

ISLAMIC HISTORY THROUGH A WESTERN LENS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF KEY INTRODUCTORY WORKS (2010-2025)

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Abstract

Western academia has witnessed a rapid proliferation of literature on Islam, particularly in the post-9/11 era. A notable portion of this corpus consists of 'introductory works', predominantly authored by 'American Islamicists'. This study critically analyzes how Islam is portrayed in a limited selection of significant introductory textbooks published (in revised editions) between 2010 and 2025. Using critical content analysis, the findings reveal a conflict between a sophisticated understanding of Islamic intellectual traditions and the framing of Islam within Western epistemological contexts. This study aims to enhance readers' understanding of current pedagogical and epistemological trends in Western studies of Islam, highlighting the importance of critical self-reflection, diverse perspectives, and culturally attuned teaching methods.

Keywords: *Islam, Introductory Works on Islam, Islamic History, Western Scholarship, Islamicists, Content Analysis*

Introduction

The academic discourse on Islam (in terms of religion, civilization, and ideology) has undergone significant transformations, influenced by contributions from both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars. In the modern period, colonialism, modernization, and Westernization have led to a notable rise in scholarship exploring Islam's theological, legal, cultural, and civilizational aspects, as well as contemporary issues and challenges.¹ Specifically, the post-9/11 era has witnessed an unparalleled surge in writings on Islam,² driven by the "rich and complex" nature of "Muslim intellectual history".³

This phenomenon is remarkable in the extensive corpus of literature published by major Western publishing houses,⁴ employing diverse approaches tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of various audiences, particularly students and general readers—seeking for accessible introductions to the subject. As Alexander Knyshev aptly states, in the 21st century, “Books about Islam are legion”, and they cover “a wide range of different, often incompatible, approaches to the subject.”⁵

This growing emphasis on diverse audiences and approaches requires a detailed and critical analysis of the dominant ideas and ways of knowing (discourses⁶ and epistemological paradigms⁷) that shape how Islam is researched, studied and interpreted in the contemporary Western academia. The study examines the latest editions of some selected introductory works on Islam published between 2010 and 2025, with the aim to critically analyze and deconstruct⁸ the prevalent narratives and frameworks that define and characterize this field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent Research on Evaluating Introductory Works about Islam

A good deal of recent academic work has been devoted to examine and evaluate introductory works about Islam, providing valuable analyses and assessments.

Two decades ago, Shari Lowin (2006) noted an escalating trend in publishing introductory texts on Islam,⁹ while Hughes, in 2007, critically examined them for perpetuating assumptions and shaping frameworks through which “Islam is introduced” and presented, ultimately influencing public perception and engagement.¹⁰ In a review essay, Bruce B. Lawrence (2008) discussed twelve introductory books on Islam, noting a “vast spectrum” of comprehensiveness by highlighting their diversity.¹¹ In his *Studying Islam* (2010), Clinton Bennett compared outsider and insider perspectives¹² in the works of William Muir, H. A. R. Gibb, and John L. Esposito.¹³ David Waines, in 2012, noted a profound “transition” towards “modern introductory textbooks”, mainly by American/ America-based scholars, both Muslims and non-Muslims.¹⁴

Building on Hughes’ framework of “critics versus caretakers”,¹⁵ Paula Schröder’s 2016 study evaluates a number of introductory works about Islam, focusing on “accessibility, structure, and content”. It distinguishes between “sympathetic” and “critical” introductions, concluding that the “genre of textbooks that introduces

the academic study of Islam specifically as a religion has emerged in recent decades primarily in the English-speaking world.¹⁶

Leslie F. Wolf (2017) observed a considerable diversity in content and methodology in these introductory works,¹⁷ while Amidu Okalekan Sanni (2017) identified a spectrum of approaches in introductory works on Islam ranging from apologetic to polemical and stereotypical to pedantic.¹⁸

Building upon these academic assessments and the author's previous work,¹⁹ this study provides an in-depth analysis of some selected introductory works on Islam, summarizing their contents, coverage, approach, and includes a comparative analysis and concluding remarks.

Selection Criteria for the Works Evaluated

All works selected for evaluation in this study are characterized by (i) being published by leading Western publishers; (ii) frequent usage in introductory courses on Islam and Islamic History, especially at Western academic institutions (and at a few Eastern universities, including India²⁰); (iii) multiple editions, ranging from second to fifth; and (iv) translations into various European and Oriental languages. These features indicate their broad appeal and positive reception in scholarly communities.²¹

The selection criteria for the evaluated introductory books on Islam and Muslims assessed in detail in this study (such as those by Shepard, Esposito, Brown, and Knysh), include: (1) Prior familiarity with the books' content, as the author has previously reviewed many of these books in reputed journals (and other platforms)²² and as review essays and articles through scholarly evaluations (2010-2022).²³ (2) Being published by notable Western publishers like *Oxford University Press* (Esposito), *Wiley-Blackwell* (Brown, Sonn), and *Routledge* (Shepard, Knysh, Denny), recognized for their extensive contributions to Islamic studies and for their global reach. (3) Insights into contemporary Western scholarship, revealing "recent trends, tendencies and tenors" in the field.²⁴ (4) Identification of the key topics and themes, aiding in the understanding of the main questions addressed within Islamic history and civilization. These criteria, collectively, ensure a comprehensive assessment of the literature and its significance within scholarly discourse.

This literature review is based on English-language scholarly assessments of introductory works on Islam (2010-2025), focusing on knowledge shaping, content diversity, methodologies, and (insider-outsider) perspectives. Earlier seminal works and non-English works

have not been considered (though the original publications of Esposito and Denny date back to 1980s).

Research Objectives

This study critically examines revised editions of introductory works on Islam (published between 2010-2025), discusses their author's backgrounds and methodologies, to assess and evaluate the current state of the field. It offers a synopsis of study approaches, evaluates selected works, and concludes with findings and recommendations for future research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Critical content analysis²⁵ is employed to evaluate selected introductory Islamic history works authored by notable contemporary Islamicists.²⁶ These books include *Introducing Islam* by William Shepard (2nd ed., 2014),²⁷ *Islam: The Straight Path* by John L. Esposito (5th ed., 2016),²⁸ *A New Introduction to Islam* by Daniel W. Brown (3rd ed., 2017),²⁹ and *Islam in Historical Perspective* by Alexander Knysh (3rd ed., 2025)³⁰ followed by a brief assessment of *Islam: A Brief History* by Tamara Sonn (2nd ed., 2010),³¹ *Introduction to Islam* by Carole Hillenbrand (2015),³² and *An Introduction to Islam* by Frederick Mathewson Denny (4th ed., 2016).³³

All of them have received widespread acclaim and have been utilized in academic settings as introductory fundamental resources for courses on Islam and Islamic history. Often referred to as “textbooks”,³⁴ works of this category aim to provide readers with a foundational understanding of Islam, offering a broad overview of key themes such as its historical development, core beliefs, practices, institutions, and contemporary issues. Some also include theoretical and methodological insights into how Islam is studied academically.³⁵

Aaron Hughes, in *Situating Islam*, critically examines some introductory Islamic texts, arguing that they often reinforce fixed discursive patterns and epistemological “assumptions”,³⁶ urging self-critique and inclusivity in pedagogy by examining these widely used textbooks to explore prevailing ‘pedagogical’ and ‘epistemological’ trends in Western scholarship on Islam.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Diverse Approaches to Studying Islam: A Brief Conceptual Framework

In studying Islam and Muslims, scholars from various disciplines utilize diverse approaches. For example, Alexander

Knysh highlights the “multiplicity of approaches to the study of Islam”, stating that it encompasses various analytical frameworks and methodologies.³⁷ The editors of *Observing the Observer* note that “teaching Islam” also “involves a variety of approaches”, addressing both fundamental aspects of Islam as well as modern developments.³⁸

A number of scholars have proposed different categories and classifications for the academic study of Islam. Oliver Scharbrodt identifies six (6) major methodological approaches in introductory works: ‘doctrinal development’, ‘phenomenological approach’, ‘insider/ outsider’ accounts, ‘historical survey’, ‘historical criticism’, and ‘revisionist’ perspectives. He emphasizes that “ideal” introductory texts should integrate “different topical and methodical orientations” to simultaneously present “Islam as a religion, its history, and Islamic studies as [an] academic discipline”.³⁹

Knysh, in contrast, identifies five primary methodological approaches: ‘macro’, ‘micro’, ‘functional’, ‘pragmatic’, and ‘civilizational’.⁴⁰ Carole Hillenbrand⁴¹ identifies four, ranging from “historically” contextualized portrayal and descriptive “modern” accounts to emic/ insider perspectives, and community-specific examinations of Islamic traditions. Notably, her own approach exemplifies a historically nuanced approach for an objective understanding of Islamic beliefs and practices, contributing to a more sophisticated and refined discourse on Islamic representations.

