
***Ibn Warrāq and Qur'anic Scepticism:
A Representative Face of Modern Apologetic Orientalism***

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ABSTRACT

In this evaluative article, we critique the works of the Islamic scholar and Orientalist Ibn Warrāq. An anonymous author, Ibn Warrāq is widely recognised by scholars of the field as a pseudo-scholarly prominent figure with highly polemical tendencies. There can be no doubt that healthy revisionism is the epitome of academic learning and intellect, but the writer in question betrays very little ability or desire for serious knowledge, that can only be gained through meticulous scholarship and an impartial demeanour. As such, I contend that Ibn Warrāq can be more accurately regarded as an ex-Muslim representative of a particular group of Orientalists with conspiratorial tendencies. This group, which also includes figures such as the more scholarly Michael Cook and Patricia Crone, is unambiguously the implicit harbinger of the modern political agenda of right-wing Islamophobia, which has been in the making throughout Europe and North America since at least the early-1970s.

Keywords: *Apologetic Orientalism, Islamophobia, Polemics, Pseudo-Scholarship, Qur'anic Scepticism, Revisionism.*

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4.1 Ibn Warrāq and Qur'ānic Scepticism

The faceless Islamicist Ibn Warrāq offers a fascinating specimen for both anthropologists and religious scholars alike. His is a classical example of a political activist seeking wider approval for his work by masquerading as an earnest intellect. As many renowned scholars of the field have repeatedly noted, Ibn Warrāq's work contains little to no originality and certainly no central theme or coherent thesis beside an insatiable lust for throwing doubts – as well as undisguised insults – at all that Muslims hold dear. A ruthless reactionary ideologue to his core, Ibn Warrāq has been clearly unable to separate his alleged scholarly endeavours from his political agenda and personal feelings about Islam.

A short note on our methodology might be warranted before we delve into this dilettante 'Native Orientalist' in more detail. This article will **not** focus narrowly on the specific critiques and comments in Ibn Warrāq's works, made by him or his contributors, in a neutral fashion. That undertaking would require infinitesimally more effort, and we certainly cannot address it adequately in a short article. Rather, our aim here is to reveal the low credibility of Ibn Warrāq as a scholar in particular, while critiquing the broader literature of revisionist Islamicists in general. For this purpose, we rely on our own observation and extensive (but admittedly not exhaustive) reading of more than a dozen of Ibn Warrāq's writings, while not shying away from reliance on other scholars for in-depth discussions regarding specific comments and theories.

4.2 Ibn Warrāq the Man

When it comes to the personal biography of Ibn Warrāq as a man, a detailed or multifaceted view is a lost cause. The only lead we have are his own descriptions of his early life and education. From whatever we do know, it is fairly certain Ibn Warrāq's extreme views were born out of an unrelenting hatred of Islam, and a reaction to his own childhood experiences. The only reason we bring this up at all is to assess just how this so-called ex-Muslim, an affiliation that he has built his entire public persona around, came to identify so closely with the new far-right in the West during the early-twenty-first century.

In fact, Ibn Warrāq hardly qualifies as a freethinking apostate at all. Born in the Indian state of Gujarāt, he grew up in the city of Karachi shortly after the end of colonial control in South Asia. It is more than clear that he was born in an unstable family. Forced to undergo religious education at an early age by his mother, Ibn Warrāq grew resentful towards religion as a whole and Islam in particular. His father's response was swift; instead of providing parental care and love, along with a reasonable freedom to pursue his passions, he was sent away to a boarding school in England while still a kid, never to return to his homeland again. He thus effectively grew up orphaned and irreligious, likely blaming the Muslim society and culture that he was

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born in. Such a background hardly makes for a courageous, honest social justice activist who thought his way out of the flawed values he was raised into, but rather a disillusioned and rebellious radical hell-bent on destroying the foundations of the social environment that allegedly ruined his early life. After all, he has never really lived in an Islamic society as an adult, and the only memories he has of doing so are those of family dispute, obligatory religious education and being compelled to leave home alone as a young boy.

