2. 'Islamic Civilisation' as a (Medieval) Problem
The Idea of Islamic Modernity in *Islamwissenschaft*

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Prologue: Historical versus Typological Approaches to Periodisation—in Response to Jörn Rüsen's *Zeitverlaufsvorstellung*

I often begin my history classes by telling students that they are, without being aware of it, already historians of a kind. They have some version, however unarticulated, of the story of their societies, picked up from their education, from movies and table talk. They have some sense of the story of their own families from received lore, family conversations and, at the tail end, their own direct experience. They are budding experts on the story of their own lives. They may even have some inchoate understanding as to the way all these stories connect to one another. My hope, beginning with this amateurish gambit, is to shake students out of the entrenched habit of viewing history as a forsaken land of alien dates and facts; to encourage them to approach its study as implicating their own stories and lives. In his opening essay in this volume, Jörn Rüsen asks historians to move in the opposite direction, to consider that the discrete, expertly researched histories they produce must be understood as part of a temporal whole, namely, as part of the total temporal experience of their societies and ultimately humanity. Historians must therefore consider their work as part of temporal experience as a totality, encompassing all the ways in which time and change acquire meaning, all the ways in which "chronology [is transformed] into history."[1] Rüsen refers to this totality—interpreted as an existential and anthropological condition whereby temporal

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1 See the chapter of Jörn Rüsen, "Making Periodisation Possible: The Concept of the Course of Time (*Zeitverlaufvorstellung*) in Historical Thinking" in this volume, here 17.

experience is constituted as historical meaning—as the conception of the course of time (*Zeitverlaufsvorstellung*).[2]

In his brief sketch of this totality, Rüsen begins with an analytical outline of the different levels involved in the transition from temporal experience to historical meaning. At the first level, there is the "level of existential experience of time." This most basic level refers to our threefold experience of time as contingency in the present, premised, on the one hand, on a sense of change (of before and after) in the past, and then on the opening, depending on how such change is understood, of a horizon of expectations for the future. At the next level, there are the concrete ways in which "temporal change in the past" is thematised, conceptualised and periodised; examples here would be medieval/modern (modernisation) or, in the Islamic context, *jahili-yyah* (ignorance)/Islam (prophetic revelation). Next, there are the distinct "temporal perspectives" which allow more generally for the movement of time as a whole to be thematised/conceptualised and so for change to become meaningful; examples of this would be the idea of time as cyclical, as decline or as progress.[3] Finally, there is the level which encompasses all of the comprehensive ways in which temporal change can be made historically meaningful. Rüsen argues that these comprehensive modalities of constructing historical meaning together constitute the totality of *Zeitverlaufs-vorstellung*, and that they can be captured, on the logical level, by way of a four-fold typology. According to this typology, history can be presented either as 'traditional,' 'exemplary,' 'genetic' or 'critical' types of narrative.[4] In traditional narrative, time is immobilised by an eternal meaning transcending all change that plots history as a continuous flow from a universal, normative origin. In exemplary narrative, time is again immobilised, though now not through an original eternal meaning, but by being flattened into a uniform space in which a universal canon of rules or lessons of human behaviour, judiciously discerned from and applied to specific historical examples, plots history. In genetic narrative, temporal change assumes a dynamic force in which the past, driving beyond itself to an unprecedented future, the old, transformed into the new, plots history as development or progress. Finally, in critical narrative, existing historical narratives are disrupted, contradicted and re-evaluated so that the discontinuity comes to plot history as counter-history. According to Rüsen, given these four ideal types of historicising time, we are in a position to logically reconstruct how temporal change comes to be experienced as historically meaningful in any distinct or discrete historical phenomenon.

In this essay I will historically examine all that was intellectually involved in the attempts of European Orientalist scholars, who pioneered the new discipline of

2   See Rüsen, "Periodisation."
3   See Rüsen, "Periodisation," 16-17.
4   See Rüsen, "Periodisation," 25.

Islamwissenschaft at the turn of the twentieth century, to periodise Islamic history. My aim is not only to show how these attempts at periodisation founded *Islamwissenschaft*. I will make clear that the Islamicist periodisation of Islamic history entailed contestations as to historical consciousness and temporal perspective between (modern) European Orientalists and the projected Muslim protagonists of (the medieval) 'Islamic civilisation' they studied. But I will also demonstrate that the periodisation (meaning, the modernisation) schema in *Islamwissenschaft* became itself the site of profound contestation and collision between Islamicist scholars, whose own historical experience drove them to conceive the character of the modern subject and of modernity as a whole in fundamentally divergent ways. In that sense, I can only applaud Professor Rüsen's counsel to historians, that they not lose sight of the fact that their work can only be understood as part of the larger context in which their societies come to historicise and thus experience their time as meaningful. However, I begin with an extended treatment of Rüsen's *Zeitverlaufsvorstellung*, his account of how chronology becomes history, because I find myself in fundamental disagreement with the typological analysis of how historicisation and periodisation become possible and how they should be studied. In contraposition to his typological account, I here propose an alternative, properly historical path to the study of historicisation and periodisation.

I am juxtaposing Rüsen's typological approach with a properly historical one, because the idea of making history out of time, as an existential/anthropological condition that can be logically exhausted by four ideal types of history making, strikes me as altogether ahistorical. But why should we be worried about ahistorical accounts of history making? The usual method of criticising typological explanations is to highlight some trenchant example, in this case, a historical phenomenon, that would serve to undermine their analytic architectonic. Let's take, for instance, prophetic revelation. According to Rüsen, it is *the* existential experience of time that a contingent present fixates on a given understanding of past change in order to open a horizon of expectations for the future. But, if we take the temporality of prophetic revelation seriously, we would have to admit that in it the future is not open; it is rather already determined (revealed) as a space of prophetic or apocalyptic judgment, the given understanding of which decides and thus makes clear the character of a contingent past while opening the present as a horizon of expectations as to the past it will become. I can now imagine a reader stopping to do the mental gymnastics necessary in order to be able to read prophetic revelation, all the same, in terms of Rüsen's analytical typology. This is altogether unnecessary. This is because Rüsen admits that the four ideal types of narrating history, in all their logical permutations and combinations, suffice to reconstruct all the extant comprehensive temporal perspectives in history that constitute the totality of *Zeitverlaufsvorstellung*. As such, he admits that these four types of narrative together

articulate the existential/anthropological condition, which makes it first possible for time to be periodised and experienced as historically meaningful. He must then also admit that the particular methods of narrating history (not to mention all the existing historical narratives to be reconstructed on their basis) cannot be considered veridical in their own terms.

Take the traditional and exemplary types of narrative: they are explicitly said to provide meaning by immobilising time, that is, by refusing the temporal change that is presumably at the heart of our existential experience of time. Traditional narratives are said to go so far as to eternalise time, that is, to deny that any fundamental change occurs. But the very existence of the other types of narrative, their various historical permutations and combinations, and not least the necessary proposition of temporal change in the existential experience of time as the sole means of explaining and reconstructing all such historical narration, make clear that fundamental historical change is real and has occurred. That in turn means that while traditional historical narratives may be existentially and anthropologically explained, their historical meaning cannot be taken seriously as they cannot be considered to be true. This situation is comparable to that of a typological account of religion that would explain how religious experience only becomes existentially and anthropologically possible by first articulating the ideal types of such experience. Such an account may explain the existence of traditional (or dogmatic) religions as an anthropological cum existential possibility, but the very plurality of such religions, not to mention the existence of other types of religious experience, would have to lead to the denial of their claims. In calling Rüsen's typological account of historicisation ahistorical, I am thus saying more than that it appeals to narratives that are admitted to be ideal types and so can only produce, to put it in his terms, a kind of second-order 'exemplary narrative.' So, to spell it out, it is not just that his typology deploys a universal cannon of history making, abstracted from and applied to the totality of examples of historical meaning construction, thus constituting history as a uniform space. Rüsen's *Zeitverlaufsvorstellung* is ahistorical in a much more radical sense. For its ideal narrative types may explain how historical meaning is made possible only to the extent that they refuse to take any existing historical meaning or periodisation seriously on its own terms.