Aaron Hughes has proposed three main classifications for the approaches and perspectives used by the Islamicists: insider/ “emic” and outsider/ “etic” approaches; “critical” and “apologetic” approaches; and an integrated “sub-disciplinary perspective”.⁴² Echoing similar views, Leslie F. Wolf proposes a taxonomy comprising descriptive (but uncritical), analytical-cum-critical, and intermediate texts (descriptive with engagement to the critical scholarship).⁴³ Bennett identifies the ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’ approaches as broad frameworks for understanding scholarly perspectives on Islam.⁴⁴

David Waines notes a recent proliferation in “modern introductory textbooks to Islam” authored by scholars from diverse “academic backgrounds and perspectives”, predominantly American scholars, indicating a significant “transition” from traditional orientalist approach to more nuanced and multidisciplinary understanding in Western scholarship.⁴⁵ Shari Lowin,⁴⁶ Bruce Lawrence,⁴⁷ Paula Schröde,⁴⁸ and Leslie Wolf⁴⁹ corroborate this, attributing the increase to rising interest in the study of Islam.

It is, thus, in this context that Richard C. Martin underscored the “growing demand for accessible knowledge” about Islam and Muslims, leading to an extensive literature covering basics of Islam and its various aspects like “Islamic cultures, religion, history, politics” and contemporary issues.⁵⁰

Let us now give a concise overview of these approaches, highlighting their distinctive features and contributions to the study of Islam.

Macro and Micro Approaches: The “macro approach” examines Islam’s “universal characteristics” connecting it to other “religious traditions” through “sacred” narratives. In contrast, the “micro approach” delves into specific contexts and practices of Muslim societies, exploring how Islam is believed, observed and interpreted in a “particular Muslim community or ethnic group in a certain geographical area”.⁵¹

Pragmatic and Functional Approaches: Treating Islam as an “ideological and political force” that operates with distinct “political and social structures”, the “pragmatic” approach explores “Islam’s role as a means of political legitimization” and is usually applied by “sociologists and political scientists”.⁵² In the “functional” approach, Islam is studied “as a system of educational practices” and as “a social and psychological safety net.”⁵³

Civilizational Approach: The “civilizational” approach, generally used by religious studies scholars, explores “how Islam shapes the cultural and spiritual lives of Muslim societies” by envisioning “Islam as a progressive” phenomenon across various domains like politics, theology, philosophy, and artistic self-expression.⁵⁴ This approach, in Knysh’s opinion, was “exemplified” by the American historian Marshall Hodgson (d. 1968) in his 3-volume *The Venture of Islam*,⁵⁵ emphasizing “Islam’s spiritual dimensions”.⁵⁶

Insider and Outsider Approaches: In *Studying Islam*, Bennett’s comparative study categorizes views into outsider and insider approaches, noting the variance in scholarly perspectives.⁵⁷ In contrast, Hughes highlights the necessity of understanding “religious data” and methodologies, contextualizing them within the “insider-outsider debate” in the “academic study of religion”, including Islam.⁵⁸ He explains this emic-etic approach as:

An *insider* approach—or, alternatively, the *emic* approach—is one that tries to *understand religion* from the *perspective of religious practitioners*. ... The insider approach represents ... the effort to understand religious thought and behavior

primarily from religious persons' point of view. The *outsider* approach—or, alternatively, the *etic* approach—is one that *refuses to explain religion* using the categories and terms of reference that religious people use. It therefore attempts to *import categories from the outside* in an attempt to interpret or explain religious data. This process can be *reductionist* ... [for] it prefers to regard *religion as a human creation* ... [over] *divine or transcendent* (Italics mine).⁵⁹

“Any attempt to understand religions”, Hughes admits, “must necessarily employ both approaches.”⁶⁰ That is why, in many chapters of his seminal work, *Muslim Identities: An Introduction to Islam* (2013), he “weave[s] both outsider and insider accounts of Islam together” while balancing “critical and the apologetic approach” to present Islam “as a historical force.”⁶¹ In order to maintain “equilibrium”, he adopts “the subdisciplinary approach”, focusing on “historical, sociological, and literary [analyses] rather than theological”, and incorporates “methodologies of cognate disciplines, such as archeology, history, and Near Eastern studies.”⁶²

Taxonomy of Introductory Works: Recognizing the proliferation of “introductory books on Islam” in recent years which exhibit considerable diversity, both in contents and methodology, Wolf proposes a tripartite taxonomy for their classification: (i) descriptive and uncritical, (ii) analytical and critical, and (iii) intermediate texts (descriptive with engagement to the critical scholarship). Each category varies in terms of content coverage, comprehensiveness, and critical engagement.⁶³

Empathetic Understanding: Unlike Bennett, Knysh’s “insider approach” suggests that a more nuanced understanding of Islam can be achieved by situating, and presenting, “Islam from within the Islamic tradition”.⁶⁴ On the contrary, William Shepard calls for “Empathetic understanding”, merging “critical study” with “sympathetic” perspective to foster appreciation of Islamic beliefs through “bracketing” process—that is, to “bracket off for time being our [non-Muslims’] own views.”⁶⁵

“There are indeed quite a number of introductory works on Islam”, as Amidu Sanni, a Nigerian scholar, opines, “which range from the apologetic to the polemical, and from the stereotypical to the pedantic”,⁶⁶ highlighting the need for impartial, sensible, and balanced interpretations of Islam. The present study is an endeavour in the same direction. Nevertheless, there are certain serious flaws and failings in these works, especially concerning their interpretations on the foundational sources of Islam—the Holy Qur’ān, the Hadith and *Sīrah* of the last Messenger (*Sal Allāh-u-’alaihe wa sallam*).

A Critical Appraisal of the Selected Introductory Works on Islam

What follows below is an appraisal and assessment of four introductory works on Islam—authored by Shepard, Esposito, Brown, and Knysh—highlighting similarities and differences in their content coverage, approach, and notable features, followed by a brief comparative analysis to clarify their similarities and differences.

William E. Shepard's *Introducing Islam* (2nd ed., 2014)

William E. Shepard (b. 1933) is a renowned scholar of Islamic Studies who has served as an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the *University of Canterbury*, Christchurch (New Zealand). Born, brought up and educated in the USA, he specializes in modern Islamic ideologies, Islamic tradition, and radical thought.⁶⁷ This study evaluates the second edition of his *Introducing Islam* (2014; first published in 2009)—a comprehensive and lucidly written introduction to Islam, its history, and culture.

Introducing Islam consists of a Preface, Introduction, and three parts with twenty-one chapters: Part-I covers the history of the Islamic community; Part-II examines socio-political, intellectual, philosophical, spiritual, artistic, cultural, architectural and other allied aspects of Islam; and Part-III focuses on modern developments. The book provides a nuanced approach to Islamic tradition, institutions, and practices within their historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts.

Part-I presents a historical overview of Islam as a religion, civilization, and ideology from the pre-Islamic period to 1700 CE, covering major empires such as the Umayyads, Abbasids, Ottomans, and Safavids. Part-II explores central aspects of Islamic tradition, including the Holy Qur'ān, the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u- 'alaie wa sallam*), rituals, law, theology, sects, philosophy, Sufism, and Islamic art and architecture, as they have developed over centuries with insights into modern developments at the end. Focused on modern developments, Part-III addresses key modern challenges and transformations, including the effects of colonialism, nationalism, and globalization, religion-politics relationship in countries like Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Indonesia, and contemporary debates on gender, democracy, and human rights.

The book includes various pedagogical tools such as illustrations, text boxes, charts, discussion questions, a glossary, appendices, list of further readings, references, and an index. It draws on diverse sources, including e-resources, with a notable

feature being the ‘Further Reading List’ and “see also” references for deeper exploration.

Shepard’s engaging and concise writing makes the book accessible for both students and scholars. Van Der Krogt praises it as “clearly written,” “attractively produced,” and “richly informed and reliable.”⁶⁸ Paula Schröde aptly describes it “as a classic textbook, with [numerous] teaching tools”, offering a “balanced presentation throughout” and evading “quasi-theological reasoning”.⁶⁹

All in all, *Introducing Islam* reflects Shepard’s forty years of teaching and research, offering a “sympathetic understanding” of Islam’s religion, history, culture, and modern developments.⁷⁰ The book’s clarity, balance, and accessibility make it a valuable contribution to the field of Islamic studies and an exceptional resource for students and scholars of Islamic and Middle East Studies.