Ibn Warrāq has confessed, multiple times, that the reason he started writing in the first place was the outrage that many Muslims felt at Salman Rushdie's ludicrous and intentionally-provocative insults against the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him), along with "The rise of Islam" (not *Islamism*) in the last few decades of the twentieth century, as he puts it.¹ By this time, Ibn Warrāq was obviously a staunch atheist, as his immediate reaction to the story was to publish a series of opinion pieces defending Rushdie's work and adding to it.² Sometime in the 1980s or 1990s, he became associated with organised atheist movements, and started one himself (the Institute for the Secularisation of Islamic Society or "ISIS") in 1998. Branding himself as a former Muslim critical of Islam (again, something that is hardly even technically accurate), Ibn Warrāq found a receptive audience in the newly-rising Islamophobe right in Europe and the Anglophone world despite the poor scholarship prevalent in his work. Ever since, Ibn Warrāq has openly aligned himself with the growing anti-leftist, proto-fascist 'culture war' movement re-emerging in the Anglophone world since at least the Reagan and Thatcher era. The bogeyman he chose to create for this purpose was 'Islam' as opposed to 'The West', a premise straight out plagiarised from Samuel Huntington's classical but controversial 1996 theory.³ In other words, Ibn Warrāq is most likely trying to simply benefit from what the American researcher AbuKhalil As'ad calls 'The Islam Industry'.⁴

4.3 Ibn Warrāq the Activist

Ibn Warrāq, pure and simple, is an anti-Islam activist and a self-declared humanist pushing for the secularisation of all Muslim communities and the dismantling of Islamic ideals in favour of Western-style liberalism. This is all undeniably true, and Ibn Warrāq himself would hardly argue to the contrary. After all, the names of a few of his volumes read as "Why I Am Not a Muslim" (1995), "Defending the West" (2007),⁵ "Which Koran (2008)?"⁶ "Why the West is Best" (2011),⁷ and "Leaving the Allah Delusion Behind (2020)".⁸ Furthermore, the topic he seems most passionate about is the act of 'apostasy' itself, to which he has devoted two whole works (2003⁹ & 2020¹⁰) to date, along with 'rationality', 'free thought', 'freedom of speech', and other libertarian tropes. And of course, this Englishman pretending to be an apostate also uses the name of a tenth-century (along with an affectionate *Ibn*) dissident as his *nom*

de plume. This is hardly a résumé for a serious academic, because Ibn Warrāq simply is not one.

Therefore, it is not hard to see how neatly Ibn Warrāq falls into the category of modern apologetic Orientalists more concerned with national, cultural and political identities than scholarship or the advancement of human knowledge. For this reason, he has a good working relationship with other anti-leftist activists (almost all populist neoconservatives) to whom he owes his popularity and probably wealth, despite being a militant atheist himself.¹¹ This relationship is far from implicit or hidden, as Ibn Warrāq has openly worked with notorious Islamophobes through his platform at ISIS, or even by directly contributing articles to alt-right websites.¹² Unsurprisingly, he has sometimes betrayed his dislike for the establishment academia for their “Misplaced concern for the sensibilities of Muslims” and their supposed move “From objectivity to Islamic apologetics pure and simple”¹³, even though he has never written directly about the subject. He loves to lament the leeway Western Islamicists supposedly give to Islam and Muslims, even though they clearly do not.¹⁴ In case it needs mention at all, he has – of course – also fed unfounded conspiratorial fears about the impending Islamisation of Europe and ranted about multiculturalism, moral relativism, and anti-racism at length.¹⁵

In fact, Ibn Warrāq is so blatantly and unambiguously Islamophobic that he is not mentally capable of acknowledging Islam as one of the most influential civilisations in history, and hence a contributor to human culture. He has to childishly deny the attribution of anything remotely positive or productive to ‘Islam’, as he perceives it. In one especially telling moment, he boldly declares: “Without Byzantine art and Sassanian art [*sic*] there would have been no Islamic art” (no comment required). Islamic “Philosophy” and “Science” are similarly depicted as solely dependent on their Greek antecedents.¹⁶ In the same work, he smears the entire spectrum of Islamic Mysticism or ‘Sufism’ by declaring that it “Owes as much or more to the influence of Christianity, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, and Buddhism” than to the Holy Qur’ān.¹⁷ This is not anything remotely thoughtful or provocative, but ill-conceived and obvious propaganda Ibn Warrāq probably plagiarised from a reactionary booklet or weblog.