While the ontological stakes are different, the point I am making has some similarities with the distinction made between primary and secondary qualities in the Scientific Revolution. According to this distinction, sensory aspects of our everyday experience of objects, such as colour, odour, taste or sound are secondary qualities because they cannot be said to reside in the objects themselves. By contrast, the primary qualities, qualities like extension, size, weight and motion that were subject to mathematical measurement and formulation, were said to be factual aspects of objects themselves. Secondary qualities were accordingly explained in terms of the

interaction of the primary qualities of objects with our sense organs.[5] In other words, the interaction of matter in motion with further matter in motion explained the possibility of our sensory experience of everyday objects, even as it 'discredited' this experience in its own terms. The seventeenth century distinction is made directly relevant and comparable to our case by the great anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss, who argued in *The Savage Mind* that its two components—ordinary sensory experience of objects versus structural, mathematical formulation—encompass two altogether distinct modalities of scientific explanation. The first, our everyday sensory experience, he said, constituted a "science of the concrete" that was prevalent until the dawn of modern science: this mode of explanation, characteristic of the untrained human mind as such, registered the sensory language of objects as signs amongst the totality of which it sought to introduce coherence, a coherence that was mythological and produced meaning.[6] The second, that of structural, analytic formulation, was the explanatory mode characteristic of the modern sciences: it made itself capable of the systematic reproduction of what it explained and thus produced results. According to Lévi-Strauss, the modern sciences, after having engaged primarily with the world of objects were now circling back to explain the human sensory experience of objects, that is, to explain the science of the concrete and so the human mind (which *was* the 'savage mind').[7] This was to be the crucial role of anthropology. I have accordingly moved to Lévi-Strauss, because he too was concerned with the anthropological explanation of how meaning becomes possible; how the human experience of time and change is transformed into meaning.

But Lévi-Strauss provides for a cautionary tale. This is because his anthropological account of how the human mind creates meaning had as its primary target thinkers like Rüsen, who think there is something anthropologically (or for that matter existentially) primordial about history: that the translation of temporal experience and change into historical meaning is somehow an inherent aspect of the human condition.[8] To counter such thinking, Lévi-Strauss highlighted the situation of pre-historical (so-called 'primitive') cultures, whose experience of time and change was certainly regulated

5   The distinction between primary versus secondary qualities was most famously articulated by John Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," Book 2 "Of Ideas" (1690) in *The Works of John Locke in Nine Volumes,* vol. 1 (London: Rivington, 1824), 109–121. But it can already be found in Galileo and Descartes. See the excerpts from Galileo's "The Assayer" (1623), in *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, ed. Stillman Drake (New York: Doubleday, 1957), 274–279 and René Descartes, *Selections from 'The Principles of Philosophy'* (1644) , trans. by John Veitch. Gutenberg Text, chap. LXVI–LXXIV, accessed September 1, 2021, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4391/4391.txt.

6   See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 1–35.

7   See Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* 9–22.

8   *The Savage Mind* concluded with a heated critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's dialectical (historical) approach in these terms; see Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* 245–269, particularly 256–262.

to produce meaning, but without any need of history. Writing of such cultures of totemic classification and mythology, he described how they, like so-called traditional cultures, also eternalised time but went so much further in doing so that they did not even register change as events (history), which nonetheless were called on to preserve a primordial meaning. Instead, changes that might constitute events were visited on the totemic ancestors that mirrored and explained reality.[9] Rather than acknowledge changes in the world as events that might accrue historical meaning, totemic cultures accommodated change by updating their totemic classifications and mythology, all the while maintaining an untroubled sense of them as primordial and eternal. So, one could make change meaningful by resetting language and mythology, without having to admit change as historical event and meaning.

Lévi-Strauss did not deny that historical cultures (like ours) experience change in terms of historical events and meaning. But he argued that the continuity, coherence and meaning we experience in the course of historical events is no less mythological than the totemic order of pre-historic cultures. For the historical meaning we assign to events is *always wrong* (in precisely the same sense that, from the perspective of modern science, our everyday sensory experience of objects is wrong).[10] This, Lévi-Strauss said, is because there is no such thing as a continuous totality of time and history. Rather, what we call history is in fact composed of discrete *chronological* series, starting from sequences that can be tabulated at the level of events (hourly, daily, annual); then *chronological* series sequenced at the level of centuries, then of millennia. It is mere illusion then to think that these series might be collapsed into a totality, because they in fact constitute different orders and types of explanation. The information is richest at the level of events, but the capacity for systematic explanation the poorest. The higher up or lower down the *chronological* series one travels—up to human and biological development across millennia, down to the infra-transformations in brain, psyche and behaviour—the more one leaves the lived meaning of events to arrive at processes subject to the schematic explanations of modern science: anthropology and biology at the upper *chronological* series, psychology at the lower. History, Lévi-Strauss accordingly argued, demonstrated exactly how the sensory science of the concrete yielded to the systematic explanations of modern science; it proved that one had to put aside meaning (including historical meaning) in order to understand, on a scientific level, how it becomes possible.[11] As he notoriously put it, "As we say of certain careers, history may lead to anything, provided you get out of it."[12]

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9   See Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 228–244.
10   See Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* 253–257.
11   See Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* 257–262.
12   Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind,* 262.

Again, why worry about ahistorical accounts of historicisation and periodisation? Because they generally end up trying to explain historical meaning by refusing to take this meaning seriously, that is, they rob history of the meaning that it has. And the more 'anthropological' they become, the more they will insist we abandon history altogether. I close this prologue by referring to another author and text, Nietzsche's "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," that seems in rather ironic fashion to have been an inspiration for Rüsen's typology. Nietzsche's discussion of the three modes of history (actually the three *uses of history for life*), i.e. monumental, antiquarian and critical history, have their respective counterparts in Rüsen's elaboration of the exemplary, traditional and critical types of historical narrative.[13] What Nietzsche says of the "historical men" of his time, who put their trust in history as a developmental process and of the Hegelian obsession with the world-historical process, mirrors Rüsen's description of the genetic type of narrative.[14] However, Nietzsche's aim was something like the opposite of cataloguing all the logical types of narrating human experience that together exhausted how it might become historically meaningful. He talked instead of how the different styles of history, each in radically divergent manner, made history meaningful for life: how each fed its own desperate need; primed its own particular course of action; *took the meaning of its history dead serious*; created new experiences with it; created new life. Monumental history served the search for glory and greatness; antiquarian history made for the pious preservation of patrimony; critical history tore down the old to create the new. But each of these styles of history was equally dangerous for life when turned against its use for it: monumental history could dissimulate greatness to crush any new attempt at it; antiquarian history could crush its sacred roots by preventing the reinvention that kept them alive; critical history could become mere destruction by crushing the aura of illusion which all new life needs to live.

Nietzsche though, argued that history became above all a calamity for life when it lost its connection with it: when all histories were piled into a totality that allowed each only a relative meaning and none a living significance and seriousness; when all styles and manners of history were thrown together to define human experience as historical rather than thinking through the historical meaning of our time; when history became a science; when humanity became subject to a "historical education"; then history's meaning for life—its capacity to create a future—was lost.[15] When the floodgates of history opened in a hypertrophy of memory, when distinct and incompatible cultures from all times became simultaneously present and so models

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13 See Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [1874]), 67–77.
14 See Nietzsche, "Uses and Disadvantages," 65–66, 104–108.
15 See Nietzsche, "Uses and Disadvantages," 77–87.

only (i.e. types), but not models for life, then any satisfying synthesis allowing for the creation of a coherent sense of self and style of life became impossible. With no convincing cultural identity on the horizon, a breach opened between the external sphere, now abused as artificial and conventional, and the internal sphere that turned into the inward site of the authentic self. But the endless search for the true self through all the relative meanings of history turned the self ultimately into at best an actor and dissimulator. In other words, authenticity becomes a value when it is no longer possible.[16] The great irony of Rüsen's typological account of *Zeitverlaufsvorstellung,* is that it too views itself as responding to a desperate present need. In the face of an increasingly post-historical culture that views history as meaningless and in the face of an increasingly global humanity, Rüsen sees the cure in the existential realisation that human experience is inherently historical.[17] But, if Nietzsche is to be believed, this is more of the disease than the cure, for the mere concession that humanity is historical robs us of the capacity to ask how our history is actually meaningful today.

In this essay on the Islamicist periodisation of Islamic history, I pursue accordingly a historical rather than a typological path to understanding the formation of historical periods and meaning. A historical approach to historicisation entails taking the historical periodisations one finds seriously, namely, as meaningful *because* they are veridical. Understood historically, historical periodisation becomes not a game played by historians, but a conceptual key to the experienced and practiced reality of the cultural context in which it is historically consolidated. Accordingly, fundamental contestations of historical periodisations and the meaning they encompass, the eruption of new periodisations, would signal broader shifts in historical experience and reality. Such contestations and shifts could be intra-cultural phenomena (as was the collapse of Christendom). Or, they could be the consequence of cultural encounters, which so often begin with trials of cultural consolidation and end with historical transformation. The periodisation of Islamic history in *Islamwissenschaft,* I will show, was a case in point that began with the assimilation (i.e. attempted modernisation) of Islam and ended with a contestation of 'modernity.' In all its facets, historicisation and periodisation, taken seriously, become the means of writing a history of reality, once it is accepted that reality is historical in character. Shifts in historical periodisation signal shifts in reality. We may understand the history of the modern world by thinking through all that was involved in the emergence of the periodisation, of the Medieval and the Modern, their universalisation and ongoing contestation and transformation. We will not arrive at a historical understanding of the modern world by weighing all the constellations of historical narrative types it may include. We might understand ourselves historically by thinking through the use of our own periodisations

16   See Nietzsche, "Uses and Disadvantages," 81–82, 84–86.
17   See Rüsen, "Periodisation."

today (a project to which this volume is attempting to make a contribution). We will not understand ourselves historically by intoning that we are human because we are historical. It is often argued that a historical approach to historical meaning would inevitably end in the aporias of historical relativism. The opposite though is true. Not taking historical meaning seriously brings about historical relativism by treating all such meanings as simultaneously and relatively the same as, say, all types of an anthropological conditionality.

