



An analysis of methodological approaches to Islamic studies in the contemporary world *By J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo*

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ABSTRACT: In the development of science, the study of Islam has also developed, which is no longer understood only in a textual and doctrinal sense, but has become a complex phenomenon. Western studies over the past few decades on the history and religion of early Islam, and the Qur'an as scripture have developed through two different schools of thought. This study aims to analyse the thoughts of J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo on Islamic Studies in the contemporary era. This study uses library research by analysing articles by J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo entitled Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies and the author takes from journal articles related to the topic of discussion. The results of this study found that in the thoughts of J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo, Islamic studies have developed into two different approaches. The first approach, called the traditional approach, limits its field of research to Islamic sources and tests them in a way that is in accordance with various assumptions and Islamic scientific traditions. The second approach, which he calls the revisionist approach, analyses Islamic literature using source-critical methods and also considers contemporary non-Arabic literature, archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic findings as historical evidence that are generally not examined by the traditional school.

KEYWORDS: Islamic studies, contemporary studies, methodological approaches to islamic studies, Soleh J. Koren, Y.D. Nevo.

Introduction

Along with the changing times, Islam is no longer seen as a guide to life, but has become a civilization, culture and community that must follow the development of the world. Islamic studies have also developed, which are no longer understood only in a textual and doctrinal sense, but have become a complex phenomenon. Scholars argue that it is no longer possible to study Islamic science from one aspect, but an interdisciplinary method and approach is needed. Islam has become a study that interests many people (Afroni, 2019). Islamic studies are not only conducted by Muslims, but non-Muslim scholars or Western scholars also participate in studying Islamic science today. The study of Islam was initially conducted to scrutinize Islamic teachings for the sake of political and economic power. It aimed

to conquer the East and to perpetuate their power over countries in the East, especially Asian nations.

On the other hand, the study of Islam is also laden with hidden interests, namely missionary which is intended to spread Christianity. The perspective of Western scholars has led to various responses in the study of Islam. For conservative Muslims and fundamentalist Muslims, the study of Islam by Western scholars is difficult to accept due to the differences in ideology. Furthermore, there are several reasons why these circles reject the study of Islam from their perspective, including; concerns about the impact of Westernism, the study is seen as not value-free, the study is rooted in the natural and social sciences, and many deviations and sometimes not based on Islamic traditions and teachings.

However, there is still a debate between Muslim and Western scholars. Western scholars still maintain their arguments and offer new theories to study Islamic science, both on the Qur'an, hadith and so on. This difference is due to their different attitudes towards Muslim sources, which for some of them are not historical sources, because they were written decades after an event occurred. In addition, there are many contradictions in the accounts of events in these sources. Recognizing the problems with these sources, some Western scholars radically question their historicity and refuse to use them in reconstructing the history of early Islam, while others take them for granted as long as there is no historical evidence to contradict them (Rahman, 2015).

Based on the description above, the author tries to discuss the work of J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo entitled *Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies*. In their writing they offer a new approach to examining Islamic science. Western scholars are currently trying to find the validity of Islamic sciences. This contradicts the Muslim belief that the majority of Muslims are based on faith, believing wholeheartedly that Islamic sources are true and unquestionable. The author in this paper wants to examine what proposals J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo offer to answer the challenges faced by Muslim scholars in the study of Islamic science.

Research methods

This research employs qualitative methods, focusing on analysis to derive conclusions. It is categorized as library research (literature review) since the data sources are derived from library materials related to the research problem. The data sources used include books, journal articles, dissertations, and other relevant documents (Azwar, 2014).

The steps taken by the author in this study are as follows:

1. **Data Collection:** The author collects sources and data in the form of books and journal articles.

2. **Primary Data Sources:** For primary data, the author uses an article by J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo titled "Methodological Approaches to Islamic Studies." The analysis focuses on how these authors view and approach the study of Islam.
3. **Secondary Data Sources:** For secondary data, the author refers to journal articles, books, and other literature related to the topic of discussion.

This methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of the methodological approaches to Islamic studies as discussed by J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo, providing insights into both traditional and contemporary perspectives.

Research findings

Western scholarship over the past few decades on the history and religion of early Islam, and the *Qur'an* as scripture has developed through two distinct schools of thought. One is the traditional approach, limiting the scope of its field of study to the sources of Muslim literature, and its studies are aligned with the premises and traditions of Muslim scholars. The revisionist approach, on the other hand, analyses the literature using the method of source-criticism, and also includes relevant contemporary non-Arabic literature and materials, such as archaeological findings, pyrography, and numismatics as evidence that are generally not studied by the traditional school.

The revisionist approach encompasses a series of fundamental methodological principles that are typically not embraced by the traditional approach. These principles often result in conflicting conclusions, yet they share a common stance of refuting the historical authenticity solely based on facts derived from Muslim literary sources. But in general, traditionalists do not debate the methods or the evidence, they tend to ignore the conclusions published by revisionists, or even reject the validity of a source-critical study by labelling it anti-Islamic without ever understanding its basic premises, methods and conclusions. Thus the traditional and revisionist approaches are parallel threads that never touch.

The premises and methodologies of the two approaches are actively opposed. The revisionist approach classifies the traditional school as the study of religion and literature, not religious or political history. J. Koren and Y. D. Nevo corroborate the revisionists, in their article pointing out the basic premises of the two approaches that are usually implicit, and giving some examples of studies based on the revisionist approach that are considered the appropriate method to approach early Islamic history.

Discussion

The "traditional" approach

The traditional approach tends not to address methodological issues. The basic premise of this approach is summarised by J. Koren and Y. D. Nevo as follows: a) A large body of Muslim literature dating from the mid-2nd century AH or 8th century AD, preserves historical facts about the pre-Islamic period, the rise of Islam, and the Conquest. b) If accounts of the same event conflict, the chain of transmission (*isnad*) of the account and other factors should be examined, to decide which is more likely to be true. c) Therefore, there is no need to consider other evidence, which is much more difficult to analyse than written documents. The religious slogans on early Umayyad coinage are an example. d) In general, this school rejects the *silentio* argument. e) The *Qur'an* is being analysed according to accepted Muslim scholarship, for example one can categorise verses as *Makkiyah* or *Madaniyah*, early or late revelation, without getting into the question of what revelation means outside the framework of Muslim belief. f) Linguistic analysis, the meaning of most semantic elements is received from classical Muslim scholarship, so modern methods of linguistic enquiry are unnecessary, and can safely be ignored as irrelevant.

The 'revisionist' approach

Reviewing historical and early Islamic studies is a form of academic activity which tests the sources of Islam believed by the traditionalist school. They argue that historical Islamic data should be reviewed and interpreted methodologically, not theologically or

dogmatically. In general, in history, religions and societies create their own traditions and identities. Therefore, it can be understood that the idea of the revisionist approach is a scientific activity undertaken to re-research, examine Islamic history, thought and law.

Rafii and Fridiyanto revealed that the idea of revisionist Islam was introduced by an Islamic researcher named John Wansbourg. Revisionist Islam arises because of the stagnation in understanding Islamic history, the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. As well as the sources of Islamic teachings which later became the basis of practice for Muslims carrying out religious rituals and ways of religion (Rafii & Fridiyanto, 2022).

The revisionist approach essentially rests on three basic methodological requirements, as follows; a) A source-critical approach to both the *Qur'an* and Muslim literary accounts of the rise of Islam, the Conquest and the Umayyad period. b) The need to compare these accounts with contemporary accounts outside the Muslim tradition. c) The use of contemporary material evidence (archaeology, numismatics, inscriptions) and the acceptance that conclusions derived from it are likely to be more valid than those based on non-contemporary Muslim historical records.