Of course, Ibn Warrāq is also highly invested in some other ‘culture wars’ of the present time. A notable example would be his obsession with the works of his ideological opposite, the Palestinian scholar and activist Edward Said. Said’s much more scholarly work primarily focuses on the intellectual legacy of European Colonialism and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Here, Ibn Warrāq saw an opportunity and went for it, evidently ignorant of the huge gap in learning between himself and Said. To date, Ibn Warrāq has authored or edited three whole volumes to refute Said’s

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work specifically, none of which has received any serious attention from the academia or the general public, and for good reason.¹⁸

4.4 Ibn Warrāq the 'Scholar' and the 'Sceptic'

As the author/editor of over a dozen books in more than two-and-a-half decades, Ibn Warrāq has surprisingly little to show for his efforts. Yet, this is hardly surprising, given that the writer in question is an amateur writing with a clear political agenda, desperate to find and publish anything he assumes would be damaging to 'Islam', while presumably earning fame and fortune for himself as an aside by declaring himself the 'editor'.

After all that we have seen, it would be hardly surprising if none of Ibn Warrāq's books passed the requirements of any academic publisher. This is precisely what has happened. Despite his popularity, Ibn Warrāq has been unable to get a single of his works published by any press with quality standards. It cannot be emphasised enough that all of his 'scholarly' volumes have been published by purely partisan and specialised publishers. In fact, barely any serious expert has even bothered to review his work at all since the early-2000s, as we shall see.

Most of Ibn Warrāq works, including all of his eight volumes until 2010 (when his views were still relatively obscure), were published by Prometheus Books. Based in Amherst, New York, Prometheus does not shy away from its ideological bias and describes itself as "Provocative, Progressive and Independent".¹⁹ It is famously known as one of America's largest and oldest atheist publishers. It is also an incredibly inapt facility for publishing serious works of Oriental studies. One very telling admission from Ibn Warrāq himself must be quoted at length here:-

"In 2004, I sent to Prometheus Books, along with my own longish introduction on variants and a short essay on pre-Islamic poetry, approximately forty-five articles by distinguished scholars in the form of photocopies, some barely legible, as they were copies from fragile journals dating from the early 1900s; many contained Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek scripts. The staff at Prometheus Books made two decisions: first, they decided to divide the book into two; forty-five articles would have made for a book of over a thousand pages. The two volumes are Which Koran? Variants, Manuscripts, Linguistics, which came out in December 2011, and the present work, Koranic Allusions. Second, they insisted on keeping the house look and the house format and fonts; in other words, they elected to reset all the articles in a unified style; whereas I was ready to accept the tradition established by Ashgate-Variorum Press whereby the original articles are photographed and reproduced without any attempt to change any of the layout, font, or style, to the extent of keeping the original page numbers. There was, however, the unresolved problem of the original Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac scripts. The

staff at Prometheus elected to photograph each Arabic or Hebrew word as a separate individual image, which was then slotted, one by one, into the appropriate place in the reset text. There were several thousand such images. Such a procedure was time-consuming, which explains to some extent the delay in publishing the two anthologies, but it also posed special worries for me, the editor, since the chances for error were multiplied a hundred-fold. If it was difficult for the editor, it was a nightmare for the typesetters, in-house editors, and members of the art department, who handled the copying of the different scripts, treating each word as a separate piece of artwork. None of the latter knew the Semitic languages and scripts concerned. Hence their work was nothing less than heroic, and I should like to thank them for their extraordinary labors [sic].”²⁰