Islam as a Problem—Introduction

In 1910, Carl Heinrich Becker, a young pioneering scholar in the emergent field of *Islamwissenschaft*, founded the journal, *Der Islam*, the first organ committed to the discipline in Germany. Becker was himself the first Islamicist to achieve an academic chair within the *Kaiserreich* (at the newly founded Hamburg Kolonialinstitut in 1908). The gathering academic institutionalisation of the Islamicist field Becker represented, was not though a merely German phenomenon. *Der Islam*, still active today, was one of a flurry of such lasting 'Islam journals' that were founded in the decade before the Great War.[18] The contemporary academic reader, conversant with the debates about Orientalism in the last decades, might quickly suspect that this moment of consolidation of a distinctly Islamicist focus in Orientalist scholarship constitutes one of the pivotal junctures for the birth of the theologocentric reduction of the history and culture of Muslims, to an essentialised 'Islam,' that would end in our own day in the idea of civilisational clash between the West and Islam. One could then read this moment as part of the rise of *The Idea of the Muslim World*, the title of Cemil Aydin's recent work, in which he argues that this essentialised idea was first created by Europeans, and then fatefully (and tragically) appropriated by Muslims themselves in fighting European imperialism.[19] Such a reader though would do well to think through Becker's seminal essay, "Islam as a Problem," that programmatically introduced his journal

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18   These were, first, *Revue du Monde Musulman* (1906), then Becker's *Der Islam* (1910), then *The Moslem World* (1911), then the Russian *Mir Islama* (1912) and then *Die Welt des Islams* (1913), the organ of the newly founded *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde*. The phenomenon was well-noted at the time, and Georg Kampffmeyer (1864–1936) opened the pages of *Die Welt des Islams* by reviewing the development and pointing to what he took to be its larger meaning of a new discipline committed to engagement in the affairs of society. See G. Kampffmeyer, "Plane Perspicere," *Die Welt des Islams* 1 (1913): 1–6.

19   See Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

and the Islamicist discipline to the broader public.[20] Becker's essay speaks directly to the problem of essentialising diverse Muslim histories and cultures through 'Islam'; it speaks directly to contemporary sensitivities that drive people to speak of 'Muslim majority societies,' as opposed to the 'Muslim world.'[21]

Becker's essay began by making clear that his subject would be not the problems of the young Islamicist discipline, but rather "Islam as a Problem."[22] The problem of Islam for the disciplinary study of it was namely the problem of essentialisation, by which I mean the reduction of a historical subject or phenomenon to some ahistorical or transcendent essence. Becker asked what could possibly justify referring to the massive diversity in the religious, intellectual, cultural and political life of Muslims across the world and history simply under the rubric of 'Islam'? No one would speak of Abyssinian Christians and Protestant Christianity in one breath under the rubric of 'Christianity,' and expect to be taken seriously. But this was somehow deemed legitimate in the case of Islam.[23] Here, the religious life of Turks and Negros (and Becker meant directly to juxtapose cultivated versus primitive religion in the juxtaposition), the intellectual height of al-Gazali and the Sudanese Mahdi, not to mention the historical fate of such distinct races as the Aryans, Semites and Negroes were all to be covered by the general concept of "Islam" and "Islamic civilisation."[24] Becker's aim in the essay was in fact to produce an anti-essentialist historical analysis of Islamic history that would unmask how 'Islam' had come to encompass an essentialised concept. The sources of the essentialisation of Islam that Becker addressed were threefold. First, there was the European philological essentialisation of Islam, which viewed it as simply the product of Arab culture and the Semitic monotheistic spirit. Becker made it repeatedly clear that a proper historical understanding of the advent of an "Islamic civilisation" would make clear that with all of the Arabic impact and variations, it had become a

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20 C. H. Becker, "Der Islam als Problem" (1910), in *Islamstudien: Vom Werden und Wesen der Islamischen Welt*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1924), 1–23.

21 What I am calling 'essentialistion' could of course go in two different direction. On the one hand, one could essentialise Muslims by reducing them to their religious identity, namely, by assuming 'Islam' to be the total determinant of every aspect of their lives, of their diverse historical experience, of their highly varied social, cultural and political relations, all of which would thereby be reduced to some essence called 'Islamic society.' On the other hand, one could essentialise 'Islam' itself by assuming that it is exhausted by a given set of legal codes, authoritative practices or dogmatic pronouncements, namely, by depriving it, as a historical phenomenon, from the capacity for historical development.

22 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 1.

23 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 1.

24 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 1–2. A general concept becomes essentialist, when it serves to deprive the concepts within it from their own distinct historical identity and trajectory. Hence, 'Islam' and 'Islamic civilisation' become essentialist if used to claim that Indonesians and Moroccans are bound as 'Muslim societies,' to have the same destiny. The 'German nation' points to a distinct German historical experience; the 'Germanic race' supersedes it.

reality precisely through the demise of Arab dominance over it.[25] Islamic civilisation, he said, was more the consolidation of Near Eastern Hellenistic civilisation than any Arab outgrowth. As he famously put it, "without Alexander the Great, no Islamic civilization."[26] The other two sources of the essentialisation of Islam, were though a good deal more paradigmatic. They focused rather on the fact that 'Islam' encompassed not only a religion that united all Muslims across the world, but also a state ideal according to which legitimate sovereignty emanated from Islamic leadership as well as a unified civilisation, a "cultural whole" in which Muslims, despite their differences, saw themselves primarily as Muslims.[27] It was now a simple step to move from this, via the trio of an Islamic religion, state ideal and unitary civilisation, to the theologocentric conclusion that Islam as a religion stood behind the idea of the Islamic state and Islamic civilisation. This essentialised and essentially medieval theologocentric view had been that of Christendom, and the self-identified Christian standpoint, that viewed 'Islam' as the monolith enemy and Other. In this reading, Arab Muslims had created the Islamic state and civilisation by spreading Islam through the sword. In contrast, Becker argued that the theologocentric essentialisation of Islam had not been merely a Christian invention. Rather, traditional Islamic Orthodoxy itself viewed 'Islam' as determinative of all aspects of the life, history and culture of Muslims. In other words, it was 'Medieval Islam' that had created and maintained, above all, the notion of a Muslim world and polity driven in all that occurred in it through Islam.[28] Consequently, in this modernist reading the Modern signified the era of critical historical consciousness, while the Medieval evoked one of self-essentialisation, which is to say, the traditionalisation of all changes and developments that made them appear in the guise of a religious origin projected as transcendent.

In seeking to proffer a critical historical, post-essentialist perspective on Islamic history and "Islamic civilisation," Becker argued that many of the Islamic sources had to be read against the grain. Namely, the Islamic ideal and theory propagated within them had not in fact conformed to the actual social and cultural praxis, so that the two had to be understood not in their identity, but in how one had served to shape the other.[29] Becker's essay provided an outline of Islamic history that did not take the orthodox definition of Islam to be definitive of the idea of Islamic polities and of Islamic civilisation. Instead, he tried to show how the Islamic religion, the Islamic state ideal and Islamic civilisation, represented distinct historical constructions that had ultimately coalesced into an ideal unity through the consolidation of Islamic law

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25 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 9–15, 22–23.
26 Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 16.
27 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 2–3.
28 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 3–4.
29 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 4–6, 21–23.