Koren and Nevo in their piece wanted to provide some examples of recent work based on each of the main principles. However, they do not analyse in detail the evidence found, their point is more to show the methods used and the conclusions reached (Koren & Nevo, 1991).

Use of the source-critical method

The comparison between the present state of Islamic studies and the study of the Old Testament in 19th century England is intriguing. It is widely acknowledged that the source-critical approach to studying the Old Testament, specifically the Pentateuch, emerged in Germany and England during the 19th century. German scholars dedicated a significant portion of the century to debating the timing of the original Grundschrift's composition, the number of editions it underwent, and the contributions made by each redactor.

Meanwhile, Britain was undergoing a paradigm shift after the publication of Wellhausen's *Prolegomena* (1885). Goldziher's examination of Muslim literary sources indicates certain conclusions from a source-critical perspective. Specifically, the information regarding the Umayyad period in Muslim sources appears to be ambiguous. In simpler terms, the Muslim sources do not provide accurate historical details but rather consist of literary works that rely on transmission histories (sanads) with questionable reliability. Overall, Goldziher asserts that numerous hadiths and assumptions about the Prophet emerged due to religious or political exigencies. Goldziher's more extreme perspectives were mostly disregarded in recent years until the emergence of the source-critical approach to studying the *Qur'an*. Initially, this method was employed to analyze the *Qur'an* as a legal reference, but later it expanded to encompass its literary and scriptural aspects, as well as classical Muslim literature (Koren & Nevo, 1991).

Al-Qur'an

Wardani quotes Gabriel Said Reynolds' statement, "the golden age of Qur'anic studies has arrived". The presence of the revisionist school is to seek the truth of the traditions believed by the traditionalist school. They argue that Islamic studies must be proven by authentic evidence to avoid bias. Wardani reviewed John Wansbrough's method in *Qur'anic Studies*, and found that Andrew Rippin tried to formulate a revisionist method by asking "what is the evidence?" In the context of the *Qur'an*, for example, "what is the evidence that supports the accuracy of the traditional sources of the Qur'anic collection after the death of the Prophet Muhammad". Wansbrough's point of departure is more radical: all the documentary corpus of early Islam must be seen as salvage history. (Wardani, 2020).

Koren and Nevo state that the main practitioner of *Qur'an* source-critical analysis to date is Wansbrough, especially in *Qur'an Studies*. He concluded that *Qur'an* material originated from logia and passages which then formed several distinct collections over long periods of transmission. The clear evidence of

oral transmission does not exclude the possibility that these logia and collections also appeared in written form. Different collections may have grown up in different geographical areas, one of which may have been Mesopotamia or in different sectarian communities. In other words, they were separated by different beliefs or different locations, or both. Such conclusions are based on analyses of several aspects of the *Qur'an*, such as its thematic content, its vocabulary and metaphors, its structure, the variety of traditions it preserves, and its language (Koren & Nevo, 1991).

All these conclusions are based on detailed textual arguments. The traditional school has so far not refuted these arguments. But its view is that the *Qur'an* was composed by Muhammad in the Hijaz and canonised in one generation of the Conquest. The source-critical method's view of the *Qur'an* rests on a more certain foundation, since it derives from detailed investigation of the text itself, whereas the traditional view derives from interpretation. The source-critical approach elevates the field of Islamic studies to the fundamental methodology that has been embraced in the Western world for the past two centuries in examining the literary origins of the Jewish and Christian traditions.

Schacht on the law

Goldziher ascribed most of the legal material to the Prophet (*hadith*). Schacht (1950) analysed the development of legal theory and legal traditions in Muslim sources. He concluded that 'Muhammad's law was not derived directly from the *Qur'an* but developed, out of popular and administrative practice under the Umayyads, and this practice often deviated from the intentions and even the explicit wording of the *Qur'an*. Norms derived from the *Qur'an* were introduced into Muhammad's law'. There were a few exceptions, notably regarding the law of divorce, but as Wansbrough points out, this is evidence of the existence of the *Qur'an* in the Umayyad period rather than the existence of a canon.