Needless to say, this “Heroic” and extremely unprofessional publisher also probably did not have any specialist to critique and further editorialise Ibn Warrāq’s work before publication. It is not surprising then, that they are also the publishers of Nevo & Koren’s infamous 2003 work²¹, which the well-known archaeologist Colin M. Wells has compared to Holocaust Denial and Creation Science,²² but which our pseudo-scholar predictably thinks is “Unjustly neglected”.²³ Two of the remaining of his works were published by the New English Review Press (based in Nashville, Tennessee), a notorious right-wing publisher known for giving a platform to people like Michael Rectenwald and Phyllis Chesler.²⁴ One of his volumes has also been published by the conservative Encounter Books.²⁵ His latest work as of early-2022 was released by Verlag Hans Schiller.²⁶ Ibn Warrāq almost certainly approached this Berlin-based house through the medium of Christoph Luxenberg, another amateur Native Orientalist whose work is also published by Verlag and to whose theories the former has dedicated one whole volume.²⁷

Given this lazy choice of publishing houses, it would be baffling if Ibn Warrāq himself was not aware of what he was doing, or still sincerely believed his work to be anything approaching scholarly or well-argued. After all, he has also deliberately kept a low profile, and will likely never confront real-time, sustained criticism from a *bona fide* expert in his life. With this in mind, it is hard to miss the point that Ibn Warrāq is nothing more than just another political activist seeking to benefit from the current wave of Islam-hatred in the West.

Not much can be said about the academic qualifications of this anonymous ideologue, but judging from his work, it is probably a good guess to say that he is mostly self-taught at best, and has very little access to or interest in the primary sources key to understanding the early history of Islam and the Qur’ān. This brings us to our central theme: The quality of Ibn Warrāq’s scholarly endeavours as a whole. Here, we must pause to ask a breath-takingly obvious question: *Which Work?*

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It is not an exaggeration to say that Ibn Warrāq has very little to show for his work over the past three decades. It might be interesting to note the sheer proportion of his 'edited' compared to authored works. Out of the fourteen book-length works he has produced thus far, ten list him as an 'editor'. Two (1995 & 2010) of the remaining four are simple collections of his previous essays, with only his two latest works (2017 & 2020) remotely requiring much effort on his part. His contribution to the field of Islamic Studies is probably best described, to appropriate his own words, as providing an "Extended annotated bibliography"²⁸, but not a very useful one, coming from an ideologically-biased and poorly-trained source.

We put 'edited' in quotation marks for a reason, because the quality of his 'editing' is just as brilliant as would be expected from a self-taught but enthusiastic amateur who puts out a bulky volume every few years or so. As might be guessed from a look into the footnotes of this article, Ibn Warrāq's own writings are often limited to simple introductions at the start of a volume or a part of the volume.²⁹ Even those introductions are not very helpful, with poor engagement to the material being presented and absolutely no effort to develop an alternative central theme beyond blindly throwing doubts at the mainstream understanding of Islam. The articles collected in his volumes are often wildly contradictory, but Ibn Warrāq's response to these differences is to simply ignore them, probably in the hope that his readers are not mentally equipped enough to notice. There is not a single new idea, theory or finding about the early history of Islam or its sources that can earnestly be attributed to Ibn Warrāq.

Apart from the introductions, his 'edited' volumes are simple collections of the most radical, mostly disproven and revisionist, works he can find. Of course, the inclusion process is extremely selective and focuses around the two core groups of classical sceptics, most of them of German heritage,³⁰ and its modern counterpart (commonly known as the 'Revisionist' school) inspired by John Wansbrough. He is indeed very fond of these revisionists and misses no chance of embracing them, as we have seen in the examples of Luxenberg and Nevo & Koren already. So far, Ibn Warrāq has failed miserably to even once engage with any establishment scholar for more than a few sentences in his fourteen volumes, let alone try to honestly understand and refute their much-better argued line of reasoning. Even ignoring the selection bias, the role of Ibn Warrāq himself is more or less limited to editing the language of the text for publication. No analysis or commentary is provided even for works more than a century old. It is hard to understand why anyone would want to re-publish such well-known texts in such a raw form, especially ones that have already been incorporated into later scholarly work in the field, apart from personal or ideological interests.