and orthodoxy, despite the cultural and political contradictions between them, as well as the cultural and political contradictions that this idealised Islamic unity continued to mask. For example, religious propagation, Becker argued, had played no significant role in the Arab conquests and the expansion of what was in fact at first an 'Arab empire.' Rather, in the growth of the Medinese state, under the prophet Muhammad and his successors, 'Islam,' which had been a matter of religious enthusiasm in Mecca, came to serve as a label allowing for the unity, albeit fractured, of the Arab nation. This unity allowed for the last and most stupendous Semitic migration out of the Arabian peninsula, due to the adverse climactic and economic circumstances prevailing within it.[30] The national Arab glossing of 'Islam' at this point, Becker argued, was made clear by the fact that the fiscal health of the Umayyad state was predicated on the existence of tribute-paying non-Muslim masses. The religious Islamicisation of the 'Islamic empire' took in fact two to three centuries to consolidate itself.[31] "Islamic civilisation" was then neither an Arab phenomenon nor the creation of Islamic religious enthusiasm. Rather, it was in the de facto creation of a massive Islamic empire that encompassed the territories of the Near Eastern civilisations, formed under the aegis of Aramaic Hellenism and the Persian imperial heritage, that a new Islamic civilisation and synthesis emerged. As more and more of the culturally and intellectually more advanced non-Muslim subjects of the Caliphate converted to Islam and remade it in their own image; as the Abbasids adopted the practices of the religious bureaucratic empires of the Byzantines and Persians and so cultivated Islamicisation; and, as the economic unity and massive cultural mixing allowed by the united empire allowed the consolidation of a new Islamic heritage, which synthesised and put on a thoroughly new footing the Near Eastern heritage available to it, something called "Islamic civilisation" came into being.[32]

Becker's essay though argued that the unity of this "Islamic civilisation," was in fact an ideal, theoretical unity that did not enjoin or capture socio-cultural practice. Rather, it was a medieval unity, which under the cover a sacred, Islamic law, theologised and reified all reality, making 'Islam' into a means either of rationalising pressing realities or of reading the latter backwards into Islam. Hence, Becker argued that the Islamic state ideal of unified Muslim sovereignty had also been consolidated precisely when its actual reality had dissipated, though it had remained the language of legitimate Islamic governance into the present of his own time. In sum, the idea at the heart of the notion of "Islamic civilisation," that Islam is determinative of the social, cultural and political lives of Muslims, became normative with the consolidation of an Islamic Orthodoxy. However, the historical formation, development and

30 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 5–9.
31 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 6–7, 10.
32 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 12–21.

deployment of Islamic Orthodoxy itself proved that the religious strictures and laws it said constituted Islam functioned mostly as ideals that, acknowledged in the breach, served (in 'medieval' manner) ideologically to sanction social and political realities from which they diverged. So, the upshot of Becker's analysis of the 'problem of Islam,' namely of the essentialisation of Islam was the problematic survival of "Islamic civilisation" as a medieval reality. One could speak coherently of an "Islam" and "Islamic civilisation" as such, because Muslims themselves still harboured an essentialised view of its ideal unity. The problem of Islam, accordingly, captured the problematic 'medieval' self-understanding of Muslims, which, Becker argued was now in the process of being challenged through modern liberal and national cultural consciousness.[33] If one followed Becker's logic, the conclusion could only be that the problem of Islam was the problem of Islamic modernity. The logic of *Islamwissenschaft*, in this reading, could only be that of an auto-destruction. It would survive until an Islamic Modernity would dispel the medieval ideal unity of "Islamic civilisation" in Islamic Orthodoxy and allow Muslims to see themselves in their full cultural and national differences.

The task of this essay is to follow through on the complex ways in which the new discipline of *Islamwissenschaft* came, at the turn of the twentieth century, to apply the European historicist logic of 'Medieval and Modern' to the Islamic heritage. My argument will be that the globalisation of these categories was a good deal more interesting than has thus far been envisioned. I begin my analysis by way of the post-colonial critique of Orientalism and the debates on the character of European modernity and historicism to which they have led. In the second section, I argue that the terms of the Orientalism debates have served more to obfuscate than to illuminate the logic of early *Islamwissenschaft*, whose roots must rather be sought in the nineteenth century European 'science of religion,' *Religionswissenschaft*. It was in this nineteenth century European study of 'religion' that I argue the categories of the 'Medieval' and 'Modern' achieved a distinctly religious historicist rather than merely secular historicist meaning. In the third section, focusing on the work of Hungarian Jewish Orientalist, Ignaz Goldziher, who was already in his own time widely regarded as the founder of *Islamwissenschaft*, I demonstrate that his reformist application of the categories of the 'Medieval' and 'Modern' inaugurated the anti-essentialist, anti-philological and anti-theologocentric Islamicist discipline outlined in Becker's essay. In this guise, I argue that Goldziher's religious application of the European historicist categories of 'Medieval' and 'Modern' to Islam, was meant to show that it was a reformed Islamic monotheism that would be the telos of European cultural modernisation and the religious progress it made possible. Goldziher, thus, made of European historicism an Islamic historicism with Islam as the rightful telos of the universal history of humanity. In a final section, I argue that the ubiquitous "problem of Islam," namely, the question

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33 See Becker, "Der Islam als Problem," 21–22.

in *Islamwissenschaft* of Islamic Modernity and how Modernity was to be globalised, led C. H. Becker, in the course of the Jihad debate in the field, during WWI, to the idea of an Ottoman *Sonderweg*. The idea of a distinct Ottoman Islamic modern path and of plural modern trajectories thus ultimately undermined the historicist idea of European progress as normative, and put all the plural modern paths on the same temporal path. Hence, this essay shows that while 'Modernity' began as a European project, its globalisation served to make it a contested site, both in terms of who could genuinely and fully represent it as well as in what it could ultimately be said to mean.

European Modernity, Orientalism, Islam

The notion of Modernity, of a 'New Age,' is a European historical schematisation, a *chronotype*, derived from European experience. However, in line with the universalist, globalising imperative of this schema, it has become a global condition that confronts all cultural trajectories across the world. From this contemporary transcultural perspective in turn, the idea of Modernity has itself become a highly contested site. Some say that we have never been modern, that Modernity has always been only rhetoric, not practice.[34] Others add that the rhetoric of Modernity has been the western and European imperial ideology, imposed on non-western peoples and civilisations in order to delegitimise and disinherit them of their distinct trajectories and cultural vocabularies.[35] An entirely different reaction has been to say that those non-western civilisations already carried the 'Modern' trajectory within themselves,

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34 See, for instance, Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993 [1991]).

35 The most important representative of this line of argument, going so far as to posit the 'Orient' and 'Orientals' as the very creation of the invidious, racist historicism of modern Europe, is Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Afterword, in: Said, *Orientalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). A more eloquent and subtle assessment of modernist historicism as a European imperialist rhetoric of dispossession is Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Chakrabarty argues that the historicist schema, which made European developments into the markers of universal human progress served not only the colonial project by relegating the natives to the past and entrusting their future to European wards who knew the only path forward. The imperialist ethos of such modernist rhetoric impacted equally those on the left, and the natives who viewed, in the allegedly normative progress made by Europeans, a trajectory inexorably ending in universal equality and justice. As the European historicist frame only allowed the natives to view themselves in terms of lacking and inadequacy, they could only move forward and gain autonomy over themselves by becoming Europe, namely, by forsaking themselves, a perfect paradigm of dispossession. See Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (see this note, supra)*, 6–8, 30–42.

whether realized or not.[36] In this light, another move is to say that Modernity was not globalised by Europeans, but rather was from the start a global reality in which the Europeans were themselves participants.[37] As an intellectual historian of modern Europe, I would argue that the idea of 'Modernity' must be analysed in terms of the emergence of a specific historicist consciousness in seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, and its consolidation within the European Enlightenment. It would be better to think through the contours and repercussions of this historicist consciousness than to deny its existence. On the other hand, it is equally useless to dispute that particularly in nineteenth century Europe, this modern historicist consciousness was not merely a periodisation schema that placed all human cultural experience on the same universal historical plane. Here Modernity was European; it identified and demarcated Europe from the backward non-European peoples that were judged in terms of their incapacity to embody modern historical consciousness and who were thus consigned to the past.

These are no doubt some of the considerations that drove Edward Said, in his critique of European Orientalism, to argue that Orientalist discourse was no mere exoticising pastime or recondite scholarly undertaking. The prevalent academic perspective remains Said's critique of Orientalist scholarship and of *Islamwissenschaft* in particular, as an essentialising, imperialist discourse that served to objectify and

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36 This tendency is extremely widespread and varied. One can find it in the best scholarship of those seeking to bolster the prospects of peoples building a non-European future. Goitein, for example, in his famous book on the Arab/Jewish historical symbiosis, optimistically eyed a new, better beginning for both peoples by charaterising their development as "primitive democracies." See Shlomo Dov Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contacts Through the Ages* (New York: Schocken, 1955), 27–34. One can see it in the great non-European thinkers and politicians that ushered in the post-colonial era, as in the case of the philosopher, later stateman and first vice-president of India, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who assured his countrymen that republican self-rule was not for them a foreign import, but part of their founding patrimony and genius. See Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (see note 35), 10. But, the impulse has throughout also yielded easily to the risible and pathetic. Examples of this are legion, but to stay with one of the more recent cases in India; the government spokesmen of the ruling right-wing BJP, responsible for representing Indian science, have claimed that Indians had already created stem cell research, organ transplants and plastic surgery in Vedic times; and, if that wasn't enough of a coup, they had also engineered the first airplane, 7000 years ago. See Ananya Vajpeyi, "The Return of Sanskrit: How an Old Language Got Caught Up in India's New Culture Wars," in *World Policy Journal* 33, 3 (2016): 50. It may seem incongruous, on the one hand, to delegitimise the idea of Modernity and then to claim its characteristic features as having been always one's own. But the structural connection between the two is in the subaltern consciousness that persists in the shadow of the fight for equality—not merely in material and technical terms but, more importantly, culturally and intellectually—with 'Europe' and the 'West.' One can hope for the day when enough confidence is amassed to happily leave Modernity to Europe so as to fight for a better future.

