi exegesis and the 'official' Muslim tradition.⁵⁹ Bashir ends the section with Chapter 59 when he takes us to the Timurid period. In his study of three Sufi authors, he shows on the one hand the importance and significance of Muḥammad in Sufi thought and, on the other hand, the diversity of approaches the authors take to make their respective points.

Volume IV

The final volume comprises contributions on modern Muslim reinterpretations as well as Western views of Muḥammad. Waugh starts by examining how Muhammad Iqbal in his poems reinterpreted the role of the Prophet Muḥammad. He also draws attention to the importance of the non-scholarly views that often diverge from the 'official' image of the Prophet, for the understanding of the changing Muslim perceptions of Muḥammad.

Khalidi, in his book *Images of Muhammad*, examines how the view of Muḥammad evolved and developed over the course of time in the Muslim community.⁶⁰ Two chapters are reprinted here: in Chapter 61, 'The Hero', Khalidi discusses how Carlyle's lecture 'The Hero as Prophet'⁶¹ and Muir's *Life of*

*Mohammad*⁶² influenced nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Muslim writers, and how these writers, among them Ameer Ali, Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Husayn Haykal, responded each in their own way to the need for a new and modern *sīra*.⁶³ Then, in ‘The Liberator’, Khalidi focuses on twentieth-century biographies of the Prophet and in particular discusses those of Ma‘rūf al-Ruṣāfī and ‘Alī Dashtī, who radically reworked and demythologized the *sīra*. Roded, in Chapter 63, examines how the Syrian scholar and political activist of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muṣṭafā al-Sibā‘ī, employed the biography of Muḥammad in his teaching to provide guidance to young Muslim propagandists and activists, covering among other things the role of the youths and of women, the question of violence and the attitude to the Jews as well as the ideal society and leadership. Bakker follows this when he discusses the first feature film about Muḥammad, Moustapha Akkad’s *The Message*, released in 1976, the difficulties this enterprise encountered on various levels, and the interpretation of Muḥammad’s life it presented. He points to the notable omissions – in particular with regard to the military campaigns and the relation to the Jews – and concludes that, similar to many modern biographies of Muḥammad, the film conveys a more peaceful image of the Prophet than Muslim tradition. Iqbal in Chapter 65, ‘Living in the time of Prophecy’, compares modern *sīra* texts – mostly Haykal’s *Life of Muḥammad*,⁶⁴ al-Mubarakpuri’s *The Sealed Nectar*,⁶⁵ and Ling’s *Muḥammad*.⁶⁶ He argues that although they all recast the traditional *sīra* works, they differ considerably in the extent of their ‘internalization’, or the degree to which the author (and the reader) are able to immerse themselves into the time of Muḥammad.

Riexinger takes a look at the *Mukhtaṣar sīrat al-rasūl* (‘Short version of the biography of the Messenger’) by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. He shows that Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb omits most passages from the traditional narratives aimed at elevating the status of Muḥammad as well as almost all miraculous accounts and argues that the depiction of Muḥammad as an ordinary human being mainly occupied with eradicating idolatry and unbelief is used to reinforce him as a role model and, in particular, to legitimize warfare against idolatry.

Ali ends the section with Chapter 67 when she examines the different approaches Muslims had over the course of time to the question of how the Prophet’s behaviour should inform the believers’ attitudes towards marriage and how the conflicting sources – the general character of the Prophet as described in the sources on the one hand and specific normative statements ascribed to him on the other – have been used to arrive at very different conclusions.

Chapters 68 and 69 deal with specific elements of the *sīra* that were eventually detached from their context and acquired a history of their own. First, Buckley takes us through the changing Muslim views of the *Burāq*, the beast on which Muḥammad is said to have ridden on his nightly journey to Jerusalem (*isrā’*), before analysing the various ways it has been employed in Western literature. Then Szilágyi explores the Baḥīra legend and how it was used and developed in Christian polemics against Islam. She argues that the major function of the legend was to help Christians living under Muslim rule to maintain their religion and that the constant transformation of

