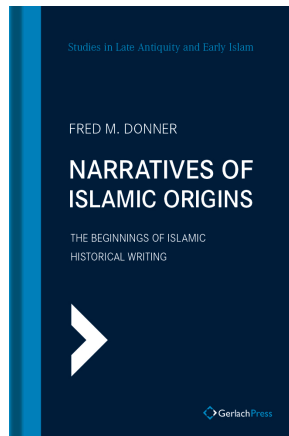


Fred M. Donner

NARRATIVES OF ISLAMIC ORIGINS

THE BEGINNINGS OF ISLAMIC HISTORICAL WRITING

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How and why did Muslims first come to write their own history? The author argues in this work that the Islamic historical tradition arose not out of idle curiosity, or through imitation of antique models, but as a response to a variety of challenges facing the Islamic community during its first several centuries.

In the first part, the author presents an overview of four approaches that have characterized scholarship on the literary sources, including the source-critical and the skeptical approaches, then it discusses historiographical problems raised by the Qurʾān and ḥadīth.

In the second part, the work analyzes major themes in historical narratives and presents formal and structural characteristics of early Islamic historiography. The monograph concludes with the proposition of a four-stage chronology regarding the evolution of historical writing in Arabic.

“ ... this book ... deserves to become the first that teachers introduce to students.” (Richard Bulliet)

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