37 See, for example, Sanjay Subramanyan, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," in *Modern Asian Studies* 31, 3 (1997): 735–762, especially 747–762.

dehumanise Muslims.[38] This Saidian critique has been broadened to argue that *Islamwissenschaft* has essentialised Muslims by way of anti-Semitic racism and/or Islamophobic theologocentrism, namely, the tendency, as I noted in discussing Becker, to make 'Islam' the totalising, essentialising determinant of every aspect of the historical experience of Muslims and the social, cultural and political practices in so-called 'Muslim societies.'[39]

Said himself positioned Orientalist discourse as a lynchpin of the modern historicist consciousness of the West, arguing that, from the nineteenth century onwards, this consciousness was founded on an invidious ethno-philological opposition between the Aryan subjects and Semitic objects of History.[40] Focusing particularly on the thinking of Ernest Renan, which he took to encompass all European Orientalism,[41] Said argued that Orientalist scholarship was fundamentally driven by this philological/racial divide between the Semitic and the Aryan. This secularised, racialised historicism, which conflated language, race, religion and destiny, characterised the Semites as culturally and historically inert products of their desert environment and amorphous language, while touting the Aryan capacity to conceptualise and act upon nature to overcome themselves and develop as historical actors. Because the Semites philologically and culturally represented their desert environment, they could not appreciate difference, and for this reason were incapable of mythology and so were instinctively monotheists. Their indubitably great insight of monotheism was thus less an achievement than rather a reflection of their cultural emptiness and incapacity for further development.[42] The

38   See Said, *Orientalism* (see note 35), 96–98, 208, 240–243; also, Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). More measured, scholarly sourced statements of the position can be found in Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Vasudha Dalmia, *Orienting India: European Knowledge Production in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (*New Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2003). Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle-East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

39   On this "theologocentrism" of *Islamwissenchaft*, Maxime Rodinson claimed: "Those schools of thought that believe that almost all observable phenomena can be explained by reference to Islam, in societies where Muslims are the majority or where Islam is the official religion, suffer from what I will call theologocentrism. In the past, such a vision was held implicitly by all researchers in the [Islamicist] field." Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006 [1980]), 104. Said made the same claims about "Islamic Orientalism"; see Said, *Orientalism*, 305; also, Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997 [1981]), xvi, xxxi–xxxiii, 10–11. That Rodinson, himself an offshoot of the Islamicist tradition that began with the *anti-theologocentric ethos* of Goldziher's work, made such claims about its past, merely proves the evisceration the latter has suffered in the meantime.

40   See Said, *Orientalism* (see note 35)*,* 130–148.

41   See Said, *Orientalism* (see note 35)*,* 6.

42   See Ernest Renan, *Histoire général et système comparé des langues sémitiques* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1855), 1–17. Renan's subject headings said it all: "The role of the Semitic race in history:

Aryans, by contrast, first recognised nature and its diversity in myth and eventually developed the sophistication that led to scientific understanding and the formulation of this fundamental insight in modern scientific terms.

In the Saidian approach, the Orientalist tradition represented primarily a political phenomenon, a main branch of the nineteenth century European racism grounding imperial ambitions and rule.[43] It was a racialising and racist historicism in which the modern Aryan West spoke in the name of universal progressive humanity, while painting the Semites as caught in an immobile past from which they could not escape except through European imperial intervention. The Orientalist study of Islam—what Said always referred to as Islamic Orientalism—was no more than the most regressive rehashing of this racist, imperialist Orientalist discourse. In Islamic Orientalism, the Semites were allegedly the instinctively religious people and Islam was simply the Semitic religion, the other of modern secular sensibility. More recently, Gil Andijar has sought to complete the Saidian picture by arguing that Orientalist anti-Semitism and Islamophobic theologocentrism, namely, the essentialisation and demonisation of Semites/Muslims by way of reduction to race and religion, went hand in hand. First, he contends, the Semites were defined as 'the religious people' (as in Renan), then the Jews were reduced to a racial type, and the Arabs and Muslims to 'Islam.'[44]

Said's critique of Orientalism led in fact to a trenchant debate, in which the divergent treatments of the Orientalist tradition sketched out fundamentally opposed standpoints on the nature of European Modernity itself. Namely, while Said clearly won the day within the 'Middle-East' field, the Area Studies reformulation of 'Islamic Studies' in the post-WWII American academy, he was vociferously opposed by stalwarts of the

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this role is more religious than political…Monotheism summarizes and explains all the characteristics of the Semitic race … The Semites don't have mythology … The religious intolerance of Semitic peoples … The Semites have neither science nor philosophy; they lack curiosity: Arab philosophy is not a Semitic product … Semitic poetry, essentially subject, without variety … The Semitic spirit lacks sentiment for nuances … The lack of the plastic arts amongst the Semites … They don't have an epic … The Semitic languages only have one type …" Renan, *Langues sémitiques*, 479. See more generally, Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 51–79.

43   "My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness." This meant that "every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric. Said, *Orientalism* (see note 35), 204.

44   On this "Semitic hypothesis," see Gil Andijar, *Semites: Race, Religion, Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 13–38. As Said himself put it: "For Orientalism, Islam had a meaning which, if one were to look for its most succinct formulation, could be found in Renan's first treatise: in order best to be understood Islam had to be reduced to 'tent and tribe'." Said, *Orientalism* (see note 35), 105.

Orientalist tradition.[45] Foremost amongst them, the Islamicist Bernard Lewis, who, in his early heated exchange with Said, painted the trajectory of Orientalist scholarship by contrast in terms of disciplinary formation and the growing professionalisation of the European academy. Rather than representing imperialist interests, Lewis argued that the Islamicist discipline was characterised by the clear epistemic imperative to push beyond all such interested attitudes and biased motivations, towards genuine humanistic understanding.[46] For defenders of the Orientalist tradition like Lewis, it could only be judged by the yardstick of specialised *knowledge*, raising itself beyond the merely cultural and political; no other yardstick made sense. Few in the academic context today subscribe to such positivist presumptions of epistemic innocence and their 'politics of truth.' However, what has since made Lewis's position risible is the fallout from his own incessant political interventionism: *he* was the founder of the 'clash of civilisations' model.[47]

In the context of the war on terror, such heated debates about Orientalism seemed in themselves to play into the clash of civilisations mentality. To counter the accumulating polarisations and cross-demonisation, many scholars, most impressively represented by Suzanne Marchand's work on German Orientalism, have sought to

45 Bernard Lewis championed Orientalist scholarship contra Said in terms of its growing academic professionalisation: Bernard Lewis, "The Question of Orientalism" in *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 99–118. Lewis, "Other People's History" in *Islam and the West*, 119–130. The extended treatment of Orientalists in this guise, as lonely, ignored scholarly enthusiasts, is Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2006). Before Said, the thematic of growing academicisation and professionalisation had long driven the 'internal histories' of the field: Johann Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1955). Rudi Paret, *The Study of Arabic and Islam at German Universities: German Orientalists since Theodor Nöldeke* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1968). Such professionalisation discourse has also dominated attempts to reassess Orientalist figures, like Goldziher, that clearly did not conform to Said's presumptions: Lewis I. Conrad, "Ignaz Goldziher on Ernest Renan: From Orientalist Philology to the Study of Islam" in *The Jewish Discovery of Islam: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lewis;* ed. Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1999), 137–180. The in fact highly political usage to which such professionalisation discourse was put by Lewis and those close to him is evident in Martin Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle-Eastern Studies in America* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001). For Kramer, 'the failure of Middle-East Studies in America' was that Middle-East scholars had become critical of rather than serving US foreign policy prerogatives; Kramer's book was, in part, a primer on how to change the scholarly landscape so as to be able to recruit them once again.

46 This was the fundamental claim at the heart of Lewis's two essays, "The Question of Orientalism" (see note 45), 99–118, and "Other People's History" (see note 45), 119–130, that directly waded into the debates.