John L. Esposito’s *Islam—the Straight Path* (5th ed., 2016)

A distinguished and renowned American scholar of Islamic studies, John L. Esposito (b. 1940) is Professor of Religion and International Affairs and of Islamic Studies at *Georgetown University*, USA. Trained by Professor Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (a renowned Palestinian-American scholar), he is recognized globally for his expertise in Islamic Studies, establishing him as a leading authority on Islam. His contribution has earned significant accolades, including the ‘American Academy of Religion’s 2005 Martin E. Marty Award’ and ‘Pakistan’s Quaid-i-Azam Award’.⁷¹

This study evaluates the fifth edition of his *Islam: The Straight Path*, a seminal work offering a comprehensive and accessible account of Islam and its contemporary developments. Originally published in 1988, the book has been revised multiple times (in 1991, 1998, 2011 and 2016), showcasing the author’s expertise as a “sympathetic” Western scholar of Islam.⁷²

The book consists of six chapters, preceded by a Preface and Introduction, and followed by a Timeline, Glossary, Bibliography, and Index. Each chapter addresses distinct aspects of Islam, from past to present. Chapter 1, “Muhammad and the Quran: Messenger and Message”⁷³ describes the emergence of Islam with a particular focus on the life and role of the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u-’alaihe wa sallam*) and the teachings of the Holy Qur’ān.

Chapter 2 discusses emergence and expansion of Islamic civilization and rise of Islamic empires.⁷⁴ The third chapter focuses on the religious beliefs and practices by highlighting the

development of Islamic theology, philosophy, law/ jurisprudence, and mysticism with a specific focus on the ‘Five Pillars of Islam’.⁷⁵ The fourth chapter narrates the emergence, development, transformations of the modern Islamic Reform movements across the Islamic world that have had a profound effect, in contemporary times, on Islam—as faith, worldview, ideology and civilization.⁷⁶

The fifth chapter presents a historical overview of the causes, worldview, and expressions of Islamic revivalism and the resurgence of religion in politics through a series of case studies from the Middle East.⁷⁷ This chapter deals with recent issues like “global terrorism” and “Arab Spring/ Arab Winter?” as well.⁷⁸ The last chapter, “Struggle for Islam in the Twenty-First Century,”⁷⁹ focuses on the ongoing efforts toward Islamic reform, introduces modern reformers, outlines their approaches, and explores key areas of reform, including democratization, pluralism, gender issues, minority rights, and interfaith relations. The chapter highlights the diversity of reformist thought⁸⁰ and the challenges involved in shaping Islam’s future in a modern context.⁸¹

All chapters, except the second, end with a brief ‘Conclusion’ summarizing the overall discussion precisely. Some of the common features are inclusion of key terms, discussion questions, boxed information on important topics.

Since its first edition, Esposito’s book has gained widespread recognition as an introductory textbook on Islam, appealing to readers both in its English and translated versions worldwide.

An “empirical survey”, presented in *Observing the Observer* (by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, USA) of foundational “Islam 101” courses, which focuses on commonly assigned texts and their authors used in teaching Islam, found Esposito’s book as “the second most widely-used book”, following Denny’s *An Introduction to Islam*. Its popularity among both Muslim and non-Muslim academics stems from its broad and comprehensive coverage of Islamic history, faith, culture, law, theology, philosophy, mysticism, and politics.⁸²

Clinton Bennett and Bruce Lawrence also commend its broad coverage, clarity, insider perspective, “distinctive popularity”, establishing it as a “widely used” College level resource.⁸³ A 2016 review in the *Arab Studies Quarterly* acclaims its “objective and meticulous” nature and balanced and well-researched narrative.⁸⁴

Moreover, Hughes, in his *Situating Islam*, describes it as a “popular introductory textbook” that addresses the post-9/11

misconceptions about Islam,⁸⁵ while Paula Schrode appreciates its persuasive style and “sympathetic” approach, but views it of “limited use as an introduction to the academic study of Islam.”⁸⁶

Overall, Esposito’s *Islam—The Straight Path* is a comprehensive, balanced, and remarkable introductory reference book on Islam,⁸⁷ recognized for its broad coverage, meticulous presentation, and clarity, making it an invaluable resource for students, scholars, and general readers.

Daniel W. Brown’s *A New Introduction to Islam* (3rd ed., 2017)

Daniel W. Brown (b. 1963) is a renowned scholar of Islamic studies, born and raised in Pakistan. Since 2013, he has been the Director of the *Institute for the Study of Religion in the Middle East* (ISRME), Istanbul, Turkey. His academic expertise includes teaching in Islamic Studies at *Mount Holyoke College, Amherst*, and *Smith College* (USA). He served as Visiting Scholar at the research institutes in Pakistan and Egypt, including the *Islamic Research Institute* (IRI), Islamabad, *Institute of Islamic Culture* (IIC), Lahore, and at the *Cairo University* (Egypt). His main areas of focus are modern Muslim intellectual thought, Islamic modernism, Hadith studies, Christian-Muslim relations, and Islam in the Subcontinent.⁸⁸

This study evaluates the third edition of his *A New Introduction to Islam* (first published in 2004),⁸⁹ a foundational textbook which offers a comprehensive history of Islam, its culture, practices, and intellectual traditions. It also discusses modern challenges like colonialism, reform, pluralism, feminism, and globalization. The book also highlights Islam’s impact on the Near East’s spiritual and intellectual life and introduces students to the development of Islamic studies as an academic discipline in the West.⁹⁰

The book consists of eighteen chapters, divided into four parts: Part-I, The Formation of the Islamic Tradition; Part-II, The Expansion of Islam; Part-III, Islamic Institutions; and Part-IV: Crisis and Renewal in Islamic History. The book covers the foundation, growth, and renewal of Islamic tradition and institutions, offering a clear and comprehensive overview of Islamic history and culture.

Part-I examines, in the historical and religious context, Islam’s rise, surveys the “central elements of Islamic tradition”, including the Prophet’s (*Sal Allah-u-‘alaie wa sallam*) life, the Holy Qur’ān, and the *Hadīth* (Tradition) literature—describing the Holy Qur’ān and *Hadīth* as “two thorniest [challenging] questions” in Islamic Studies.⁹¹ Part-II discusses the Arab conquests, early worldview, and the Caliphate up to 1258 CE. Part-III examines key

Islamic institutions—law, theology and philosophy, and Sufism—which Brown sees as “defining features of Islam” that shaped “coherence, the brilliance, and the resiliency” of Islamic civilization.⁹²

Part-IV explores Islam’s responses to historical challenges, patterns of renewal and reform, and contemporary issues including globalization and pluralism, global Salafism, liberalism, and feminism, and Muslim responses to these pressing problems “of theological, ethical and political” nature faced by the contemporary *Ummah* (Muslim community,) globally.⁹³

Key strengths of the book are its clear organization, clarity, and insightful guidance on the study of Islam. The revised 3rd edition adds “significant revision[s]” in part-I, reflecting new “revisionist” scholarship on the “Islamic origins”,⁹⁴ and expands part-IV to address topics like Islam in the West, gender, pluralism, human rights, and recent trends in contemporary Islamic thought. Moreover, supplementary and pedagogical features—chronologies, tables summarizing key information, maps, diagrams and illustrations, updated resources for further study, and ‘Questions for Study and Discussion’ at the end of each chapter—enhance its value as a comprehensive introduction to Islamic studies.

Another remarkable feature is a two-page section on “Essential Resources for the Study of Islam” in the first chapter, ‘Islam in Global Perspective’,⁹⁵ which provides a list of important works necessary for the study of Islam and Muslims. This list, along with a brief description of their merits and guidelines on their use, is very informative, helpful and beneficial for the students.

Oliver Scharbrodt praises Brown’s work for its comprehensive and accessible treatment of Islam, offering a balanced historical and doctrinal analysis, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of Islamic tradition.⁹⁶ For Diego Sarrio, conveying “scholarly content in an easy-to-read and engaging style” is the “main strength” of the book.⁹⁷

Schrode also praises Brown’s book for being “pronouncedly an introduction to the academic study of Islam, dealing ... with the challenges critical research has posed to traditional understandings of the origins of Islam.”⁹⁸ In her analysis, “Brown’s book is to be recommended for university students without any reservations” for being a “well-structured, simple, yet captivating” account; an “accessible introduction to the academic study of Islam”; depiction of “Islamic traditions and practices in a lively manner”; and for containing “stimulating thoughts for more advanced readers”.⁹⁹

Nonetheless, Brown's adoption of 'revisionist' approach regarding the Holy Qur'ān, *Hadīth*, and the *Sirah* (Prophet's Biography)¹⁰⁰ is deemed problematic for an introductory work,¹⁰¹ particularly for an (under) graduate student, as it lacks acceptance among Western scholars.¹⁰² Despite the book's clarity and currency, the emphasis on revisionist perspectives is criticized for failing to provide a balanced foundation for newcomers to Islamic Studies.¹⁰³ Scholars like Shepard and Scharbrodt highlight the book's "controversial questions" linked to "revisionist scholarship",¹⁰⁴ indicating the need for a more nuanced introduction to Islam that reflects the intricacies of the field, one that acknowledges the complexities and debates within the discipline without prioritizing revisionist views.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the use of "New Introduction" in the title might give an impression that other introductory works on Islam are obsolete or insignificant.¹⁰⁶

Despite these limitations, this book provides a lucid, informative, and comprehensive overview of Islam, addressing key issues and historical events, making it an essential and valuable resource for students and teachers.