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the legend makes it possible to study their changing attitudes towards Islam. Luchitskaja follows on by studying several Latin twelfth- and thirteenth-century works on Muḥammad and Islam and exploring the question of how the direct contact with Muslims during the age of the crusades affected the perception of Muḥammad. She shows how the writers built on previous, mostly Byzantine stereotypes and enriched them with more recent folkloric subjects and exotic tales, and concludes that overall the stereotypes remained very strong and that the image of Muḥammad and Islam evolved only very slowly. Mula draws our attention to the *Golden Legend (Legenda Aurea)*, a collection of saints' lives composed by Jacobus de Voragine around 1265, and the chapter it contains about Muḥammad. He shows in Chapter 71 that Muḥammad's biography in this work is carefully constructed to appear as the opposite of the saints' virtuous lives and argues that this work – despite its chapter on Muḥammad often being neglected – probably was the most accessible source of information on Muḥammad and Islam in the centuries that followed its publication. Watt discusses the background and originality of Carlyle's lecture on Muḥammad in 1840. He argues that Carlyle was the first to focus on the inner experience of Muḥammad rather than on his achievements, and that his insistence on Muḥammad's sincerity was a milestone in the history of Western perceptions of the Prophet. Gunni, in Chapter 73, offers a survey of the works on Muḥammad of some ten French-speaking authors, covering a period from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries. He discusses the different views they held, but sees them all contributing to a 'more rounded picture' of Muḥammad. Tolan takes a broader view and discusses the changing European perceptions of Muḥammad, which include his being represented as a trickster, epileptic, false prophet, impostor, but also as a lawgiver, statesman and sage. He shows that, despite being mostly negative, European views of Muḥammad were very heterogeneous. He argues that the authors often were less interested in Muḥammad himself but instead used the figure of Muḥammad in their polemic against their direct opponents. In Chapter 75, Bosworth takes a look at Henri de Bornier's play *Mahomet*, written in 1889, and discusses its background as well as its presentation of Muḥammad. He also takes notice of the protests by the Turkish authorities against the performance of the play, which led to its prohibition in France – apparently without those objecting actually having read the play. Marshall rounds off the volume with his chapter on contemporary Christian views of Muḥammad. After summarizing pre-modern Christian views of Muḥammad, Marshall discusses the theological difficulties inherent in the question and presents four approaches – put forward or represented by Daniel Madigan, Hans Küng, Jacques Jomier and Christian Troll, and Kenneth Cragg, respectively – ranging from a respectful recognition of Muḥammad's political and religious achievements to his acceptance as a prophet.

Conclusion

Taken together, the four volumes provide an overview of several aspects of scholarship on Muḥammad. As Muḥammad has been a central object of study in

the preoccupation with Islam for centuries, this selection nevertheless only constitutes the tip of the iceberg, and quite a few topics had to be left out that could easily have filled several more volumes. The selection nevertheless hopefully is able to show the variety both in approaches and in assessment in the study of Muḥammad, which will certainly continue to grow.