47 See, Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," 56–58. See the telling article in this regard by Michael Hirsh, "Bernard Lewis Revisited," in *The Washington Monthly* (Nov. 2004): 13–19.

replace the one-dimensional characterisations of the Orientalist legacy in the Orientalism debates.[48] The proponents of a 'third way' have, to this end, mostly focused on the Orientalist heritage as primarily a pregnant *cultural* phenomenon:[49] they have shown that one is bound to find in the academic Orientalism of the nineteenth century not simply the creation and ordering of 'Others,' but also a European search for cultural roots and origins.[50] This search for cultural identity came, of course, to involve all manner of self-projections, some with quite ambivalent and invidious consequences for 'internal outsiders,' like the Jews, who were accordingly pushed to the margins of this new story of western civilisation.[51] By expanding the range of cultural identity and identification beyond the Christian and Classical canons, Orientalist scholarship also introduced the promise—if left to us to fulfill—of a more cosmopolitan, less 'Eurocentric' sense of self.[52] Nonetheless, in this new scholarship too, 'Islamic Orientalism' has tended, no doubt with an eye to teleologies ending in contemporary conflicts,

48 See Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Marchand's cultural reading of Orientalism as a western bid at civilisational origins and prospects beyond the Judaic and Hellenic goes back in spirit to the work of Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984 [1950]).

49 For Marchand's characterisation of a "third way," see Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (see note 48)*,* xx–xxv. As she put it: "As I became more and more interested in finding out what German orientalism, as a cultural phenomenon was, I became less and less convinced that it was about European culture 'setting itself off against the Orient' or that its leading ideas were informed by the imperial experience." Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, xxiii.

50 This meant a focus on what it meant fundamentally to be 'Christian' and 'German' and so preoccupation with the Biblical Orient: see, for example, Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (see note 48)*,* xvii–xxiv, 35–52, 105–113, 167–186, 212–227, 236–249.

51 See particularly Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (see note 48)*,* 239–240, 244–245, 300–311, 267–270, 279–291.

52 Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (see note 48)*,* 498. Marchand's ambivalence about German Orientalism—that its cultural self-projections on the basis of newfound roots beyond the Judaic and Hellenic were self-absorbed and invidious but also opened the path to a multi-cultural future, mirrored the ambivalence of what I take to be its spiritual model, namely, Raymond Schwab's ambivalence about what he called the 'Oriental Renaissance.' Schwab, however, associated the dangers of Orientalism—the self-obsessed search for cultural roots for the purposes of invidious cultural self-assertion—squarely with the Germans, calling it the "*furor teutonicus*." Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance* (see note 48)*,* 446. But, he took the broader 'Oriental Renaissance' to have involved "the discovery that there had been other Europes" (XIII), opening the path to a multi-civilisational "integral" humanism (49), because the "ultimate meaning" of Orientalism was "the absolute equality of all races and ages." (403). See also Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, 473–478.

to remain on the margins as something like the imperialist, 'politicised' bad apple of the Orientalist canon.[53]

The Orientalism debates, accordingly, were predicated on divergent verdicts on a Modernity that was distinctly European and historicist. In one reading, this European historicism, pitched in a universal human vocabulary, had been the means of divesting the 'Orientals' of their humanity, of portraying them as racially incapable of such universal human consciousness and progress. It had been a political tool for caging them in an eternal past and thereby robbing them of their future. European imperialism was thus not an accidental feature but rather the very meaning and telos of a European Modernity, that was fashioned as an Aryan prerogative against the 'Medieval' Semites. Those who defended European modernist historicism, against Said, continued to insist on the thematic of a universal human advance enabled by epistemic progress. In this version of the European modernist narrative, the 'developed, democratic West' served again as the model for the globalisation of its presumed universal values, its study and accumulating knowledge of non-Europeans, preparing the ground for their eventual realisation of what it had already achieved. Meanwhile, the proponents of a 'third way' beyond the knowledge/power polemics waged between 'Europe' and its Others, marked also a distinct trajectory for European Modernity. By interpreting the European study of the Orient in terms of a search for cultural identity and so of cultural self-fashioning, this stance constructed European Modernity as an unfinished project, one that beckoned a multi-civilisational, multi-cultural future, but which Europeans themselves, in their self-absorbed use of it for the purposes of cultural self-assertion, had been unable to achieve. Hence, the Orientalism debates dissolved themselves into directly opposed visions of the meaning and telos of European Modernity: 1) the political deployment of a universal humanist vocabulary to ideologically engineer its opposite, the imperialist dehumanisation of non-European Others; 2) The European achievement of universal values and knowledge that would act as a catalyst for their ultimate de facto globalisation and realisation; 3) the promise of a universal, multi-cultural future, which had not yet been achieved by Europe itself.

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53 As Marchand put it, "I will argue that in some fields, such as Islamic Studies and Sinology, involvement in the imperialist projects of the Reich blunted or redirected passions that might otherwise have been turned inward." Namely, the passions of the 'core' disciplines of German Orientalism had been focused on establishing German cultural identity. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (see note 48), 216; see also 220, 356–367.

The Science of Religion, *Islamwissenschaft*, and Modern Religion

In the rest of this chapter, I would like to demonstrate the way in which Said's account of the Orientalist globalisation of European historical categories is complicated once we understand the context within which the European historicist schema of 'Medieval' and 'Modern' was applied to the Islamic heritage. I argue that it was this globalising application of 'Medieval' and 'Modern' to Islam that first led to the founding of *Islamwissenschaft*, or the discipinary study of Islam, in the work of the Hungarian Jewish Orientalist, Iganz Goldziher, in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Not only did Goldziher not pit the modern secular West against the Medieval Semitic Islam, he also sought to displace Renan's racialisation of history with his own anti-racial universalised historicism. Goldziher's globalising application of 'Medieval' and 'Modern,' rather than imperialist imposition, represents one of the ways in which the idea of Modernity became the contested site it is today. Goldziher's conceptualization of Islamic history derived from his reformist Jewish background. In contrast to Renan's racialisation of Islam, it sought to position Modernity as the internal destiny and telos of Islamic history. To understand how Goldziher could come to associate not simply Europe but Islam and Judaism with Modernity, I suggest that we study the trajectory of *Islamwissenschaft,* not simply in the context of the Orientalism debates about whether Orientalism represents essentially racist, imperialist politics, or is primarily an epistemic process of professionalisation and disciplinary formation, or encompasses an episode in European cultural self-fashioning. Namely, it means moving beyond attempts to reduce *Islamwissenschaft* to 'politics,' 'knowledge' or 'culture,' to see how it was all these things at the same time.

Against such reductionist treatments of Orientalist scholarship, I propose studying *Islamwissenschaft* in the context of the nineteenth century European study of religion from which it emerged. Namely, I propose studying *Islamwissenschaft* through what was termed the 'science of religion,' or *Religionswissenschaft*. It may seem that turning to the modern European study of religion and its critical historical methodology, could only serve to repeat in a different key the invidious deployment of the idea of a European modernity pitted against non-Europeans. In fact, this seems to be at the heart of the Modern/Medieval distinction with the Medieval intimating the dark, dogmatic authority of religion over all areas of life. The very idea of religion as encompassing a transcultural, transhistorical aspect of human experience across all religious traditions and phenomena has, as in the work of Talal Asad, been analysed as itself a creation of secular Western Modernity. Asad has argued that the very notion of 'religion' as something that supposedly all putatively 'religious' traditions across human societies and history share, is no more than a product of

the modern anthropologisation of religion itself: 'religion' is a mirror figure of the secular and secularisation processes that analyse religious traditions through anthropological categories not their own and thus suggest that 'religion,' when unmasked as all too human, can act (legitimately) only as bulwark for the irrational areas of life not amenable to the secular. In this reading, 'religion,' as a category circumscribed within a specific area of life, particularly belief about its irrational aspects, represents a secular policing of the 'Medieval' pretensions of religious traditions to account and prescribe for all human experience and beyond. For Asad, European Modernity is secular, and 'religion' is a secular critique of the 'Medieval.' Again, a Modern Europe stands against a Medieval Islam.[54]

In my work on the 'science of religion' tradition, I argue that neither the category of 'religion' it cultivated nor its critical historical methodology can be understood in terms of such a secularisation narrative. To understand the 'science of religion' tradition in nineteenth century European scholarship is to see the way in which Asad is *right* in arguing that the notion of 'religion' is a modern product of the anthropologisation of religious traditions, but *wrong* in thinking that it is an inherently secularist or reductionist product. The 'science of religion' tradition in nineteenth century scholarship emerged as an anthropological championing of religion that served to create the notion of 'religion' as an irreducible aspect of human experience. The proud products of nineteenth-century scholarship, the critical historicist and comparative study of religion (as well as mythology) long developed within its framework.[55]

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54 For such evaluation of the 'anthropological construction of religion,' see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 27–54; Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 21–66.