Alexander D. Knysh's *Islam in Historical Perspective* (3rd ed., 2025)

Professor of Islamic Studies in the Department of Middle East Studies of the *University of Michigan*, Knysh (b. 1957) is a renowned Russian-American scholar of Islamic studies. He is also the Academic Director of the Islamic Studies project at the *Saint Petersburg State University (SPSU)*, Russian Federation. His research specialization lies in the history and development of Islamic thought, with particular focus on Islamic mysticism (*Sufism*), Qur'anic studies, Islamic intellectual history, and modern Islamic/Islamist movements. He is the author and translator of numerous books, journal articles, encyclopedia entries, and more.¹⁰⁷

This study evaluates the third edition of Knysh's *Islam in Historical Perspective*. First published in 2011 (by *Pearson*, with 2nd edition by *Routledge* in 2017),¹⁰⁸ the book offers a comprehensive and nuanced introduction to Islam (as religion, civilization, ideology) and Muslim societies through centuries.¹⁰⁹

Structured chronologically and thematically, the book comprises twenty-four chapters spanning over 640 pages. It begins with a Preface, acknowledgements, note on transliteration and dates, and a detailed Introduction.¹¹⁰ The book ends with a comprehensive bibliography and index, with each chapter featuring pedagogical tools such as conclusions, questions to ponder, point-wise summaries, and notes.

The contents of Knysh's book, excluding Introduction, can be divided into three major thematic parts: (1) *Foundations of Islam and Emergence of Islamic Civilization*: Chapters 1-8 explore Islam's historical development up to 1258 CE and discuss Islamic primary sources, the Holy Qur'ān, *Hadīth*, and the Prophet's (*Sal Allāh u-’alaihe wa sallam*) biography. (2) *Islamic Beliefs, Institutions, and Schools of Thought*: Chapters 9-18 delve into the development of Islamic scholarship, exploring the various schools of thought, philosophy, sects, Sufism, madrasah education, and the basic beliefs and practices of Islam as well as art, architecture and mosques. This part also includes a chapter on "Women in Islamic Societies",¹¹¹ a controversial subject that is "politically and emotionally charged" and has "generated heated debates".¹¹² (3) *Islam vis-à-vis Modern Developments*: Chapters 19-24 examine Islam and modernity, covering Islam's relationship with the West, responses to colonialism, Islamic modernism and reform, Islam as a political force, contemporary Islamic thought, and global jihadism.

The book presents Islam as a dynamic dialogue shaped by diverse interpretations,¹¹³ offering a meticulously researched and balanced understanding of its complex history.

David Waines' described first edition as "a formidable achievement",¹¹⁴ a sentiment equally applicable to its revised editions. Waines commends Knysh's adoption of a "civilizational" perspective, which integrates historical, thematic, and cultural narratives, echoing Hodgson's influential work, *The Venture of Islam*.¹¹⁵ This comprehensive approach results in a rich and diverse exploration of topics, primary sources, and pedagogical tools, providing a nuanced understanding of Islam.¹¹⁶ Knysh acknowledges the influence of Hodgson's civilizational approach in the Introduction and claims that he has adopted "a modified version of the civilizational approach" in this book.¹¹⁷

In sum, Knysh's *Islam in Historical Perspective* offers a clear and comprehensive introduction to Islam's history, traditions, and modern developments, enriched with summaries, questions, and notes for students and scholars. Its thematic structure, in-depth analysis, and pedagogical tools make it an indispensable resource for understanding Islam's diverse traditions.¹¹⁸

Brief Comparison: Comparative Analysis of the Evaluated Books

Below are presented the key findings concerning the convergences and divergences in the books' content, coverage, approach, and distinctive features:

Shared Characteristics: All these works have undergone multiple editions (2nd to 5th), with updates addressing contemporary issues and enhancing pedagogical features. In terms of pedagogy, the works of Brown, Shepard, and Knysh stand out for their concise introductions to “academic approaches”, for addressing “fundamental theoretical issues”, and for maintaining “a certain level of reflexivity”.¹¹⁹ All these works contain current pedagogical features and teaching tools.¹²⁰

Structural Similarities: Structurally, the books cover Islamic history, foundational sources, institutions and traditions, and contemporary issues,¹²¹ with most of them beginning with a preface or introduction outlining the author’s perspective or methodology adopted. That is to say, “each author”, to some degree, “makes his or her own selection of topics”.¹²²

Diversity of Approaches: The works demonstrate a “multiplicity” and “plurality” of “scholarly approaches”, revealing a well-represented use of methodologies within the study of Islam.¹²³

Varied Perspectives on Contemporary Issues: Collectively, these works offer a comprehensive analysis of Islam and Muslims, exploring different dimensions of Islamic faith and its history—from past to present. All of them contain a substantial amount of information on Islam vis-à-vis modern issues and challenges, providing valuable insights in knowing and understanding Islam and Muslims in the broader “global context”.¹²⁴

Scope and Utility: The books cater to both students and general readers, facilitating understanding of Islamic history and civilization along with their convergences and divergences.

Publishing Houses and Target Audience: The books have been published by three leading Western publishing houses with global reach, making them accessible to students worldwide. Primarily targeted at Western students, they are also suitable as ‘Recommended’/ ‘Suggested Readings’ in Eastern institutions.¹²⁵ (see Appendix-I at the end).¹²⁶

A few more Introductory works on Islam

Besides the above evaluated works, there are many other notable ‘introductory’ works on Islam, (re)published post-2000. Three such works, offering valuable insights into Islamic history and culture include Tamara Sonn’s *Islam: A Brief History* (2010), Carole Hillenbrand’s *Introduction to Islam* (2015), and Frederick M. Denny’s *An Introduction to Islam* (2016). Below is presented a brief overview of these.

Tamara Sonn's *Islam: A Brief History* (2nd ed., 2010)

A distinguished American academic, Sonn (b. 1949) currently holds the position of Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani Professor (Emerita) in the History of Islam and Director of the Alwaleed Centre for Christian-Muslim Understanding at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, *Georgetown University (GU)*, USA. Sonn's research expertise lies in Islamic history and thought, and her scholarly contributions include numerous books, book chapters, encyclopedia entries, and journal articles.¹²⁷

Sonn's *Islam: A Brief History*, first published in 2004, is a simple, straightforward, and thematic introduction to Islam—covering its origins, development, and contemporary issues. Written in a lucid and simple style, the book combines historical narrative with scholarly insights, presenting “a clear and coherent picture” of Islam as “a dynamic, complex, and global religion”.¹²⁸

The book comprises five chapters, preceded by a List of Illustrations, Foreword, two Prefaces, and maps and are followed by notes, suggestions for further reading, source acknowledgements, and Index. The five chapters include discussions on the Holy Qur’ān, the Prophet (*Sal Allah-u-‘alaihe wa sallam*), Pillars of Islam, Caliphs, early disputes, Islamic institutions and culture, crusades and pre-modern Islamic empires, colonialism and reform, and modern issues like human rights and democracy. Professor Akber S. Ahmed praises Sonn for presenting “an indispensable guide to understanding Islam in the twenty-first century.”¹²⁹

Subsequent editions (2nd in 2010 and 3rd in 2016) have incorporated recent developments in different chapters on diverse topics and themes, such as expanded descriptions of the Holy Qur’ān, additional material on Sufism, and overviews of “mainstream Muslim viewpoints” on global concerns.¹³⁰ For instance, in its third edition, the fifth chapter “Contemporary Islam”,¹³¹ provides brief but insightful discussions on several key Muslim nations of Arab world and South(east) Asia—including Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and Indonesia—and events like ‘Tunisia and Arab Spring’ and global terrorism (ISIS, Boko Haram, Hamas, and Hezbollah) as well.

Professor Ahmed praises Sonn's scholarship, noting that she restores “perspective and balance” in her discussions and analysis on all topics, classical or contemporary. He calls this book an “essential reading for anyone wishing to make sense of the difficult times we live in”.¹³²

Situating Islamic history within its broader historical, intellectual, and cultural context, Sonn offers a balanced, clear, and engaging overview of Islamic history, accessible for students and general readers.