Notes

- 1 See e.g., Andrew Rippin, 'Muḥammad in the Qur'ān: Reading scripture in the 21st century', in Harald Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muḥammad: The Issue of the Sources*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 298–309 (included as Chapter 4 of this volume).
- 2 See e.g., John Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; Herbert Berg, 'Context: Muḥammad', in Andrew Rippin (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, Malden: Blackwell, 2006, pp. 187–204 and 199–200.
- 3 There is a large amount of scholarship on this question, ranging from very optimistic assessments, as in Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 1, Leiden 1967, pp. 251–255 and 275–302, who argues that it is possible to reconstruct works from the early decades of Islam, to very pessimistic ones, as in Yehuda D. Nevo and Judith Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, Amherst: Prometheus, 2003, p. 11, who claim that Muḥammad was not a historical figure and his biography only consists of back-projections of the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries. The studies of Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, New York and London: Routledge, 2007 and *The Biography of Muḥammad. Nature and Authenticity*, New York and London: Routledge 2011, are fundamental in understanding the processes at work in the early transmission. Ella Landau-Tasseron, 'On the reconstruction of lost sources', *al-Qanṭara* 25 (2004): 45–91, and Lawrence I. Conrad, 'Recovering lost texts: some methodological issues', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113 (1993): 258–263, discuss some of the major issues in the question of reconstructing earlier texts.
- 4 See e.g. Chapter 50 in Volume III of this collection, Carl Ernst, 'Muḥammad as the pole of existence', in Jonathan E. Brockopp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 123–138; Annemarie Schimmel, *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet: Die Verehrung des Propheten in der islamischen Frömmigkeit*, Düsseldorf, Köln: Diederichs, 1981, pp. 108–123 [English translation: *And Muhammad is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985]; Tilman Nagel, *Allahs Liebling: Ursprung und Erscheinungsformen des Mohammedglaubens*, München: Oldenbourg, 2008, pp. 153–158.
- 5 Cf. Schimmel, *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet*, see note 4, pp. 86–96; Robert Gleave, 'Personal Piety', in Brockopp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, see note 4, pp. 103–122; Nagel, *Allahs Liebling*, see note 4, pp. 166–179.
- 6 See Chapter 51 in Volume III. For more comprehensive studies of the birthday celebrations of Muḥammad, see e.g. Nico Kaptein, *Muhammad's Birthday Festival: Early History in the Central Muslim Lands and Development in the Muslim West until the 10th/16th Century*, Leiden: Brill, 1993; Marion Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muḥammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam*, London: Routledge, 2007; and her chapter 'The Prophet Muḥammad in ritual', in Brockopp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad*, see note 4, pp. 139–157. Cf. Gustave Edmund von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, London: Curzon, 1976, pp. 67–84; Annemarie Schimmel, *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet*, see note 4, pp. 124–138; Tilman Nagel, *Allahs Liebling*, see note 4, pp. 301–315.

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- 7 There is a large amount of literature on the story and its reception. See for instance Geo Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God, and his Ascension*, Uppsala: Lundequistska bokhandeln [a.o.], 1955; Frederick S. Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008; Christiane Gruber, *The Ilkhanid Book of Ascension: A Persian-Sunni Devotional Tale*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010; Brooke Olson Vuckovic, *Heavenly Journeys, Earthly Concerns: The Legacy of the Mi'raj in the Formation of Islam*, New York: Routledge, 2005, Schimmel, *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet*, see note 4, pp. 139–154.
- 8 For the emergence of Medina as a holy place, see Harry Munt, *The Holy City of Medina: Sacred Space in Early Islamic Arabia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- 9 See Chapters 61–63 and 65 in Volume IV; Martin Lings, *Muhammad, His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, London: Islamic Texts Society, 1983; Muhammad Hamidullah, *Le Prophète de l'Islam: sa vie et son œuvre*, 2 vols, Paris: J. Vrin, 1960 [English translation: *The Life and Work of the Prophet of Islam*, Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute].
- 10 See Chapters 70–71 and 73–74 in Volume IV; Cf. Minou Reeves, *Muhammad in Europe: A Thousand Years in Western Myth-Making*, Reading: Garnet, 2000; John Tolan, 'Impostor or Lawgiver: Muhammad through European eyes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in Christiane Gruber and Avinoam Shalem (eds), *The Image of the Prophet between Ideal and Ideology: A Scholarly Investigation*, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014, pp. 261–69; Hartmut Bobzin, *Mohammed*, München: Beck, 2000, pp. 9–21; Hans Haas, 'Das Bild Muhammeds im Wandel der Zeiten', *Zeitschrift für Missionskunde und Religionswissenschaft* 31 (1916): 161–172, 193–203, 225–239, 258–269, 289–295, 321–333, 353–365; Albrecht Noth and Trude Ehlert, 'The Prophet's image in Europe and the West', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. VII, Leiden: Brill, 1993, pp. 377–387; Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West. The Making of an Image*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960.
- 11 See Chapter 75; Cf. Tolan, 'Impostor or Lawgiver', in Gruber and Shalem (eds), *The Images of the Prophet*, see note 10; Bobzin, *Mohammed*, see note 10, pp. 18–20; Reeves, *Muhammad in Europe*, see note 10, pp. 139–174.
- 12 See Chapters 73–75 and 77; Cf. Reeves, *Muhammad in Europe*, see note 10, pp. 175–202; Bobzin, *Mohammed*, see note 10, pp. 20–21; Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*, London: James Fraser, 1841; David Kerr, "'He Walked in the Path of the Prophets": Toward Christian theological recognition of the prophethood of Muhammad', in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Z. Haddad (eds), *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995, pp. 426–446; Hans Küng, *Islam: Past, Present and Future*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007.
- 13 Cf. Harald Motzki, 'Introduction', in *The Biography of Muḥammad*, see note 1, pp. xi–xvi, xi; Bobzin, *Mohammed*, see note 10, p. 116.
- 14 Among the most important studies of this time are: Gustav Weil, *Mohammed der Prophet, sein Leben und seine Lehre*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1843; Aloys Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Moḥammad: Nach bisher größtenteils unbenutzten Quellen*, 3 vols, Berlin: Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1861–1865; William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, 4 vols, London: Smith, Elder, 1858–1861; Hubert Grimme, *Mohammed. Das Leben nach den Quellen*, Münster: Aschendorf, 1892; Cf. Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20: Jahrhunderts*, Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1955, pp. 174–181; Bobzin, *Mohammed*, see note 10, pp. 116–117.
- 15 In particular: Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, vol. 2, Halle: Niemeyer, 1890; Leone Caetani, *Annali dell'Islām*, 10 vols, Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1905–1927; Henri Lammens, 'Qoran et tradition: Comment fut composée la vie de Mahomet', *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 1 (1910): 27–51 (see the English translation,

