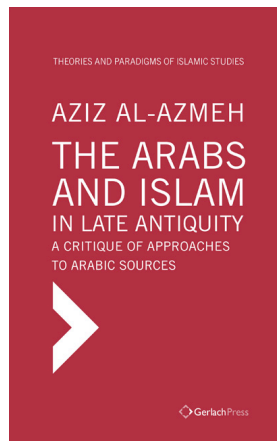


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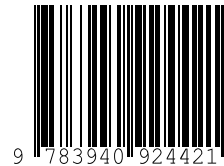
AZIZ AL-AZMEH

**THE ARABS AND ISLAM IN LATE ANTIQUITY
A CRITIQUE OF APPROACHES TO ARABIC SOURCES**



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This study is a critique of Arabic textual sources for the history of the Arabs in late antique times, during the centuries immediately preceding Muhammad and up to and including the Umayyad period.

Its purpose is to consider the value and relevance of these sources for the reconstruction of the social, political, cultural and religious history of the Arabs as they were still pagans, and to reconstruct the emergence of Muhammadan and immediately post-Muhammadan religion and polity.

For this religion (including the composition and canonisation of the Qur'an), the label *Paleo-Islam* has been coined, in order to lend historical specificity to this particular period, distinguishing it from what came before and what was to come later, all the while indicating continuities that do not, in themselves, belie the specificity attributed to this period of very rapid change. This is argued further in Aziz Al-Azmeh's *The Emergence of Islam in Late Antiquity: Allah and His People* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), to which this book is both a companion and a technical preface.

Al-Azmeh illustrates his arguments through examination of orality and literacy, transmission, ancient Arabic poetry, the corpus of Arab heroic lore (*ayyam*), the early narrative, the Qur'an, and other literary sources.

The work includes a very extensive bibliography of the works cited.

This is the first book in the Gerlach Press series *Theories and Paradigms of Islamic Studies*.

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