Carole Hillenbrand's *Introduction to Islam* (1st ed., 2015)

A distinguished British scholar of Islamic studies, Hillenbrand (b. 1943) is Honorary Professorial Fellow in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the *University of Edinburgh* (UK) since 2008 and Professor of Islamic History at the *University of St. Andrews* (UK). She is the first non-Muslim to be honored with the *King Faisal Prize* in Islamic Studies (2005). Her book, *Introduction to Islam*—which was awarded the prestigious ‘Nayef Al-Rodhan Prize for Global Cultural Understanding’ by the *British Academy* in 2016¹³³—is a thematic history of Islam that provides a nuanced understanding of the religion and its practices.

The book consists of eleven chapters, each addressing “the most essential aspects of Islamic faith and practice”, with “a one-word title” using a “lavish use of subheadings within each chapter” allowing readers to gain sensitive understanding of the essential tenets of Islam.¹³⁴ The titles of these chapters are: Introduction; Muhammad (*Sal Allah-u-‘alaie wa sallam*); The Holy Qur’ān; Faith; Law; Diversity; Thought; Ṣūfism; *Jihād*; Women; and Tomorrow. Some additional features are a Timeline of Islamic history, glossaries, illustrations, a list of further reading and Index. For example, in the 7th chapter, “Thought”, Hillenbrand discusses Islamic Theology, Islamic Philosophy, Political Thought, The Sunni Caliphate, and Modern Trends in Islamic Thought.¹³⁵

Hillenbrand aims to present Islamic faith and practice “accurately and objectively” for undergraduates and general readers, highlighting “core beliefs, practices, and doctrines” of Muslims.¹³⁶

Schrode describes Hillenbrand's book as a “sympathetic approach” based “nuanced introduction” to Islam, but notes it lacks “critical outlook”, making it better as a supplementary rather than a foundational text for Islam.¹³⁷ Amidu O. Sanni, in contrast, praises it as a “welcome intellectual product” and a “masterpiece” drawing on its author's “over five-decade long engagement with Islamic studies and civilization”.¹³⁸

Overall, Hillebrand's book has been highly praised for its well-argued, structured, researched, balanced, and judicious approach as well as for its flowing and engaging style, making it an ‘ideal introductory text’ for basic courses in Islamic/ Religious Studies and Middle East Studies.

Frederick Mathewson Denny's *An Introduction to Islam* (4th ed., 2016)

A renowned Islamic studies scholar, trained as historian, Denny (b. 1939) is currently Professor Emeritus at *University of Chicago*, and has previously served as Professor of Religious Studies at *University of Colorado*, Boulder.¹³⁹ His book provides an in-depth, integrated and thematic introduction to Islam and Muslims, placing the religion within a socio-cultural and political-historical context. First published in 1985 (by *Macmillan* and later by *Pearson Education*), it currently runs in its fourth edition, it has gained popularity and positive reception in the academic circles, and has been “adopted” by many “courses on introductory Islam”.¹⁴⁰

The book comprises sixteen chapters broadly divided into six main parts (spanning over 600 pages): Religion and Common Life in the Pre-Islamic Near East; The Coming of the Islam: The Prophet, His People, and God’s Religion; The Islamic Religious System; The Sufi Way of Mysticism and Fellowship; Patterns of Islamic Personal and Communal Life; and Islam in the Modern World. It also features Suggestions for Further Reading, Glossary, Acknowledgements, and an Index.

Denny’s book is not “a history of Islam” but “a topical presentation, arranged roughly in order of the more universal dimensions of the tradition down to the more particular ones” through a “historical framework”, with references to and connections with the Judeo-Christian morals, thus making it a “comprehensive and balanced” work.¹⁴¹

A survey by Faisal Islam and Zahid Bukhari acknowledges it as “the most widely-used [adopted] book for teaching fundamental Islam”, highlighting its integration of doctrinal, devotional, cultural, socio-political, and religious aspects of Islam.¹⁴² Scholars such as Schröde, Hughes, Shepard, and Elizabeth G. Burr corroborate this assessment, and regard it as a “classic”, authoritative, and “excellent survey” of Islamic civilization due to its clear structure, insightful content, essential summary of teachings, and accessibility to newcomers.¹⁴³

Denny’s textbook is considered a unique and indispensable resource in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. Elizabeth Burr notes that despite being non-Muslims, both Esposito and Denny exemplify scholarly “multiplicity” and have become leading, “sympathetic” experts in Islamic studies, effectively educating diverse audiences.¹⁴⁴ (italics mine)

This brief assessment and analysis of books by Sonn, Hillenbrand and Denny reveal both similarities and differences in methodology, approach, and pedagogical features. All three authors adopt a thematic approach, providing a nuanced understanding of Islamic history and culture. However, Hillenbrand emphasizes historical development, Denny situates Islam in a broader socio-political and cultural contexts, and Sonn presents a concise, accessible narrative for general readers—together reflecting the field's diversity.

Conclusion

Presenting a critical examination of selected introductory works on Islam, published from 2010 to 2025, the study leads us to conclude that these works help us in understanding the dominant trends, tendencies and themes in 21st century Western scholarship (especially Euro-American)¹⁴⁵ regarding Islam. It clearly illustrates the prevalent thematic coverage, academic perspectives, and methodological structures used in this genre, which ultimately aids readers in understanding the intricacies of portraying Islamic historiography in contemporary Western scholarship.

The assessment has also uncovered the complex methodological frameworks utilized in these writings, integrating diverse perspectives—spanning historical, civilizational, insider/empathetic, as well as historical and revisionist—to critically analyze, evaluate, and interpret different dimensions of Islam (both as a religion and civilization), encompassing theological, cultural, socio-political, and other aspects. This critical examination provides a deeper insight into Islam and Muslims in their historical and contemporary global settings, underscoring the complexities and subtleties of Islamic traditions and experiences.

This study offers detailed perspectives on the titles and themes, goals and intents, methods and intended audiences of these works. We hope, ultimately, that this research deepens our comprehension of Islamic history and its continuing importance in the modern global context.

The study underscores the importance of critically evaluating the methodological approaches and nuances utilized by Western academics, particularly American Islamicists, in examining Islam, Muslims, and Muslim communities. The preceding discussion offers an important perspective on the current state of Islamic history scholarship in the 21st century, highlighting the need for continued critical evaluation, nuanced understanding, and creative approaches.

Recommendations

This study is limited to examining selected introductory works on Islam, predominantly written by American Islamicists. Future research endeavours ought to encompass writings by Islamicists from different Western countries/ regions (such as Canada, Australia, Europe, etc.) with diverse academic backgrounds (History, Sociology, Anthropology, Cultural studies, Comparative literature, etc.). Moreover, this study focuses on the methodological approaches and subtleties utilized by Western academics, which might not adequately represent the full spectrum of Islamic studies. To enhance our understanding of Islamic experiences and traditions, future research must incorporate and integrate interdisciplinary methods, drawing insights from sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. By embracing a more holistic and contextualized framework, researchers can better understand the intricacies of Islamic history and its continued relevance in the contemporary world. Moreover, future studies ought to critically evaluate how Islam and Muslims are portrayed in both academic and mainstream discussions, underscoring the importance of a nuanced and accurate depictions.

Last, but not the least, this author believes that on comprehensive content coverage and sensitivity to spiritual and devotional aspects, the books of Shepard, Denny, Hillenbrand, and Knysh, respectively, may be recommended for academic adoption as ‘required textbooks’ or ‘recommended readings’ in Eastern universities (see Appendix-I below).

Appendix-I: My ranking (in descending order) of the evaluated works based on the criteria of (i) academic merit, (ii) accessibility, (iii) sensitivity to spiritual and devotional aspects, (iv) academic adoption, and (v) content coverage:

Ranking	Criteria-I: Academic Merit	Criteria-II: Accessibility	Criteria-III: Sensitivity to Spiritual and Devotional aspects	Criteria-IV: Academic Adoption	Criteria-V: Content Coverage
	<i>Rationale</i> : Ranking based on writing style, authoritative sources, and begin	<i>Rationale</i> : Ranking for general reader and begin	<i>Rationale</i> : Ranking determined by the author's consideration of “Muslim sensibilities” in relation to the Holy	<i>Rationale</i> : Suitability as required textbooks or recommended	<i>Rationale</i> : Ranking based on comprehensive

	comprehension, etc.	ner useful ness	Qur'ān and the Prophet's <i>Sīrah</i>	readings for Eastern universities	topic covera ge
1.	Hillenbrand	Esposito	Shepard	Shepard	Knysh
2.	Shepard	Sonn	Hillenbrand	Denny	Shepard
3.	Esposito	Hillen brand	Esposito	Hillenbrand	Brown
4.	Denny	Denn y	Denny	Knysh	Denny
5.	Knysh	Shepa rd	Sonn	Brown	Hillen brand
6.	Brown	Knys h	Knysh	Esposito	Esposito
7.	Sonn	Brow n	Brown	Sonn	Sonn