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- Chapter 5 of this volume); Henri Lammens, 'Mahomet fut-il sincere?', *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 2 (1911): 25–53, 140–166; Henri Lammens, *Fāṭima et les filles de Mahomet, notes critiques pour l'étude de la Sira*, Rome: Sumptibus Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1912; Cf. Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa*, see note 14, pp. 226–231, 292–299, Motzki, 'Introduction', see note 1, pp. xi–xii; Maxime Rodinson, 'A critical survey of modern studies on Muhammad', in Merlin L. Swartz (ed.), *Studies on Islam*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 23–27.
- 16 Among them, Theodor Nöldeke, review of Caetani's *Annali dell'Islām*, *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Kunde des Morgenlandes* 21 (1907): 297–312; Theodor Nöldeke, 'Die Tradition über das Leben Muhammads', *Der Islam* 5 (1914): 160–170; Carl Heinrich Becker, 'Prinzipielles zu Lammens' Sira-Studien', *Der Islam* 4 (1913): 263–269.
- 17 The major biographical studies of Muḥammad that appeared until the 1960s include Frants Buhl, *Muhammeds liv: med en indledning om forholdene i Arabien før Muhammeds optræden*, Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1903 [German translation: *Das Leben Muhammeds*, Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1930]; Tor Andrae, *Mohammed, sein Leben und sein Glaube*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1932 [English translation: *Mohammed: The Man and His Faith*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1936]; Régis Blachère, *Le Problème de Mahomet*, Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1952; Rudi Paret, *Mohammed und der Koran*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1957; Maxime Rodinson, *Mahomet*, Paris: Club français du livre, 1961 [English translation: *Mohammed*, London: Penguin, 1971]; William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1953; William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1956; William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961; cf. Rodinson, 'A Critical Survey', see note 15, pp. 27 and 45–51.
- 18 The major contributions of this sceptical approach include: Joseph Schacht, 'A reevaluation of Islamic tradition', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 49 (1949): 143–154; Joseph Schacht, 'On Mūsā b. 'Uqba's *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*', *Acta Orientalia* 21 (1953): 288–300 (included as Chapter 11 in this volume); John Wansbrough, *The Sectarial Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History*, London: Oxford University Press, 1978; Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980; Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987; see also Jacqueline Chabbi, 'Histoire et tradition sacrée: la biographie impossible de Mahomet', *Arabica* 43 (1996): 189–205. The statement that Muḥammad was not a historical figure can be found in Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, see note 3, p. 11, and has since been taken up among others by Karl-Heinz Ohlig. See Karl-Heinz Ohlig and Gerd-Rüdiger Puin (eds), *Die dunklen Anfänge: Neue Forschungen zur Entstehung und Geschichte des frühen Islam*, Berlin: Schiler, 2005 [English translation: *The Hidden Origins of Islam: New Research into its Early History*, Amherst: Prometheus, 2010]; Karl-Heinz Ohlig (ed.), *Der frühe Islam: Eine historisch-kritische Rekonstruktion anhand zeitgenössischer Quellen*, Berlin: Schiler, 2007.
- 19 See e.g. William Montgomery Watt, 'The reliability of Ibn-Ishāq's sources', in *La Vie du prophète Mahomet: Colloque de Strasbourg (octobre 1980)*, Paris, 1983, pp. 31–43 (included as Chapter 14 in this volume); Josef van Ess, 'The making of Islam', *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 September 1978, pp. 997–998; Fred M. Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins: The Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Princeton: Darwin, 1998, in particular pp. 25–30; Robert Bertram Serjeant, 'Meccan trade and the rise of Islam: Misconceptions and flawed polemics', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110 (1990): 472–486; see also Crone's response 'Serjeant and Meccan trade', *Arabica* 39 (1992): 216–240.