We do not know how to delicately say this, but the lack of originality in Ibn Warrāq's work is truly astonishing to any well-informed reader. As unimportant as it may

sound after all we have already gone through, the fact that he has frequently (and admittedly) plagiarised even the titles of his books³¹ and articles³² is perhaps a good micro indicator of the way his populist ‘scholarship’ functions.

Finally, with such a blatantly partisan and hateful content, Ibn Warrāq has also accumulated a number of ‘flattering’ reviews to his name. Often, his books will now simply be ignored by mainstream scholars, but when some known Islamicist does manage to spare the time to go through one of his works, they are often legitimately frustrated by what they find published in the name of scholarship and ‘secular humanism’. After all, Ibn Warrāq had had the honour of being called “triply unqualified” and “religious polemic attempting to masquerade as scholarship” by Fred Donner,³³ while Daniel Varisco had to earnestly state that:-

*“This modern son of a bookseller imprints a polemical farce not worth the 500-plus pages of paper it wastes”.*³⁴

Often, the only positive reviews Ibn Warrāq would ever get for his work are from “Jihad Watch” (where Ibn Warrāq has been writing himself since 2015) or other notorious neo-fascist conspiracy groups.³⁵ Whatever neutral or positive remarks he will get from other scholars, often boil down to an appreciation of his ‘boldness’ rather than the quality of his arguments.³⁶ The only single genuinely positive review Ibn Warrāq ever got from an acclaimed expert in his twenty-five years of publishing was apparently so encouraging that he had to cite it in the introduction to a 2013 work.³⁷ This should give us an idea of how incredibly controversial Ibn Warrāq is in an industry *designed* to provoke and introduce new ideas, and at the same time his desperation to be seen as at least reaching the minimum threshold of impartial scholarship.

4.5 Ibn Warrāq the Revisionist

One of our main themes in this article is the assertion that Ibn Warrāq is simply one (albeit very obvious) example of how modern apologetic Orientalists function, often under the cover of ‘scepticism’ or ‘revisionism’.³⁸ The most common cover for radical revisionism – like all conspiracy theories – is a relentless detestation for mainstream scholarship and the inability to understand its arguments. Ibn Warrāq, of course, excels at this, and there is hardly any lengthy article or ‘introduction’ written by him that does not explicitly bring this up.

We might as well look at the introduction to one of his most well-known works to realise the kind of tactics apologetic Orientalists utilise to make their points. Predictably, Ibn Warrāq is wildly confused throughout the work as to why “Most modern scholars ... accept more or less the traditional account ... without *giving a single coherent reason* [his emphasis]” without every trying to actually engage with any mainstream work in detail. Ironically, while throwing doubts at the ‘traditional’ understanding, Ibn Warrāq is absolutely sure when it comes to the conclusions of

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whom he himself calls “Wansbrough and his disciples”, for he confidently declares *all* traditions regarding the early collection of the Qur’ān as “Exceedingly late, tendentious in the extreme, and all later fabrications” without even adding ‘perhaps’ or ‘probably’, as a more scholarly revisionist would prefer to do. He continues with even more bizarre and confused questions like: “Are we really to believe that Muhammad remembered it exactly as it was revealed?” and “We seem to assume that the Companions of the Prophet *heard and understood* him perfectly”.³⁹