Notes and References

¹ For this viewpoint, see Tauseef Ahmad Parray, “Debates on Tradition and Modernity in the Subcontinent”, in Lütfi Sunar, ed., *The Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Muslim Socio-Political Thought* (New York & London: Routledge, 2021): 59-72, p. 59

² For a detailed overview of this aspect, see my previous works: Tauseef Ahmad Parray, “A Portrayal of 21st Century Western Scholarship on ‘Islamic History’”, *Greater Kashmir*, 10th September, 2020, p. 7; *Idem.*, “21st Century Western Scholarship on ‘Islamic History’: An Evaluation of Some Selected Recent Works”, *The Freelancer* (Online Portal, New Delhi), 25th January 2021, retrieved from <http://www.thefreelancer.co.in/eng/?p=83> [last accessed on 6th February, 2025]; *Idem.*, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam: An Appraisal of Selected ‘Introductory’ Reference Works on Islamic History”, *Analisa: Journal of Social Science & Religion*, 6, 2 (December 2021): 253-274; *Idem.*, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship: Critical Reviews on 125 Recent Books* (Aligarh, India: Brown Books, in association with Springs, South Africa: Ahsan Academy of Research, 2023), pp. 15-18, 23-32

³ Saulat Parvez, “Muslim Intellectual History: A Survey”, *American Journal of Islam and Society* [AJIS; previously *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, AJISS], 39, 3-4 (2022): 206-272, p. 207

⁴ Parray, in *Greater Kashmir* (2020), p. 7; *Idem.*, in *The Freelancer* (2021); *Idem.*, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021): 253-274; *Idem.*, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship* (2023), pp. 15-18, 23-32

⁵ Alexander Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective*, 3rd ed. (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2025), p. xvii

⁶ Discourse can denote either “a learned discussion … on a philosophical, political, literary or religious topic” or “specific type of language and the set of problematics that define and delimit a given field”, or as “the ordered exposition in writing or speech of a particular subject”. For details, see J. A. Cuddon (Revised by M. A. R. Habib), *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 5th ed.

(Chichester, West Sussex, Malden, MA, and Oxford: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2013), p. 207; Peter Childs and Roger Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Abingdon, Oxon, and New York: Routledge, 2006 [1973]), p. 58. In this study, discourse specifically concerns the prevailing narratives about Islam in Western academic and scholarly circles.

⁷ Epistemology (from the root “*episteme*”, meaning ‘knowledge’ or ‘science’) essentially refers to “the science or study of knowledge” and is specifically the branch of philosophy concerned with “understanding the nature and limitations of knowledge.” It examines the nature, sources, and limitations of knowledge. Cuddon, *Dictionary*, p. 245. In this study, epistemological framework refers to the perspective employed to analyze Islam within Western academic circles, whereas epistemological assumptions denote the fundamental beliefs that shape these perspectives. In simple terms, this study aims to critically examine these frameworks and assumptions, demonstrating their impact on the field of Islamic studies in the West.

⁸ Deconstruction, which is closely related to the term “analysis” (or the notions of “to undo” and “to de-construct”), represents a critical analytical approach that scrutinizes the construction of texts and unveils the “mode of analytical inquiry”, while as “deconstructive reading” refers to a “reading which analyses the specificity of a text’s critical difference from itself”. Deconstruction is also defined as “a critique of concepts and hierarchies which ... are essential to traditional criteria of certainty, identity and truth”. For details see, Cuddon *Dictionary*, pp. 189-190; Childs and Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary*, pp. 48-51. In this study, deconstruction and deconstructive narrative entail the dissection of introductory works on Islam to understand their narratives and uncover the perspectives that influence the authors’ presentations.

⁹ Shari Lowin, “[Review] Reviewed Works: A New Introduction to Islam by Daniel Brown [2004]; An Introduction to Islam by David Waines [2003]; Islam: Its History, Teaching, and Practices by S. A. Nigosian [2004]”. *The Journal of Religion* [JoR], 86, 1 (2006): 164-66. The books reviewed by Lowin are: Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 1st ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); S. A. Nigosian, *Islam: Its History, Teaching, and Practices* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004)

¹⁰ Hughes, *Situating Islam*, pp. 79, 84-92. Hughes has evaluated these works: John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*. 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Karen Armstrong, *Islam—A Short History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2006); Frederick M. Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 3rd ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹¹ Bruce B. Lawrence, “Review essay: Introducing Islam or reviling Muslims?” *Contemporary Islam [Cont. Islam]*, 2, 1 (2008): 85-89. Among these, he has included Denny’s *An Introduction to Islam* and Esposito’s *Islam: The Straight Path*.

¹² Clinton Bennett, *Studying Islam: The Critical Issues* (New York: Continuum, 2010), pp. 1-22

¹³ Sir William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, 4 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1861); H. A. R. Gibb, *Muhammedanism: A Historical Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961 [1949]): later published as *Islam: A Historical Survey*

(1980); John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*. 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

¹⁴ David Waines, “Review: Alexander Knysh: *Islam in Historical Perspective...*” (2011). *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies [BSOAS]*, 75, 2 (2012): 382-84. Waines here refers to the following works using “Islam” in their titles: Gibb, *Islam: A Historical Survey* (1980 [1961]); Alfred Guillaume, *Islam* (London: Penguin, 1954); M. Z. Khan, *Islam—Its Meaning for Modern Man* (London: Penguin, 1962); Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*. 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1966]).

¹⁵ Aaron W. Hughes, *Muslim Identities: An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), p. 6

¹⁶ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), pp. 247, 252, 258, 265

¹⁷ Leslie F. Wolf, “Review: Islam—An Introduction by Catharina Raudvere (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2015) ...”. *Oxford Journal of Islamic Studies [OJIS]*, 28, 2 (May 2017): 221-224

¹⁸ Amidu Olalekan Sanni, “Review: Islam: A New Historical Introduction. By Carole Hillenbrand. London: Thames and Hudson, 2015...”, *The Muslim World Book Review [MWBRJ]*, 37, 2 (2017): 23-26, p. 25

¹⁹ Parray, in *Greater Kashmir* (2020), p.7; *Idem.*, in *The Freelancer* (2021); *Idem.*, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021): 253-274; *Idem.*, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship* (2023)

²⁰ Among these books, Esposito’s book is included in a few university courses in India and is recommended by Muslim scholars like Abou El-Fadl as a core reading on Islam. For example, (1) in a Master’s course on “Trends in Contemporary Orientalism”, Shah-i-Hamadan Institute of Islamic Studies, *University of Kashmir*, Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir) has mentioned Esposito’s *Islam: The Straight Path* in its “Books Recommended” list: for details see PG Syllabus (2018) available in PDF at https://islamicstudies.uok.edu.in/Files/36892408-1fed-4431-9848-0761b9e02587/Menu/Pg_Syllabus_2018_f17847ba-0d81-4d07-b9e8-faaff662f518.pdf, p. 58; (2) *University of Madras*, India has also included Esposito’s *Islam: The Straight Path* (3rd ed., 1998) in the Books Recommended list in these courses: “Introduction to Islam”, “Islamic History-II”, and “Essentials of Islam”: see syllabus at <https://www.unom.ac.in/webportal/uploads/naac/1/additional/37%20M.A.%20Islamic%20Studies.pdf>, pp. 18, 26, 61; (3) *SAFI Institute of Advanced Studies*, Malappuram, Kerala (India) has listed Esposito’s book (1991 ed.) in “Islamic Political Thought” course of their Master’s in Islamic Studies, p. 37, retrieved from <https://sias.edu.in/docs/syllabus/MA-Islamic-Studies.pdf> (4) Khaled Abou El Fadl has included Esposito’s *Islam—The Straight Path* (1998) and Denny’s *An Introduction to Islam* (1994) in his “Recommended Reading” list: for details, see “General Books on Islam: Recommended by Dr. Abou EL Fadl”, *USULI: The Institute for Advanced Usuli Studies*, retrieved from www.usuli.org/2017/12/01/general-books/on-islam/ (all URLs included in this note have been last accessed on 25th May, 2025).