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- 20 See e.g. William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad's Mecca: History in the Qur'ān*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988; Jacqueline Chabbi, *Le seigneur des tribus: L'Islam de Mahomet*, Paris: Noësis, 1997; Alford T. Welch, 'Muhammad's understanding of himself: The Koranic data', in Richard G. Hovannisian and Speros Veronis Jr. (eds), *Islam's Understanding of Itself*, Malibu, CA: Undena, 1983, pp. 15–52 (included as Chapter 3 in this volume); Andrew Rippin, 'Muhammad in the Qur'ān' (included as Chapter 4 in this volume).
- 21 Most famously, Patricia Crone and Michael Cook in *Hagarism*, see note 18. See also Stephen J. Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet: The End of Muhammad's Life and the Beginnings of Islam*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, in particular pp. 18–72; For an assessment of the material, see Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluations of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam*, Princeton: Darwin, 1997, and with regard to Muḥammad, his 'The earliest Christian writings on Muḥammad: An appraisal', in Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muḥammad*, see note 1, pp. 276–297 (included as Chapter 22 in this volume).
- 22 See e.g. Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs*, London: Routledge, 2001; Gerald R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; and the article collections: Meir J. Kister, *Studies on Jāhiliyya and Early Islam*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1980; Robert Bertram Serjeant, *Studies in Arabian History and Civilisation*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1981; Michael Lecker, *Jews and Arabs in Pre- and Early Islamic Arabia*, Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1998; Michael Lecker, *People, Tribes and Society in Arabia Around the Time of Muḥammad*, Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 2005; Francis E. Peters (ed.), *The Arabs and Arabia on the Eve of Islam*, Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1999; Albrecht Noth, 'Früher Islam', in Ulrich Haarmann (ed.), *Geschichte der Arabischen Welt*, München: Beck, 1987, pp. 11–100; Walter Dostal, 'Mecca before the time of the Prophet: Attempt of an anthropological interpretation', *Der Islam* 68 (1991): 193–231.
- 23 There is a huge amount of scholarship on this topic. See e.g. Chapters 7–21 of this volume; Josef Horovitz, *The Earliest Biographies of the Prophet and their Authors*, Princeton: Darwin, 2002; Johann Fück, *Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq: Literaturhistorische Untersuchungen*, PhD thesis, Frankfurt, 1925; Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ibn Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955, xiii–xlvi; Rudolph Sellheim, 'Prophet, Chalif und Geschichte: Die Muhammad-Biographie des Ibn Ishāq', *Oriens* 18–19 (1967): 33–91; Sadun Mahmud Al-Samuk, *Die historischen Überlieferungen nach Ibn Ishāq: Eine synoptische Untersuchung*, PhD thesis, Frankfurt, 1978; Toufic Fahd (ed.), *La Vie du Prophète Mahomet: Colloque de Strasbourg (Octobre 1980)*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983; Miklos Muranyi, 'Ibn Ishāq's *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* in der riwāya von Yūnus b. Bukair: Bemerkungen zur frühen Überlieferungsgeschichte', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 14 (1991): 214–275; Abd al-Aziz Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs* (translated and edited by Lawrence I. Conrad), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983; Joachim von Stülpnagel, 'Urwa Ibn az-Zubair: Sein Leben und seine Bedeutung als Quelle frühislamischer Überlieferung', PhD thesis, Tübingen, 1957; Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds*, Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1996; translated into English as *The Biography of Muḥammad: Nature and Authenticity*, New York and London: Routledge, 2011; Andreas Görke and Gregor Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte über das Leben Muḥammads: Das Korpus 'Urwa ibn az-Zubair*, Princeton: Darwin, 2008; John Marsden B. Jones, 'The Maghāzī Literature', in Alfred Felix Landon Beeston et al. (eds), *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 344–351; Meir J. Kister, 'The Sīra Literature',