55 Maurice Olender had already made clear that the "new religious sciences" of nineteenth century Europe with their critical philological methodology had not represented a secularist departure but, while pretending to "treat all religions in the same way," had set about "to impose a Christian providential meaning on the new comparative order." See Olender, *The Languages of Paradise* (see note 42)*,* 136–138. Hence, Olender rightly corrected Edward Said's argument that such Orientalist philology represented a secularist, historicist racialisation of what had previously been a religious animus. See Said, *Orientalism* (see note 35)*,* 120–121, 82–86. Where Olender went wrong though was to discern only one racialised and predominantly racist stream within these new religious sciences: one that, like Said, viewed the new scholarship as riven by the Semitic/Aryan distinction, whereby Christianity came to be formulated as an Aryan historical achievement. Not surprisingly, like Said, Olender's focus, in this vein, was on Renan. See Olender, *The Languages of Paradise* (see note 42), 68–74. My argument is that the philological racial branch of the new 'science of religion' was merely one such branch and that within the broader Christian historicism within which it emerged. Soon such Christian historicism had to vie a Jewish historicism and ultimately *Islamwissenschaft* emerged in the work of Ignaz Goldziher as an Islamic historicism. On the general question of secularism and the 'new religious sciences,' see also Suzanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (see note 48), xxvi–vii.

What the nineteenth-century scientists of religion offered were comparative and historicist accounts of the religious experience in its progress through the religions and the religious history of humanity, but thereby also the promise that their own critical historical study would fulfil this progress by reaching a proper understanding and realisation of pure 'religion,' allowing it to become what it was destined to be. Our category of 'religion' thus arose from this nineteenth-century liberal Protestant conception of 'religion' as a distinct sphere of human experience, more *and* less progressively represented in humanity's religions and religious history, whose Historical telos was its fulfilment in its purity. The 'science of religion' then, far from any secularist debunking of 'religion,' involved the historicist idealisation and production of it, that parsed religious traditions and canons against the history of their formation to argue that their promise lay not in any presumed immaculate origin, but in their end, as divulged critically. My argument, in laying out the trajectory of the 'science of religion' in nineteenth-century European scholarship, is that *Islamwissenschaft* arose in the work of Ignaz Goldziher in the closing decades of the century as a science of religion aimed at the teleological purification and idealisation of the Islamic heritage, namely, that Islamic monotheism, when critically reformed, can be viewed as the telos of the religious progress in human history.

The idea that there is an irreducible and autonomous realm of human experience that is distinctly religious in character, developed in Protestant thought, particularly in the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, at the turn of the nineteenth century.[56] His notion of religious experience thus posited 'religion' as a transcultural, transhistorical aspect of all human experience and development over time. All positive religious phenomena that could be called such across cultures and history, from sacrificial rites to the most personal, mystical devotion, were to be referred to and judged by the standard of 'genuine' religious experience and its peculiar essence.[57] This idea of 'religion' as a transhistorical, transcultural aspect of human reality should remind us of those other such concepts posited in the nineteenth century as essentially natural human categories—namely, those of 'culture' and 'nation,'[58] against and through

56 The seminal text was Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988 [1799]).

57 For a historical critique of this modalisation of religious life as "religious experience," see, Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 78–130.

58 On the advent of 'nationality' as a modular, naturalised transhistorical category, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 7, 80–81, 113, 163–165. On the modalised and modular construction of 'culture' as a transhistorical category, see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 90; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 41. See also on 'aesthetic experience," Jay, *Songs of Experience* (see note 7), 131–169.

which the distinctly religious came to be defined.[59] Like 'culture' and 'nation,' what was called 'religious experience' did not simply capture all that was religion and its development over time. Rather, it was the idea of religious experience that for the first time created something called 'religion,' encompassing all humanity and history and thus the concept of religion still prevalent into our own time. After all, the so-called religious traditions in the pre-modern past did not generally conceive of themselves and their rivals in comparative, modular fashion, but rather hierarchically and polemically, through the proper understanding of, and relationship to, God or the cosmos.

The idea of religious experience as a distinct, irreducible aspect of what it means to be human first emerged in the work of Schleiermacher precisely as the means of overcoming ongoing attempts in Enlightenment thought to reduce religious beliefs and practices to putatively more fundamental aspects of human life. Religious beliefs were thus reconfigured as encompassing more or less—and it was generally less—rational belief about the world, creation, the soul, the afterlife. Religious prescriptions were considered to encompass a more or less—and it was generally less—pure branch of moral action and ethics. Hence, many Enlightenment thinkers made a distinction between natural (or rational) religion as constituting proper belief or morality, as against the positive religions of human history. Schleiermacher went in the opposite direction: validating all actual human experience of religion in history, he preached the idea of religious experience against just this reduction of it into the dichotomy between belief and action, knowledge and morality. He did so by pitching 'religious experience' against this fact/value dichotomy itself. Schleiermacher defined religious experience in terms of humanity's sense of dependence, of the holistic feeling of infinity and the infinite

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59   Jonathan Sheehan, for example, argues that the Enlightenment Bible was, in the nineteenth century, to become the "cultural Bible" and the "national Bible." See Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 219–240. As he put it, "The German Bible simultaneously created a German religion, a German culture, and a German nation." Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, 227. That said, it is crucial to understand that the category of "religion" came to be defined *through* and also *against* that of "culture" and "nationality." Hence, "religion" came to be defined in terms of its universality and individuality as against the cultural capacity to create, through such a universal perspective, an integral, public national synthesis. This dynamic, for example, was clear in Abraham Kuenen, *National Religions and Universal Religions* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882). Kuenen did not only invidiously compare universal versus national religions; he argued that there was essentially only one true universal religion, Christianity, but that was because it was the only religion bound historically ever to have its message developed anew in diverse national contexts and at different stages of civilisation, providing impetus to the forward progress of both: Christianity is "the most universal of religions…because it is best qualified for its moral task—to inspire and consecrate the personal and the national life." Kuenen, *National Religions*, 292. Of the two other religions he treated, Islam was said to be just national, Buddhism not national at all and Christianity the most universal religion because subject to ever renewed nationalisation; it was the religion of the future. See Kuenen, *National Religions*, 297–298.

connectedness of all being.[60] One is reminded of the 'oceanic feeling' that Freud discarded as the foundation of religious attitudes in *Civilization and Its Discontents*.[61] The 'oceanic feeling' functioned as just this foundation for the scholars of what came to be known as the 'science of religion' in the nineteenth century. The immediate feeling of being part of an infinite, meaningful whole, Schleiermacher argued, was the means by which to redeem a world in which fact had become divided from value, knowledge from morality. Religious experience would save a world in which human experience had become increasingly depersonalised into empirical data, serving to secure the accumulation of objective, public knowledge, but no longer able to provide direction and meaning. The immediate, intuitive sense of being part of a meaningful whole was meant to congeal into just such a concrete sense of personal and cultural direction, animating equally belief and action.[62] History, Schleiermacher thus read, as a scene of religious progress towards the realisation of the truly universal experience religion was meant to be, and the subject of this progress was to be Protestant Christianity, which he argued alone had the capacity for the full idealisation to become pure 'religion.'[63]

The attraction of the idea of 'religious experience' for scholars of religion was that it began with actual human experiences of the sacred in order to understand the meaning and role of 'religion.' The problem for later critics was that beginning with human experiences to understand and define the sacred made it all too easy to move in the other direction. Religion, defined experientially, could thus be used to sacralise the most quotidian of human endeavours.[64] The celebrated theologian Albert Ritschl, for example, seemed to reduce being a good Christian to doing one's social and national duty. Many religious thinkers in this mould did not shrink from sacralising participation in WWI as a divine mission.[65] It was on this basis that Karl Barth condemned the idea of 'religious experience,' arguing that, as the key to understanding the divine, it was a component of the Enlightenment creation of a 'religion of man.'[66] When

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60 See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958 [1821]), 39. Schleiermacher called it the feeling of the "One in All," to ward off reduction by stressing both the plurality and unity of consciousness. See Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 101, 137. I cite from this third edition of the text.

61 See Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1939) in: Peter Gay (ed.), *The Freud Reader* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989), 722735.

62 See Schleiermacher, *On Religion* (see note 60)*,* 27–33, 38–40, 46–50, 57–62.

63 See Schleiermacher, *On Religion* (see note 60)*,* 108 n. 8, 214, 238–253.

64 Jay, *Songs of Experience* (see note 57), 101f., 127–129.

65 See for the case of Martin Buber, Jay, *Songs of Experience* (see note 57), 125–126.

66 "We can ask", he said, "whether the entire theological movement of the [nineteenth] century resulted not at all in an overcoming of the Enlightenment, of its decisive interest of man in himself, but in its fulfilment." Karl Barth, *Protestant Though from Rousseau to Ritschl* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959 [1952]), 391–92.