²¹ Parray, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021), p. 255

²² For details, see, Tauseef Ahmad Parray, “Review: Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 2nd Ed. UK: Wiley-Blackwell”. *Islamic Studies [IS]*, 49, 1 (2010): 121–125; *Idem.*, “[Review] William Shepard, *Introducing Islam*. Oxon, RN; USA & Canada: Routledge, 2009”, *AJIS*, 27, 4 (2010): 117-120; *Idem.*, “Review: Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 2nd Ed. UK: Wiley-Blackwell”, *AJIS*, 28, 1 (2011): 150-52; *Idem.*, “On Reading John Esposito’s *Islam—The Straight Path*”, *Greater Kashmir*, 14th January, 2021, p. 7; *Idem.*, “‘Islamic History’ through ‘Civilizational Perspective’: On Reading Alexander Knysh’s *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2017)”, *Kashmir Observer*, 19th

February 2022, p. 7 (All these reviews also feature in Parray, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship*, 2023, pp. 183-191, 213-222); *Idem.*, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021): 253-274; *Idem.*, “Presenting ‘Islamic History’ through a ‘Civilizational Perspective’”, *Greater Kashmir*, 22nd May, 2025, p. 7, also available online at <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/opinion/presenting-islamic-history-through-a-civilizational-perspective/>; *Idem.*, “How To Rethink Islamic History as a Civilization?”, *Kashmir Life*, 24th May, 2025, retrieved from <https://kashmirlife.net/rethinking-islamic-history-civilizational-lens-392013/> (last accessed on 26th May, 2025)

²³ Tauseef Ahmad Parray, “Focusing Socio-Political Reforms of the Prophet: An Appraisal of Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui’s Sirah Works”, *Quarterly Insights*, 2, 2-3 (2010): 263-302; *Idem.*, “Encyclopedic Works on Islamic Political Thought and Movements in the Twenty-first Century”, *AJIS*, 32, 4 (2015): 85-96; *Idem.*, “Recent Scholarship on ‘Islamism’ Discourse: An Evaluation and Assessment”, *Analisa*, 1, 1 (2016): 1-18; *Idem.*, “Democracy and Democratization in the Muslim World: An Evaluation of some Important Works on Democratization in South/Southeast Asia”, *Analisa*, 2, 1 (2017): 79-101; *Idem.*, “Understanding Pakistan through Literature: An Appraisal of some Recent Works”, *Analisa*, 4, 1 (2019): 1-20; *Idem.*, “Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the West: A Review Essay”, *Aligarh Journal of Quranic Studies [AJQS]*, 3, 1 (March 2020): 48-72; *Idem.*, “Review: Faces of Muhammad: Western Perceptions of the Prophet of Islam from the Middle Ages to Today, John V. Tolan (2019)”, *Hadis ve Siyer Arastirmalari/Hadith and Sira Studies [HSS]*, 6, 1 (2020): 129-139; *Idem.*, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam...”, *Analisa*, 6, 2 (2021): 253-274; *Idem.*, “Thematic Studies on the Sirah and Contribution of Professor M. Yasin Mazhar Siddiqui: An Appraisal of Some Selected Works”, *Hamard Islamicus*, 45, 1 (2022): 35-59. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57144/hi.v45i1.319>

²⁴ Parray, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021), p. 254

²⁵ Criticism is defined as the act “to analyze” and “to judge”, and is regarded “complementary to literary *criticism*” (Childs and Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary*, p. 38); Critique is described as a “detailed review and assessment of a literary work” (Cudon *Dictionary*, p. 173); and Critical Theory is characterized as “a philosophical activity which should underlie criticism” but should not be seen as a component of it (Childs & Fowler, *The Routledge Dictionary*, p. 38). This study employs ‘Critical Content Analysis’ (CCA), a methodological approach that combines critical theory with content analysis to examine the portrayal of Islam in introductory works authored by some prominent Islamicists.

²⁶ Islamicist denotes “a scholar whose academic specialization is some aspect of Islam”, “academic scholar who studies about Islam”, or academics who “engage in the academic study of Islam”. Until approximately the mid-20th century, they were referred to as “Orientalists” (from the root “Orient”, meaning the East), and their discipline as Orientalism; however, the current common term is Islamicist, and the discipline is now known as Islamic Studies. The term Islamicist is considered “appropriate” for academics in Religious Studies, History, Anthropology, Political Science and other fields “who focus primarily on some aspect of Islam.” Islamicist must be distinguished from “Islamist”, which refers to “one who calls for an Islam[ic] state and society”. For this definition, brief historical context, and differentiation, see William E. Shepard, *Introducing Islam*. 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 6, 245, 377

²⁷ Shepard, *Introducing Islam*, 2nd ed. (2014)

²⁸ John L. Esposito, *Islam—The Straight Path*, 5th updated ed. (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

²⁹ Daniel W. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 3rd ed. (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017)

³⁰ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective*, 3rd ed. (2025)

³¹ Tamara Sonn, *Islam: A Brief History*, 2nd ed. (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). The first edition, *A Brief History of Islam*, was published in 2004 and the third edition appeared in 2016 under the new title, *Islam: History, Religion, and Politics*. In this study, although both the 2nd and 3rd editions have been cited, the analysis is based on the 2nd edition.

³² Carole Hillenbrand, *Introduction to Islam: Beliefs and Practices in Historical Perspective* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2015). It has been published in UK under a new title, *Islam—A New Historical Introduction*, by the (same) publisher.

³³ Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 4th ed. (Abingdon, Oxon & New York: Routledge, 2016). As references of the previous editions of these seven evaluated works also appear in the references, the year of publication has been added in parenthesis with each reference to avoid confusion.

³⁴ For the definition, nature and characteristics of textbooks, see Michael Strausberg and Steven Engler, “Textbooks in the study of religion/s: introducing a new feature series”, *Religion*, 43, 2 (2013): 131-134, pp. 131-32 (DOI: 10.1080/0048721X.2013.781882). For textbooks on Islam, see Paula Schröde, “Between critics and caretakers: current introductions to Islam”, *Religion*, 46, 2 (2016): 247-268 (DOI: 10.1080/0048721X.2016.1138630)

³⁵ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), p. 248

³⁶ Aaron W. Hughes, *Situating Islam: The Past and Future of an Academic Discipline* (Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2007), pp. 72, 80, 81, 84, 90

³⁷ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2025), pp. 1-6, especially pp. 1-3

³⁸ Sulayman S. Nyang, Mumtaz Ahmad, Zahid Bukhari, “Introduction”, in Mumtaz Ahmad, Zahid Bukhari and Sulayman Nyang, eds., *Observing the Observer: The State of Islamic Studies in American Universities* (London & Washington, International Institute of Islamic Thought [IIIT], 2012): ix-xxvii, p. xxiv

³⁹ Oliver Scharbrodt, “Review: Brown, Daniel. 2004. A New Introduction to Islam. Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA (USA)...”, *Marburg Journal of Religion [MJR]*, 10, 1 (August 2005): 1-3

⁴⁰ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2025), pp. 1-3

⁴¹ Hillenbrand, *Introduction to Islam*, pp. 17-18

⁴² Hughes, *Muslim Identities*, pp. 1, 2, 4-5

⁴³ Wolf, in *JIS* (28, 2, May 2017), p. 221

⁴⁴ Bennett, *Studying Islam*, pp. 1-22

⁴⁵ David Waines, “Review: Alexander Knysh: *Islam in Historical Perspective*. xiii, 534 pp. New York & London: Prentice Hall, 2011...”. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies [BSOAS]*, 75, 2 (2012): 382-84, pp. 382-83

⁴⁶ Lowin, in *JoR* (86, 1, 2006), pp. 164-66

⁴⁷ Lawrence, in *Cont. Islam* (2, 1, 2008), pp. 85-89

⁴⁸ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), pp. 247-268

⁴⁹ Wolf, in *JIS* (28, 2, May 2017), pp. 221-224

⁵⁰ Richard C Martin, “Introduction”, in Richard C. Martin, ed., *Encyclopedia of Islam and Muslim World*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 2004), I: ix-xii, p. x

⁵¹ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2025), pp. 1-2

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Vol. I; *The Classical Age*; Vol. II: *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*; and Vol. III: *The Gunpowder Empires and Modern Times*.

⁵⁶ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2025), p. 2

⁵⁷ Bennet, *Studying Islam*, pp. 6, 11, 22

⁵⁸ Hughes, *Muslim Identities*, pp. 5-6

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. xi

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. xi, 1-2

⁶³ Wolf, in *JIS*, (28, 2, May 2017), p. 221

⁶⁴ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2025), p. 2

⁶⁵ Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (2014), pp. 3-5, esp. p.4. Shepard’s concept of “empathetic understanding” emphasizes the importance of reconciling “critical study” with “sympathetic” perspective, which he considers as complimentary, rather than mutually exclusive, for studying Islam and Muslims. By this, he means entering “imaginatively … into the experience of another person [Muslim] and seeing the world as they see it”. “In order to do this, we must often temporarily set aside many of our own beliefs and disbeliefs, values and presuppositions, and ask what would follow if the beliefs, values and presuppositions of those we are studying

were in fact true. This is called ‘bracketing’, because we bracket off for the time being our own views.”