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- in Beeston *et al.* (eds), *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 352–367.
- 24 See for example Chapters 23–38 in Volume II of this collection and several of the articles from the collections mentioned in note 22; Marco Schöller, *Exegetisches Denken und Prophetenbiographie: eine quellenkritische Analyse der Sīra-Überlieferung zu Muhammads Konflikt mit den Juden*, Wiesbaden: Harrassovitz, 1998; Reuven Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham–Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990; Uri Rubin (ed.), *The Life of Muhammad*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998; Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muhammad*, see note 1.
- 25 E.g. Hans Jansen, *Mohammed: Eine Biographie*, München: Beck, 2008; Tilman Nagel, *Mohammed. Leben und Legende*, München: Oldenbourg, 2008.
- 26 See e.g. Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*, Princeton: Darwin, 1995.
- 27 See e.g. Chapters 60, 63 and 66 in Volume IV of this collection; Tarif Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad: Narratives of the Prophet in Islam across the Centuries*, New York: Doubleday, 2009 (of which two chapters are included as Chapters 61 and 62 in Volume IV of this collection); Christiane Gruber and Avinoam Shalem (eds), *The Image of the Prophet between Ideal and Ideology: A Scholarly Investigation*, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2014; Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif, ‘The story of portraits of the Prophet Muhammad’, *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003): 19–38; Christiane Gruber, ‘Between Logos (*Kalima*) and Light (*Nūr*): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic painting’ *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 229–262.
- 28 See e.g. Chapters 46–49 in Volume III of this collection; Nagel, *Allahs Liebling*, see note 4.
- 29 See e.g. Chapters 50–59 in Volume III of this collection; Schimmel, *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet*, see note 4; Nagel, *Allahs Liebling*, see note 4.
- 30 See e.g. Chapters 68–76 in Volume IV of this collection; Avinoam Shalem (ed.), *Constructing the Image of Muhammad in Europe*, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2013.
- 31 See note 20 for further references on this topic.
- 32 Cf. for instance, Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, see note 18, pp. 203–230.
- 33 For a discussion of *topoi* in different fields of the Islamic tradition, not confined to the *sīra*, see Eckhart Stetter, *Topoi und Schemata im Hadīth*, Inaugural-Dissertation, Tübingen, 1965, pp. 4–34; Albrecht Noth and Lawrence I. Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1994, pp. 109–172; Albrecht Noth, ‘*Futūḥ*-history and *futūḥ*-historiography: the Muslim conquest of Damascus’, *al-Qanṭara* 10 (1989): 453–462; Albrecht Noth, ‘*Iṣfahān-Nihāwand*: Eine quellenkritische Studie zur frühislamischen Historiographie’, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 118 (1968): 274–296; Lawrence I. Conrad, ‘The conquest of Arwād: A source-critical study in the historiography of the early medieval Near East’, in Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (eds), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, I: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992, pp. 317–401; Lawrence I. Conrad, ‘Seven and the *tasbī*’: On the implications of numerical symbolism for the study of medieval Islamic history’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 31 (1988): 42–73.
- 34 This method, which in rudimentary form was already employed by Aloys Sprenger, Johannes Hendrik Kramers and Josef van Ess, has in recent years been further developed and used to reconstruct early reports on the life of Muhammad by a number of scholars, among them Gregor Schoeler, Harald Motzki, Andreas Görke, Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort, and Sean Anthony. Apart from the two articles included here,