When he does get into specific criticisms, he is almost always simply borrowing the arguments of another, more scholarly revisionist. Whenever Ibn Warrāq does eventually try to add something of his own, it is often in the form of clearly-incoherent statements born out of frustration rather than healthy and rational scepticism. Consider the fact that this serious scholar actually took the time to write a fictitious apologetic “Dialogue” between two people in one of his few prominent works, which mostly boils down to – if we may be blunt about it – an overly simplified rant about Ibn Ishāq’s oral tradition being the first and only source of *Sīrah* we have today.⁴⁰ The mistake most revisionists make is to discredit or ignore the Muslim Arab sources for early Islamic history as a whole, and rely solely on non-Muslim⁴¹ or archaeological⁴² sources. Ibn Warrāq, on the other hand, does not seem well acquainted with any of these sets of sources, or the principles and methodologies of modern historical criticism.

Often, Ibn Warrāq’s own analysis only adds even more extreme and often ridiculously ill-educated claims to the existing revisionist literature, such as “We can see the Muslim *hijra* ... as an emigration of the Ishmaelites (Arabs) from Arabia to the Promised Land” instead of from Mecca to Medina, “For no early source attests to the historicity of this event”, despite the fact that documents from as early as 643 C.E. contain the Hijra dating.⁴³ This is not even an extreme example, but rather illustrative of how Ibn Warrāq functions as a self-made ‘scholar’. Such sad and desperate conjectures contribute nothing to human learning, but can have disastrous social consequences and embolden the rising alt-right Islamophobes in Europe, which is the only thing that Ibn Warrāq is – consciously or unconsciously – accomplishing.

4.6 Conclusion

We culminate our survey of Ibn Warrāq’s (still-growing) legacy by addressing one final point. We do understand the criticism that might be directed at us because of our minimal engagement with the actual content of Ibn Warrāq’s ‘evidence’. But again, it needs to be emphasised that he objectively does not have any new or original arguments to begin with. Regardless, other – more capable – experts have already addressed some of Ibn Warrāq’s specific points,⁴⁴ and adding one more to it might not do much good in the long run. It is not that we refuse to discuss his work in detail or ‘ignore’ it out of spite or a threat to *status quo*, – as Ibn Warrāq probably thinks of his

critics – our decision to limit our analysis to a holistic approach merely reflects the fact that Ibn Warrāq simply is not worth the time. He might be influential in the far-right circles of Europe and North America, but only because he writes a lot and cites a lot, regardless of the quality of his interpretations or lack thereof. The best course for a serious scholar, in our opinion, is to simply understand the situation as a whole, and move on to a more productive activity.



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References & Notes

¹ Such as in the introduction to his first published work, along with a number of interviews, see: Ibn Warraq, *Why I Am Not a Muslim* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1995), XIII-XIV.

² For an excellent analysis of his early life and declaration of apostasy based on the best interviews available, see: Dr. Muḥammad Fairouz al-Dīn Shāh Khagga, *Muṭāli'a e Islam aur Istishrāqī Tanqīdāt* [Urdu] (Lahore, Pakistan: Aks Publications, 2019), 198-200; cf. Ibn Warrāq, *Virgins? What Virgins? And Other Essays* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2010).

³ See: Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York City, New York: Touchstone, 1996).

⁴ Abu Khalil As'ad, *The Islam Industry and Scholarship: Review Article* ("The Middle East Journal", vol. 58, no. 1, 130-137).

⁵ Ibn Warraq, ed., *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2007).

⁶ Ibn Warraq, ed., *Which Koran?: Variants, Manuscripts, and the Influence of Pre-Islamic Poetry* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2008).

⁷ Ibn Warraq, ed., *Why the West is Best: A Muslim Apostate's Defence of Liberal Democracy* (New York City, New York: Encounter Books, 2011).

⁸ Ibn Warraq, *Leaving the Allah Delusion Behind: Atheism and Freethought in Islam* (Berlin, Germany: Schiller & Mücke GbR, 2020).

⁹ Ibn Warraq, ed., *Leaving Islam: Apostates Speak Out* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2003).

¹⁰ Cf. Footnote 8.