⁶⁶ Sanni, in *MWBR* (37, 2, 2017), p. 25

⁶⁷ For biographical details, <https://www.routledge.com/authors/i8376-william-shepard> (last accessed on 12th February, 2025)

⁶⁸ Christopher Van Der Krogt, “Review: Introducing Islam. William E. Shepard [2014] …”. *New Zealand International Review [NIR]*, 40, 2 (2015): 30-31

⁶⁹ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), p. 262

⁷⁰ Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (2014), p. xviii; Parry, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship*, pp. 87-88

⁷¹ For biographical details, see <https://gufaculty360.georgetown.edu/s/contact/00336000014RbJ4AAK/john-esposito> and <https://acmcu.georgetown.edu/profile/john-esposito/> (last accessed on 12th February, 2025)

⁷² Parry, “On Reading John Esposito’s Islam—The Straight Path”, *Greater Kashmir*, 14th January, 2021, p. 7; Parry, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship*, pp. 213-18

⁷³ Esposito, *Islam—The Straight Path* (2016), pp. 1-36

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-91

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-147

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-193

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-258

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 232-244, 245-256

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-306

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-269

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 274-287

⁸² Faisal Islam and Zahid H. Bukhari, “Islam 101: A Survey of ‘Introduction to Islam’ Courses in American Colleges and Universities”, in Ahmad, Bukhari and Nyang, eds., *Observing the Observer* (2012): 178-218, pp. 179, 190

⁸³ Bennett, *Studying Islam*, p. 22; Clinton Bennett, “Chronology”, in Clinton Bennett, ed., *The Bloomsbury Companion to Islamic Studies* (London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013): 283-310, p. 306; Lawrence, in *Cont. Islam* (2, 1, 2008), p. 88

⁸⁴ “Review: Books in Brief: Reviewed Work(s): Political Islam, World Politics and Europe by Tibi, Bassam; Islam: The Straight Path, by Esposito, John L.; Anthropology’s Politics: Disciplining the Middle East by Deeb, Lara, and Jessica Winegar”. *Arab Studies Quarterly* [ASQ], 38, 4 (Fall 2016): 728-731, pp. 729-30

⁸⁵ Hughes, *Situating Islam*, p. 84

⁸⁶ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), p. 254

⁸⁷ Parray, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship*, p. 218

⁸⁸ For biographical details, see <https://isrme.org/daniel-w-brown/> and <https://www.wiley.com/en-it/A+New+Introduction+to+Islam%2C+3rd+Edition-p-9781118953464> (last accessed on 12th February, 2025)

⁸⁹ Daniel W. Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 1st ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004)

⁹⁰ Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam* (2017), p. xvii

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 336

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xviii

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-17, esp. pp. 16-17

⁹⁶ Scharbrodt, in *MJR* (10, 1, August 2005), p. 3

⁹⁷ Diego Sarrio, “Review: Brown, Daniel W., *A New Introduction to Islam* (2nd edition), Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA 2009, 341 pp.”, *Islamochristiana*, 35 (2009): 333-336, p. 333

⁹⁸ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), p. 261

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 261-62

¹⁰⁰ Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam* (2017), pp. xviii, 74, 89, 90, 120

¹⁰¹ Parray, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021), p. 269. Cf. pp. 260, 261

¹⁰² Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (2014), p. 79; Parray, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa*, (6, 2, 2021), p. 261

¹⁰³ Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (2014), p. 405

¹⁰⁴ Scharbrodt, in *MJR* (10, 1, August 2005), p. 3

¹⁰⁵ Waines, in *BSOAS* (75, 2, 2012), p. 383

¹⁰⁶ Parray, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa*, (6, 2, 2021), p. 269

¹⁰⁷ For biographical details, see <https://lsa.umich.edu/middleeast/people/faculty/alknysh.html> and <https://www.routledge.com/Islam-in-Historical-Perspective/Knysh/p/book/9780367715809> (last accessed on 12th February, 2025)

¹⁰⁸ Alexander Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective*. 1st ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall and Pearson Publishers, 2011)

¹⁰⁹ Alexander Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017)

¹¹⁰ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective*, 3rd ed. (2025), pp. 1-3, 3-4

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 390-412

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 391, 406

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹¹⁴ Waines, in *BSOAS* (75, 2, 2012), p. 384

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 383

¹¹⁶ Parry, *21st Century Trends and Approaches in Islamic Scholarship*, p. 222

¹¹⁷ Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2025), p. 3

¹¹⁸ Parry, “How to Rethink Islamic History as a Civilization?”, *Kashmir Life*, 24th May, 2025

¹¹⁹ P. Schrode, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), p. 266

¹²⁰ Parry, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021), p. 268

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 269

¹²² P. Schrode, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), pp. 266, 267

¹²³ Parry, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021), pp. 269-70; Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (2025), pp. 1-3; P. Schrode, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), p. 266

¹²⁴ Parry, “Contemporary Western Scholarship on Islam”, *Analisa* (6, 2, 2021), p. 270

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 268. See also the universities/ courses cited in note 32. Moreover, in response to this author’s email query, dated 26th May, 2025, concerning the ranking of these books, Prof. Marcia Hermansen (Theology Department, *Loyola University Chicago*, USA) noted that Knysh’s book adopts “a historical approach” with a lot of detailed content, while Brown’s work is notable for its “use of current research” but is deemed “offensive” because of its disregard for Muslim sensitivities. Denny’s book adopts a “religious studies approach”, while Esposito’s work is “more about politics—[and is] thin on religion”. A similar email correspondence, dated 27th May, 2025, with Prof. Natana J. DeLong-Bas (*Boston College*, USA), who has also authored *Islam: A Living Faith* (Minnesota: Anselm Academic, 2018), indicated that Esposito’s book is “more political and contemporary in [its] coverage”; in contrast, Hillenbrand’s is characterized as “medievalist” with less emphasis on the “contemporary era”. (The author acknowledges their responses and insights with gratitude).

¹²⁶ It is noteworthy to mention that in his ‘Further Reading’, Roberto Tottoli, *Islam: An Advanced Introduction*, 1st ed. (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 117-120, esp. p. 117, identifies the works of Denny, Esposito, Andrew Rippin, and Brown as “most significant in terms of contents and diffusion” in the list of “introductions to Islam available to English readers.”

¹²⁷ For biographical details, see <https://gufaculty360.georgetown.edu/s/contact/00336000014TlbDAAW/tamara-sonn> (last accessed on 12th February, 2025)

¹²⁸ Akbar S. Ahmed, “Foreword”, in Sonn, *Islam*, p. xi

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xiii

¹³⁰ Sonn, *Islam*, p. xvi

¹³¹ Tamara Sonn, *Islam: History, Religion, and Politics* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), pp. 139-194

¹³² Professor Akbar Ahmed, “Foreword”, in Sonn, *Islam* (2016), pp. ix-x

¹³³ For biographical details, see <https://edwebprofiles.ed.ac.uk/profile/carole-hillenbrand> and <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/fellows/carole-hillenbrand-FBA/> (last accessed on 12th February, 2025). See also, Yasir Suleiman, ed., *Living Islamic History: Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010)

¹³⁴ Hillenbrand, *Introduction to Islam*, pp. 9, 20

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-188

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 17

¹³⁷ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), pp. 256, 257

¹³⁸ Sanni, in *MWBR* (37, 2, 2017), p. 26

¹³⁹ For biographical details, see <https://www.colorado.edu/rilst/frederick-denny> and <https://www.routledge.com/Introduction-to-Islam/Denny/p/book/9780138144777> (last accessed on 12th February, 2025)

¹⁴⁰ Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (2016), p. xi

¹⁴¹ Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam*, 1st ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985), pp. vii, viii

¹⁴² Islam and Bukhari, “Islam 101...”, in Ahmad, Bukhari and Nyang, eds., *Observing the Observer*, p. 190

¹⁴³ P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016), pp. 252, 253, 266; Hughes, *Situating Islam*, p. 89; Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (2014), p. 405; Elizabeth G. Burr, “Learning to Teach Islam as a Non-Muslim in the Twin Cities”, *Teaching Theology and Religion [TTR]*, 8, 3 (2005): 155-163

¹⁴⁴ Burr, in *TTR* (8,3, 2005), p. 157

¹⁴⁵ For an overview of the list of introductory works, see Lowin, in *JoR* (86, 1, 2006): 164-66; Lawrence, in *Cont. Islam* (2, 1, 2008): 85-89; Waines, in *BSOAS* (75, 2, 2012): 382-84; P. Schröde, in *Religion* (46, 2, 2016): 247-268; Wolf, in *JIS* (28, 2, May 2017): 221-224; Kathryn Kueny, “[Review] *Islam: An Advanced Introduction*. By Roberto Tottoli. London: Routledge, 2020. ...”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 81, 2 (October 2022): 433-434. There are also few translated introductions, such as Tariq Ramadan, *Islam: The Essentials* (Penguin, 2017)/ *Introduction to Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), translated by Fred A. Reed; Roberto Tottoli, *Islam: An Advanced Introduction*, 1st ed. (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2020), originally published as *Introduzione all’Islam* in 2018 from Rome.