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- see e.g. Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie der muslimischen Überlieferung über das Leben Mohammeds*, see note 23 [translated into English as *The Biography of Muḥammad: Nature and Authenticity*, see note 23]; Harald Motzki, 'The murder of Ibn Abī l-Huqayq: On the origin and reliability of some *maghāzī*-reports', in Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muḥammad*, see note 1, pp. 169–239; Andreas Görke, 'The historical tradition about al-Hudaybiya: a study of 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr's report', in Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muḥammad*, see note 1, pp. 240–275; Andreas Görke and Gregor Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte*, see note 23; Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort, 'The raid of the Hudhayl: Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī's version of the event', in H. Motzki with N. Boekhoff-van der Voort and S. Anthony, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, pp. 305–383; Sean Anthony, 'Crime and punishment in early Medina: The origins of a *maghāzī* tradition', in H. Motzki with N. Boekhoff-van der Voort and S. Anthony, *Analysing Muslim Traditions: Studies in Legal, Exegetical and Maghazi Hadith*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, pp. 385–465.
- 35 See Stephen J. Shoemaker, 'In search of 'Urwa's sīra: Some methodological issues in the quest for "authenticity" in the life of Muḥammad', *Der Islam* 85 (2011): 257–344; Stephen J. Shoemaker, 'Muḥammad and the Qur'ān', in Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 1078–1108; Tilman Nagel, '"Authentizität" in der Leben-Mohammed-Forschung', *Arabica* 60 (2013): 516–568; for the responses, see Andreas Görke, Harald Motzki, and Gregor Schoeler, 'First-century sources for the life of Muḥammad? A debate', *Der Islam* 89 (2012): 2–59; Gregor Schoeler, 'Tilman Nagels "Authentizität" in der Leben-Mohammed-Forschung: Eine Antwort', *Asiatische Studien* 68 (2014): 469–496; Andreas Görke and Harald Motzki, 'Tilman Nagels Kritik an der Isnad-cum-matn Analyse: Eine Replik', *Asiatische Studien* 68 (2014): 497–518.
- 36 See in particular, Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950; and Joseph Schacht, 'A reevaluation of Islamic traditions', see note 18.
- 37 Already mentioned in his *Origins*, see note 36, p. 166. Michael Cook has later elaborated on the concept, in Michael Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 107–110.
- 38 For the full German version of this article, see Gregor Schoeler, 'Mūsā b. 'Uqbas *Maghāzī*', in Motzki (ed.), *The Biography of Muḥammad*, see note 1, pp. 67–97; cf. Gregor Schoeler, 'Neue Erkenntnisse zu Mūsā b. 'Uqbas *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*', in Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort et al. (eds), *The Transmission and Dynamics of the Textual Sources of Islam*, Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 49–61.
- 39 See e.g., Wim Raven, 'al-Sīra', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, Vol. IX, see note 10, pp. 660–663 and 662f.; Gregor Schoeler, *Charakter und Authentie*, see note 3, p. 6.
- 40 Albrecht Noth, 'Der Charakter der ersten großen Sammlungen von Nachrichten zur frühen Kalifenzeit', *Der Islam* 47 (1971): 198; Albrecht Noth, 'Iṣfahān-Nihāwand: Eine quellenkritische Studie zur frühislamischen Historiographie', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 118 (1968): 295f. [translated into English as: 'Iṣfahān-Nihāwand: A source-critical study of early Islamic historiography', in Fred M. Donner (ed.), *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, 260f]. This approach of concentrating on single traditions rather than on the character of the compilations is the basis of all studies employing the *isnād-cum-matn* analysis.
- 41 Advanced for instance by Henri Lammens (see Chapter 5 of this volume), and followed among others by Carl Heinrich Becker, 'Prinzipielles zu Lammens' Sīrastudien', see note 16: 263–269. See also Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, see note 18, pp. 214f.; Schöllner, *Exegetisches Denken und Prophetenbiographie*, see note 24, pp. 5 and 128–133.