¹¹ A comparison with figures like Adam Carolla, Bill Maher, George Carlin, Jordan Peterson, and Sam Harris, among others, might help us better understand this phenomenon.

¹² See footnote 35.

¹³ Ibn Warraq, *Leaving Islam*, 19-20.

¹⁴ This is a common complaint by revisionists, who often offer studies of Christianity and Jesus as poor comparisons. However, it is more likely, as the religious scholar Herbert Berg has pointed out in one of the rare studies comparing Islamic and Christian scholarly disciplines, that scholars of Islam simply have much less resources than those studying Christianity, and given this disparity, the Islamic scholars have in fact accomplished much more disproportionately positive results. He also notes that they are far less biased in favour of the Prophet of Islam [ﷺ] than Jesus, and that the Islamic sources themselves are much more rich and authentic than the gospels and other early-Christian texts, which allows for a more objective research. See: Herbert Berg, *The Historical*

Muhammad and the Historical Jesus: A Comparison of Scholarly Reinventions and Reinterpretations (“Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses”, vol. 37, no. 2, 271-292).

¹⁵ For instance, see: Ibn Warrāq, *Not a Muslim*, 351-360.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 276-281.

¹⁸ The three works in question are “Defending the West” (2007), “Why the West is Best” (2011), and “Sir Walter Scott’s Crusades and Other Fantasies” (ed., Nashville, Tennessee: New English Review Press, 2013).

¹⁹ See the official webpage for the publisher: www.prometheusbooks.com/about.

²⁰ Ibn Warraq, ed., *Koranic Allusions: The Biblical, Qumranian, and Pre-Islamic Background to the Koran* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2013), “Preface, Acknowledgments, and Advertisement for Myself”.

²¹ Yehuda D. Nevo & Judith Koren, *Crossroads to Islam: The Origins of the Arab Religion and the Arab State* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books).

²² Colin Michael Wells, *Crossroads to Islam* [reviewed] (Bryn Mawr Classical Review, 2004.02.33, retrieved 6/2/22, <https://bmc.brynmawr.edu/2004/2004.02.33>).

²³ *Koranic Allusions*, 1.1.

²⁴ *Sir Walter Scott’s Crusades and Other Fantasies* (2013), & *The Islam in Islamic Terrorism: The Importance of Beliefs, Ideas, and Ideology* (2017).

²⁵ *Why the West is Best*.

²⁶ *Leaving the Allah Delusion Behind*.

²⁷ Ibn Warraq, ed., *Christmas in the Koran: Luxenberg, Syriac, and the Near Eastern and Judeo-Christian Background of Islam* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2014).

²⁸ *Why I Am Not a Muslim* XV.

²⁹ A good example might be that of his 2002 work: *What the Koran Really Says: Language, Text and Commentary* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books), that contains five ‘introductions’ of varying length by Ibn Warrāq, to the volume and its various parts.

³⁰ Such as Ignác Goldziher and Joseph Schacht.

³¹ The title of his year-2000 work: *The Quest for the Historic Muhammad* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books) is derived from the incomparably more serious work of Albert Schweitzer.

³² His introduction to Part III of his book is named *The Allah that Failed* after a famous anti-Communist work from 1949.

³³ Fred Donner, *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad, Edited and Translated by Ibn Warraq* [reviewed] (“Middle East Studies Association Bulletin”, vol. 35, no. 1, 75-76). Some other observations worth quoting from the review are that Ibn Warrāq and a fellow anonymous revisionist Ibn Rāwandī contribute no ‘original arguments to this debate’, and that his selection of material is ‘one-sided’ and characterised by ‘favouritism’ that is ‘likely to mislead many an unwary general reader’. His ‘agenda’ is ‘Not scholarship, but anti-Islamic polemic’. In the end, he calls the work ‘A monument to duplicity’. Keep in mind that Fred Donner is a very serious and audacious scholar himself, to the point that Mun’im Sirry considers him an effective revisionist (*Controversies over Islamic Origins: An Introduction to Traditionalism and Revisionism*, Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021, XVII-XVIII).