There is actually no contradiction between Schacht's conclusions and Wansbrough's view of the *Qur'an* as the final collection of oral and

written passages. Wansbrough concludes from an analysis of *Qur'an* sources, that the *Qur'an* was compiled or canonised at the end of the second *Hijriah* or eighth century AD Schacht concludes, from an analysis of Muslim legal literature, that law began to be derived from the *Qur'an*, as Scripture in the third *Hijriah* or ninth century AD (Koren & Nevo, 1991).

Attitude towards Isnads

Ignaz Goldziher, Joseph Schacht, and G.H.A. Juynboll are revisionists who have always viewed Islamic sources with great criticality and scepticism. They do not simply believe in their authenticity before it is proven that the source is really tested by the source criticism method. Thus, the use of the method of source criticism characterises the revisionist school of hadith scholarship. However, the traditional school of hadith study which includes the study of early Islamic history contradicts what is conceptualised by the revisionist school.

Fuat Sezgin, Nabia Abbott, and M. M. Azamia are traditional hadith scholars whose hadith studies depart from the basic assumptions and methods of Islamic scholarship, especially those of hadith science. In their works, it can be said that they have never criticised Islamic sources. They simply trust what the early Islamic generation said, narrated, interpreted and wrote (Masrur, 2012).

Later Koren and Nevo revealed that traditional scholars devoted much attention to establishing the reliability of transmission chains (*isnads*). But Goldziher concluded with a critical approach that *isnads* cannot be relied upon to authenticate historical data. Schacht in his legal studies examined the growth, formation and lateral spread of *isnads* with detailed examples. He concluded that some highly regarded *isnads* were the result of widespread forgeries. Thus many works of the traditional approach cannot be accepted as historical evidence.

Furthermore, Michael Cook, building on Schacht's work, has examined the growth and spread of *isnads* due to the emphasis on elegance over truth. His conclusion is that such *isnads* cannot be accepted as historical evidence. Wansbrough characteristically took

the conclusion further. He argues that *isnads* are methodologically impossible to accept, due to their internal contradictions, anonymity and arbitrary nature.

Crone in the Trade

Crone (1987) has studied trade in both Muslim and non-Muslim literature, and shows that the overall picture is unfounded. Mecca did not lie on the overland trade route connecting South Arabia to Syria, but this route was not significant when compared to the sea route through the Red Sea. By the end of the second century AD, the overland route had become obsolete. According to the Muslim sources, apart from Yemeni perfumes, the Meccans primarily engaged in trading inexpensive leather goods, clothing, and occasionally basic food items like butter and pure cheese. These goods were not exported to Syria, as they were already abundant there, but were instead provided to the people living in the Arabian Peninsula.

Crone goes on to point out that traditions in Muslim accounts often contradict each other. Source criticism attempts to separate early traditions from late traditions. But in reality, neither the early nor the late traditions preserve the truth, both must be regarded as the fabrications of storytellers, the authors of which knew little about seventh-century Hijaz trade in general, or Mecca trade in particular.

Contemporary accounts in non-Arabic literature

To look at contemporary accounts in non-Arabic literature is inseparable from history. History is a description of past events or incidents experienced by humans, arranged scientifically, covering a certain time sequence, given interpretation and critical analysis so that it is easy to understand and understand. In other words, in history there is the object of the event, the person who did it, the time, the place and the background. All these aspects are then arranged systematically and illustrate the close relationship between one part and another.

The historical approach is a study and other sources that contain information about the past and are carried out systematically, so it can be said that the historical approach in Islamic

studies is a conscious and systematic effort to know and understand and discuss in depth about the intricacies or things related to Islam, both related to teachings, history and practices of real implementation in everyday life, throughout its history (Haryanto, 2017). Therefore, non-Arabic historical records can also be studied to gain a deeper understanding of the events that took place in an effort to adjust the information.