- 42 Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu*, see note 18, pp. 76–87; Tilman Nagel, ‘Hadīṭ – oder: Die Vernichtung der Geschichte’, in *XXV. Deutscher Orientalistentag vom 8. bis 13.4.1991 in München. Vorträge*, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994, pp. 126f.
- 43 For a different assessment of the historical materials in Hadīṭ collections, see Görke and Schoeler, *Die ältesten Berichte*, see note 23, pp. 277–279.
- 44 For a radical re-interpretation of early Islam on the basis of non-Muslim sources, see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, see note 18. The non-Muslim sources have also been extensively studied with regard to the question of Muḥammad’s date of death in Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, see note 21, pp. 18–72.
- 45 See note 6 for literature on this event.
- 46 Bertram Schrieke, ‘Die Himmelsreise Muhammeds’, *Der Islam* 6 (1916): 1–30.
- 47 The only monograph on the topic so far is Michael Lecker, *The Constitution of Medina: Muḥammad’s First Legal Document*, Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004.
- 48 The view that the ‘Constitution’ consists of several documents was previously already advanced by William Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, see note 17, pp. 221–228.
- 49 Lecker, *The Constitution of Medina*, see note 47, p. 3, likewise argues for a unified document but sees it composed of two clearly distinct parts.
- 50 As Caetani, *Annali dell’ Islām*, vol. I, see note 15, pp. 631f. had argued.
- 51 On the topic, also see Irving M. Zeitlin, *The Historical Muhammad*, Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
- 52 In contrast to Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, vol. 2, see note 15, pp. 305–306. On the topic now see Harry Munt, *The Holy City of Medina*, see note 8.
- 53 On the Muḥammadan Light and its veneration in Sufism, see also Schimmel, *Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet*, see note 4, pp. 108–123; on its significance in Shiite Islam, cf. Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, see note 27, pp. 124–150.
- 54 See note 6 for further literature on the topic.
- 55 On the topic, also see the comprehensive study by Fritz Meier, *Nachgelassene Schriften. Band 1: Bemerkungen zur Mohammedverehrung. Teil 1: Die Segensprechung über Mohammed* (ed. Bernd Radtke and Gudrun Schubert), Leiden: Brill, 2002. Cf. James Robson, ‘Blessings on the Prophet’, *Muslim World* 26 (1936): 365–371.
- 56 For an overview of the genre of the *pillāittamiḷ* and its adaptation in various religious traditions, see Paula Richman, *Extraordinary Child: Poems from a South Indian Devotional Genre*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997.
- 57 On this, see R. S. (Rex Seal) O’Fahey and Bernd Radtke, ‘Neo-Sufism reconsidered’, *Der Islam* 70 (1993): 52–87.
- 58 This topic has been dealt with extensively by various scholars. See, among others: A. E. Affiti, ‘The story of the Prophet’s ascent (*mi’rāj*) in Sufi thought and literature’, *Islamic Quarterly* 2 (1955): 23–27; Joanna Wronecka, ‘Le *Kitāb al-isrā’ ilā al-maqām al-asrā’ d’Ibn ‘Arabī*’, *Annales Islamologiques* (Cairo) 20 (1984): 15–27; James Morris, ‘The spiritual ascension: Ibn ‘Arabī and the *Mi’rāj*’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107 (1987): 629–52, and 108 (1988): 63–77; Muhammad ‘Abdul Haq, ‘Significance of the *Isrā’-Mi’rāj* in Sufism’, *Islamic Quarterly* 34 (1990): 32–58.
- 59 See also his annotated translation of the work: Frederick S. Colby, *The Subtleties of the Ascension: Early Mystical Sayings on Muhammad’s Heavenly Journey*, Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2006.
- 60 Tarif Khalidi, *Images of Muhammad*, see note 27.
- 61 Held in 1840. See also Chapter 72 in this volume.
- 62 William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, see note 14.
- 63 Of these, Haykal’s work has received the most attention in the West. See e.g. Antonie Wessels, *A Modern Arabic Biography of Muḥammad: A Critical Study of Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal’s Ḥayāt Muḥammad*, Leiden: Brill, 1972.

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- 64 Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad* (transl. Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi), New York: Islamic Book Service, 2005 (originally published in Arabic in articles in *al-Siyāsa al-usbū'iyā* from 1932–1934 and as a book in 1935).
- 65 Safi-ur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, *Ar-Raheeq ul-Makhtum* [*The Sealed Nectar*], Riyadh: Dar-us-salam, 2002 (originally published in Arabic and Urdu in 1979).
- 66 Martin Lings, *Muḥammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1983.