

And when Abraham said, “My Lord, make this land secure,  
and turn me and my sons away from serving idols;  
my Lord, they have led astray many men.  
Then whoso follows me belongs to me;  
and whoso rebels against me, surely Thou art All-forgiving,  
All-compassionate.  
Our Lord, I have made some of my seed to dwell in a valley  
where is no sown land by Thy Holy House;  
Our Lord, let them perform the prayer,  
and make hearts of men yearn towards them,  
and provide them with fruits; haply they will be thankful.  
Our Lord, Thou knowest what we keep secret and what we pub-  
lish;  
from God nothing whatever is hidden in earth and heaven.  
Praise be to God, who has given me, though I am old, Ishmael  
and Isaac;  
surely my Lord hears the petition.  
My Lord, make me a performer of the prayer, and of my seed.  
Our Lord, and receive my petition.  
Our Lord, forgive Thou me and my parents, and the believers,  
upon the day when the reckoning shall come to pass.

Qur’ān, 14:35—41<sup>1</sup>

**Keith E. Small. *Textual Criticism and Qur’ān Manuscripts*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011. 209 pp.**

It is well known that the Biblical criticism, which has accumulated the achievements of semitology, classical philology, and many other fields of humanities, influenced greatly the development of Qur’ānic studies. It was the success of German Biblical studies that led to the pre-eminence of German scholars in the study of the Qur’ān (G. Flügel, T. Nöldeke, F. Schwally, G. Bergsträsser, O. Pretzl and many others), a trend established in the nineteenth century. Forces and resources that Biblical Studies have historically accumulated and continue to accumulate are incomparable to that of Qur’ānic studies. For many decades the latter has been able to use methodological approaches and achievements from Biblical

Studies to address its own critical problems. An excellent confirmation of this is a capital work of Rev. Dr. Keith E. Small, Visiting Lecturer and Associate Research Fellow at London School of Theology<sup>2</sup>, dedicated to the least-studied period in the history of the Qur’ān.

Until now the history of the Qur’ān’s textual establishment has not been studied and described properly. The research and findings of recent years convincingly demonstrate that the works of medieval Muslim authorities as well as works based on them by European scholars reveal only a part of a significantly more diverse and contradictory history of the Sacred text’s fixation. A discussion of J. Wansbrough’s “Qur’ānic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation” by such specialists as A. Rippin, J. van Ess, E. Ullendorff, R. Paret, L. Nemoy, W. A. Graham, R. Serjeant, G. H. A. Juynboll, I. J. Boulatta, E. Wagner, K. Rudolph, and others<sup>3</sup> have shown

<sup>1</sup> Translation by A. J. Arberry.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Small has taught at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in Britain and internationally. In addition to his academic credentials he has nearly twenty years of ministry experience to Muslims in the UK.

<sup>3</sup> A. Rippin, “Literary Analysis of Qur’ān, Tafsīr, and Sīra: the Methodologies of John Wansbrough”, *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, ed. by R. Martin (Phoenix, 1985), p. 228, n. 4.