However, if we look deeper in the context of history in a record of contact between Byzantium and the Prophet Muhammad at the time, it shows that there was intensive contact between the two as evidenced by an Arabic document called Hiraqlu, at that time Byzantium was led by an emperor named Heraclius emperor, At that time there was an Arab trader named Abu Sufyan who faced the emperor, Sufyan was an enemy of the Prophet Muhammad at that time but Abu Sufyan finally converted to Islam after losing the war, back to Sufyan who faced the emperor and also several other Roman leaders.

In the conversation apparently the emperor had heard news related to someone who claimed to be a prophet and the emperor wanted to hear directly from the Arabs related to the news, several questions were asked by the emperor to Sufyan ranging from whether there really was a person who claimed to be a prophet? Until what is the purpose of the prophet? Sufyan also answered that it was true and he explained that the purpose of Muhammad who claimed to be a prophet was to invite the entire community to abandon the religion of their ancestors and to worship Allah SWT, and establish prayer and strengthen mutual brotherhood.

It can be seen from the story that Emperor Herculius was very interested in the prophetic news he heard even in the dialogue with Sufyan that he said that if only the news he heard was true then surely he would wash the feet of the Apostle. That is one proof of contact between Byzantium and the Prophet Muhammad at that time, another proof is that which greatly shocked the land of Byzantium when the Prophet Muhammad sent a letter containing an invitation to convert to Islam to the emperor

Herculius the letter was sent through the governor of Bushra (Asyari', 2006).

Brock (1982) has considered historical references to Arabs in seventh-century Syrian works, written by people who witnessed the Arab takeover of the Fertile Crescent. He concludes that the authors did not regard the events as an organised conquest, and only realised that they had witnessed the arrival of an organised Arab kingdom after a decade. Moreover, they probably only used the term kingdom (*malkuta*) because they were used to thinking in biblical terms, and saw the Arab success as a fulfilment of prophecy, since it was not until the late seventh century that they understood Arab rule as the Arab Empire, equating the new political order with the old.

Brock notes the lack of references to Islam in the literature of the Christian inhabitants who co-existed with the newcomers. And he points out that there are no details about Muhammad's early career in any of the Byzantine or Syrian sources that predate the Muslim literature on the subject. Koren and Nevo have studied political and religious references to Arabs in all seventh-century sources. They conclude that local sources written before the early eighth century provide no evidence of a planned invasion of the Arabs from the Peninsula, nor of a major battle that destroyed the Byzantine army, nor do they mention any caliph before Mu'awiyah. The nature of *ayyam* explains why written versions of traditional Muslim accounts disagree with each other regarding the name of the battle, the commander, the number of participants and casualties, and so on.

Archaeological evidences

Archaeological work published on the Byzantine *limes arabicus* over the past decade has important implications for the history of the Arab conquests. A survey of the 1976 *limes arabicus* followed by the excavation of fortifications along the *limes*, led to the conclusion that Byzantium abandoned most of its fortifications during the fifth and sixth centuries AD and withdrew most of the regular troops, leaving the defence of the frontiers mainly in the hands of the Arab phylum. For

example, the fortresses of Fityän, Yäsir and possibly Bsir were peacefully abandoned before 500 CE, and Lajün after the earthquake of 551. By the end of Justinian's reign, the Byzantines had essentially retreated from the Arabian frontier, both legionary strongholds, sixteen of the twenty-four castellas, and the twelve watchtowers surveyed were abandoned by the end of the sixth century, and the eight watchtowers at Risma were also unoccupied. Moreover, even the eight occupied castellas were not necessarily used for military purposes, as the only indications of occupation are Late Byzantine fragments, which could also have been left by people (monks or desert dwellers) who moved in after the limes were abandoned.