³⁴ Daniel Martin Varisco, *Orientalism’s Wake: The Ongoing Politics of a Polemic* (“The Middle East Institute Viewpoints”, 2009, no. 12). He also criticises “Defending the West” in particular as “Aptly titled but badly edited”.

For two other particularly telling reviews by actual scholars, see: Yasin Dutton, *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book* [reviewed] ("Journal of Islamic Studies", vol. 11, no. 2, 229-232), & Alfons H. Teipen, *The Quest for the Historical Muhammad* [reviewed] ("Journal of Ecumenical Studies", vol. 40, no. 3, 328-329).

³⁵ For two examples of reviews by different contributors on Jihad Watch, see: <https://www.jihadwatch.org/2014/11/ibn-warraqs-christmas-in-the-koran-a-new-challenge-to-the-standard-account-of-islams-origins> & <https://www.jihadwatch.org/2017/05/hugh-fitzgerald-a-review-of-ibn-warraqs-the-islam-in-islamic-terrorism>. For a series of articles reviewing one of Robert Spencer's (the website's founder) recent books by Ibn Warrāq, see: <https://www.jihadwatch.org/2021/07/spencer-has-laid-out-with-exemplary-clarity-the-problems-with-the-traditional-account-of-the-life-of-muhammad>.

³⁶ For instance, see this French review by a professor of Arabic: Pierre Larcher, Untitled [Review of Christmas in the Koran, 2014] ("Arabica", T. 62, Fasc. 5/6, 756-763).

³⁷ See: *Koranic Allusions*, "Preface, Acknowledgments, and Advertisement for Myself". For the original review, which again is primarily praising his 'courage' in taking a revisionist stance, see: David Cook *Virgins? What Virgins? and Other Essays* [reviewed]. "Reason Papers", vol. 34, no. 2, 234-238. Not-so coincidentally, David Cook also provided the only positive review of Nevo & Koren's work as well ("Crossroads to Islam", in *Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 4, Fall 2006), and has himself written multiple works on the notion of modern 'Jihad', see, for instance: *Understanding Jihad* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2005) & *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁸ At least one scholar has explicitly made the connection between neo-conservatism and revisionist Islamicists, see: Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islamic Origins for Neo-Conservatives*. Central European University (no date).

³⁹ See the complete text in: Ibn Warraq, ed., *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1998), "Introduction".

⁴⁰ See: *The Quest for the Historic Muhammad*, 38-43.

⁴¹ Such as Patricia Crone & Michael Cook, in *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

⁴² Such as Nevo & Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*.

⁴³ *The Origins of the Koran*, under "Skepticism of the Sources" in Chapter 1. For the papyrus PERF 558, the earliest attestation of the Hijra dating, see: Alan Jones, *The Dotting of a Script and the Dating of an Era: The Strange Neglect of PERF 558* ("Islamic Culture", vol. 72, no. 4, 95-103). Ibn Warrāq statement can only be considered woefully ignorant and ill-informed, unless he believes that the Hijra calendar was actually dated from a mysterious event that everyone apparently forgot about, or that all the Islamic world somehow unanimously decided to name it after the supposedly-fictional 'Hijra' was invented.

⁴⁴ For instance Ḥaḥṣah Naṣrīn discusses the introduction to "What the Koran Really Says" (*Qur'ān Karīm kī Zubān: Ibn Warrāq kī Ārā kē Tanāzur mēn* [Urdu], "Jihāt al-Islām", vol. 10, no. 2, 31-54), while Waraich (Dr. Muhammad Nasir Mahmood, *Orientalists on the Early History of the Compilation of the Quran: A Study of "The Origins of the Koran" by Ibn Warrāq*, "Al-Qamar Bi-Annual Research Journal", vol. 1, no. 2) refutes his unwarranted scepticism concerning the early compilation of the Qur'ān. Also see some of the reviews of his books by specialists, as cited in footnotes 33 & 34.