The Hijaz is another area where archaeological work has been carried out extensively for decades. Arab and Western archaeologists have conducted large-scale and systematic surveys and excavations in the Jordanian desert, the Arabian Peninsula, and particularly the Hijaz. They have found Hellenistic, Nabatean, Roman, and early Byzantine remains, but no signs of local Arab culture from the sixth and early seventh centuries, except for a few tumuli in the Jordanian desert that are not accompanied by indications of settlement. In particular, there are no 6th or 7th century *Jahili* pagan sites, and no pagan shrines as described by Muslim sources.

Archaeologically speaking, the idol worship described in these sources is not a Hijäzi phenomenon. Moreover, archaeological work does not reveal traces of Jewish settlements in Medina, Xaybar or Wadi al-Qurra. Both points directly contradict the Muslim literary sources' description of the demographic composition of pre-Islamic Hijäz. In the development of science, archaeological evidence is increasingly emerging, for example, Maqam Ibrahim is mentioned in QS Ali Imran (3): 97. The Kaaba is mentioned in QS Al-Ma'idah (5): 97. The city of the people of Prophet Luth AS in QS Al-Hijr (15): 76, it is mentioned that it was located on a road that is still travelled by people. The Ark of Noah in QS Hud (11): 44 is stated to be anchored on the hill of Judi (Akbar, 2014), in Islamic studies

there is still a lot of archaeological evidence about Islam.

Judging from survey and excavation findings, active pagans must have formed a large part of the Negev population during the first century and a half of the Muslim era, and paganism seems to have reached its peak during the reign of Hisham. The 1985 surface survey of the Negev uncovered some thirty sites. The centres of idolatry strongly correlate with the descriptions of Jahili pagan sanctuaries in Muslim literary sources, especially regarding the topography of the sites and the layout of the buildings. Archaeological evidence thus suggests that the pagan sanctuaries described in Muslim sources did not exist in the Jahili Hijaz, but sanctuaries very similar to them existed in the Central Negev after the 'Abbasids came to power.

This suggests that the stories of Jahili religion in Hijäz may be a back projection of a paganism that was actually recognised in later times. Again, this cannot be easily reconciled with traditional Muslim accounts. Sooner or later the traditional hypothesis about the course of early Islamic history will have to be reframed to account for these archaeological findings.

Numismatics

For historians of the early Arab States, the first task was to familiarise themselves with using coinage as a source of historical data. Bates (1986) argues for the need for historians to utilise numismatic evidence. Koren and Nevo attempted to glean information regarding the progress of the Arab takeover of al-Sam from early issues of Arab-Byzantine coinage. They tentatively concluded that the cities of al-Sam recognised Arab sovereignty gradually over a period of time, beginning with Jaras and Baysän in the south in the 630s and extending to Hims and Tartüs in the north. It was only at a relatively late date that the centralised government imposed uniformity of printing processes on the various cities, and this stage was probably not reached until the Battle of Siffin.

In addition, numismatic data provide no evidence that Mu'awiyah ever controlled the

cities of Central Palestine ('Amman, Iliya ' (Jerusalem), Bayt Jibrin). If seen further in the archipelago, the discovery of evidence of Umayyad coins at the Bongal Site is very important in the study of the history of the entry of Islam into the archipelago, which is one of the supporting evidence regarding the theory of the entry of Islam into the archipelago in the 7th century AD. The finding of the Umayyad coin is also a new interpretation space for research on the history of Islam in the archipelago, especially numismatic studies which to this day are still little researched (Arrumdani et al., 2022), Numismatic findings like this are a testament to the development of the Islamic world, which is still a question mark to the western world.

Numismatic evidence comes from the Arab-Sassanian coinage, which unlike the Arab-Byzantine bears dates and religious inscriptions from the earliest issues to the reforms of 'Abd al-Malik. Several different religious formulae were used, but until about 70 A.H. none of them included the name Muhammad or Islam-specific phrases. The phrases used, e.g. *bism Allah*, *bism Allah rabbi/al-malik*, *rabbi Allah* were of a general monotheistic nature acceptable to many monotheistic religions in the region. As Koren and Nevo have mentioned earlier, traditional approaches to seventh-century Arabic history consider this fact to be unimportant. However, Koren and Nevo argue that the minting of coinage was an official act of political and economic importance, and the inscriptions on coinage were official statements of State attitudes intended to be disseminated.

Epigraphy

The Arabian Peninsula and the Syro desert of Jordan, along with the Negev, are abundant with numerous rock inscriptions. These inscriptions encompass a wide range, starting from the earliest pagan inscriptions in different epigraphic Peninsular languages to the later monotheistic inscriptions in classical Arabic, specifically in Kufic script. The conventional approach towards these inscriptions follows a distinct paradigm. It asserts that since Islam originated in 620 AD, all the monotheistic Kufic inscriptions were authored exclusively by

Muslims. This viewpoint clearly sees no need to look for evidence of religious development in this material, or vice versa. A revisionist approach to the same material would critically analyse the religious content of the inscriptions in the hope of discerning differences in religious development and determining chronological order. In addition, it will recognise as evidence what traditionalists consider irrelevant.

It is important to highlight that prior to the initial years of Mu'awiyah's reign, no inscriptions in Classical Arabic have been discovered in Hijaz. The earliest inscriptions, dating back to the 40s/660s, originate from the Ta'if region, which Mu'awiyah appeared to have a keen interest in colonizing during that period. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that there are no Classical Arabic inscriptions of a pagan nature, nor do they make any reference to paganism or incorporate pagan names, as is commonly observed among individuals who were among the first to embrace Islam. This indicates that Classical Arabic emerged within a non-pagan context and that the individuals responsible for the monotheistic Classical Arabic inscriptions were not converts from paganism.

The difference between the two approaches can perhaps be summarized as follows. For the traditional approach, the ability to draw history from the seventh-century accounts of events found in Muslim sources is the basic fact, the only solid foundation on which to build. The revisionist approach, on the other hand, is merely a hypothesis that needs to be proven by examining external evidence. The traditional school is methodologically unprepared for the demands of proving the initial premise, so it tends to ignore it, or even dismiss it out of religious or political bias. Koren and Nevo consider that approaches whose methodological foundations are clearly stated and defensible, and whose historical theories are based on extensive evidence, are bound to prove more attractive than approaches that lack these features.

History records that there were several orientalist scholars who tried to study epigraphy in the Arabian Peninsula, such as Max Van Berchem who lived in the late 19th century to

the early 20th century, Max was directly involved in scientific expeditions in Egypt and Syria, he was very deep in the field of Arab epigraphy, besides that there was also a reviewer of Islamic epigraphy named Joseph Marcel who came from Francis, one of the famous findings put forward by him was making documentation of variations in the encryption of khat writing used in Egypt. Marcel was a famous palaeographer in his time, his ability to read and assemble the meaning of ancient Arabic inscriptions helped in the exploration of the terbabit region which became the struggle of several great world rulers because of the treasures of knowledge and treasures.

Conclusion

According to J. Koren and Y.D. Nevo, Western scholars have adopted two distinct approaches when studying early Islamic history, religion, and the position of the Qur'an. The first approach, known as the traditional approach, focuses solely on Islamic sources and interprets them in a manner that aligns with the assumptions and traditions of Islamic scholarship. In contrast, the second approach, referred to as the revisionist approach, employs source-critical methods to analyze Islamic literature. Additionally, it incorporates other forms of evidence such as contemporary non-Arabic literature, archaeological findings, epigraphic evidence, and numismatic findings. These sources, which are typically overlooked by the traditional school, are considered valuable historical evidence by the revisionist approach.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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