Barth was finished with Ritschl, he looked little better than a televangelist.[67] God, he thundered, was the Absolute Other who judged humanity, not the other way around.

The critique of Barth and others in this vein is understandable. The 'science of religion,' grounded through the idea of 'religious experience,' involved, as I have argued, an anthropologisation and historicisation of religious life. In fact, the Left Hegelians, who began with Schleiermacher and Hegel, ended by making God into the alienated, reified self-consciousness of humanity, a self-consciousness that would become philosophically adequate with the realisation of human divinity.[68] Left Hegelian humanism therefore contended that the uncovering of 'religion' meant that it was not the ideal religion that was 'covered' by all-too human realities, but that 'religion' was in fact the cover for divine humanity, which would claim and fulfil its own sacral History by arriving ultimately at self-consciousness.[69] Moreover, the critical historical method, the 'higher criticism' of sacred texts that was the pride of nineteenth century scholarship, seemed to be playing a comparable destructive, secularising role. By examining sacred texts as historically conditioned human artifacts, by focusing on the life of Jesus instead of the salvation proffered by Christ, scholars of religion were allegedly turning religious traditions into little more than a cultural heritage, historical tales serving at best a pedagogy of moral uplift.[70]

However, again, I argue that the science of religion tradition serves to displace this notion that it entailed merely a secularising narrative and telos. Yes, the Left Hegelian 'religion of man' represented one of the possibilities of this burgeoning tradition, but it was in fact not the one focused on critical historical examination of canonical texts and tradition. In contrast, F. C. Baur and the Tübingen school continued to follow Schleiermacher in conceiving of 'religion' in terms of the most universal consciousness possible, making it and its full realisation the subject and telos of History.[71] The

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67 See Barth, *Protestant Though*, 390–397.

68 The seminal work in this regard was, D. F. Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet*, vol. 1–2 (Tübingen: F. C. Osiander, 1835–1836); see esp. vol. 2: 734–735.

69 It is this trajectory of Left Hegelianism towards humanist apotheosis that is the subject of John Edward Toews, *Hegelianism: The Path Toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805–1841* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), esp. 175–199, 327–355. He concludes this course with Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christentums* (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1841).

70 For this common reading of the significance of the "higher criticism," see the résumé in Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 182–183. On the transformation of the Bible into a cultural heritage, see again Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible*, xiv, 219–221.

71 See Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die Tübinger Schule* (Tübingen: L. Fr. Fues, 1859), 15–16. Hence, treatments of Baur and the Tübinger Schule that focus on proving them to be closet versions of Strauss's atheism essentially miss the point; see for example, Horton Harris, *The Tübingen School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 3, 161. Baur himself, however, always contrasted the "positive" results of his own work and that of his Tübingen colleagues to Strauss's "negative" results that sought to define the canon as mythology rather than history. See Baur, *Die Tübinger Schule*, 56–57;

teleological development and purification of religious consciousness towards its universal essence entailed as such the progress and end of History. This religious progress the Tübingen scholars characterised in terms of the dialectical struggle between a ritualistic, particularistic, aristocratic Jewish principle vying against a Pauline universalist, egalitarian, spiritual principle in the development of Christianity.[72] The consolidated Christian canon, which, critically and historically examined, reflected and was riven by this dialectical conflict, in becoming canonical, represented a historical equilibrium between Jewish and Pauline Christianity, one which froze this conflict by reifying and traditionalising the Christian message in eternalised, simultaneous format. Accordingly, Tübingen scholars argued that the canonical corpus and tradition of Christianity, a homogenised whole assumed to be one in its transcendental unity and origin, had in fact evolved according to a dialectical process of historical formation and ongoing reception, and that the very internal telos of this process was aimed at its critical historicisation and reconstruction. Hence, in their own critical unraveling of the canon, the Tübingen scholars must be read as both demonstrating and operationalising its developmental teleology towards the perfection and purification of religion.[73] In other words, historical criticism of the canon was the highest religious act possible. It was with such religious rather than secularising tasks that the 'science of religion' and the historicising methodologies of the 'higher criticism' overtook the nineteenth-century academy. Religion was in this science not the other, but the telos of Modernity.

The historicist Christian supersessionism of the Tübingen school and other branches of the Christian science of religion, invariably couched the historical progress and purification of religion in terms of Christianity's overcoming of its Jewish foundations. The differences in the way in which this historicist supersession was envisioned, constituted the fundamental dividing line between the different schools of the Protestant science of religion. For example, Christianity's overcoming of Judaism could be seen in Renan's racialised schema in terms of the Aryan overcoming of the Semites. I will have more to say about this racist version of the Christian science of religion, but, as we have now seen, Christianity's supersession of Judaism could also be understood, à la Tübingen, in terms of Christian universalism overcoming Jewish particularism.

The Christian Protestant science of religion did not go unchallenged. By the middle of the nineteenth century, all of its branches were confronted by scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, which sought to project the Jewish tradition as the

Ferdinand Christian Baur, Geschichte der christlichen Kirche, vol. 5, *Kirchengeschichte des neunzehnten* Jahrhunderts (Tübingen, L. Fr. Fues, 1862), 394–399.

72 See Baur, *Die Tübinger Schule*, 72–75. This is of course a simplification. There were also stark differences in the ways in which various Tübingen scholars interpreted the dialectical history of the Christian canon. For Baur's own position in this regard, see Baur, *Die Tübinger Schule*, 21–27.

73 See Baur, *Die Tübinger Schule*, 17–21, 45.

one meant to fulfil the teleological task of 'religion,' namely, to become critically purified as the universal faith of humankind. Jewish scholars turned the tables on the Christian 'science of religion,' to reconfigure the history of religion to mean Judaism's overcoming of Christianity, meaning monotheism's ultimate triumph over paganism (i.e. Christianity). Rather than being particularistic or national, Jewish history was now read in terms of a universal mission to spread monotheism.[74] In addition, the Jews, in the process, were lauded for their universal capacity to engage with all cultures, to the extent that the latter proved themselves open to universal scientific and critical pursuits.[75] In this fashion, the great reformist Jewish thinker, Abraham Geiger, arrived at a Jewish supersessionism, making it the ultimate mission of the Jewish tradition, in critically reforming itself, to overcome the Christian descent into paganism and deliver humanity to a purified monotheism.[76]

My argument is that *Islamwissenschaft* emerged in Goldziher's work as yet another rival bid at the critical historicisation and idealisation of a religious tradition, this time of the Islamic tradition, as the one capable of the purification necessary to encompass the religion of all humanity. Viewing Islam as a sister monotheistic tradition to Judaism, and unable to secure an autonomous position in the Hungarian Jewish and academic context to fulfil his critical reformist mission with regards to Judaism, Goldziher shifted this mission to Islam and thereby founded *Islamwissenschaft*.[77] As I

74   For *Wissenschaft* scholars shifting the focus of the Jewish tradition from difference to universality, see Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: Publisher 1993), 20. Ismar Schorsch characterised this shift in terms of a westernization of the Jewish tradition, namely, of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* reconfiguring it within the context of universal history. See Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1994), 154, 158. The most strident exponent of the prevalent motif of the Jewish monotheistic mission in *Wissenschaft* scholarship was the founder of Reform Judaism, Abraham Geiger. For his depiction of Christianity as a paganised Jewish offshoot and of Islam as Judaism's world-historical answer to Christian regression, see Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and Its History* (New York: The Bloch Publishing Company, 1911 [1864–1871]), 1: 139–151, 167–172.

75   For Moritz Steinschneider's universalised retelling of Jewish cum human history in terms of the three Jewish cultural encounters with the Hellenistic, Islamic and modern European civilisations, see Schorsch, *From Text to Context*, 87–88.; Franz Rosenthal, Steinschneider's Contribution to the Study of Muslim Civilization, in: *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 27 (1958), 67–81, esp. 78–80.

76   See Abraham Geiger, Die Aufgabe der Gegenwart, in: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie* 5 (1844), 24, 28–29., 34, Geiger, *Judaism and Its History*, 2: 211–212. Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 83–105, 167, 177.

77   See Ignaz Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, ed. Alexander Scheiber (Leiden: Brill, 1978), which encompassed a retrospective account of his life at age forty and a diary thereafter. This retrospective account, written in the immediate aftermath of his receipt of the Gold Medal of the VIII International Congress of Orientalists in Stockholm, was meant to mark his life as unremitting resistance against his "martyrdom," namely, the fact that his life had been radically reshaped by both by

have noted, *Islamwissenschaft*, or Islamic Orientalism, still tends to be viewed through the prism of Edward Said's work as the most retrograde product of a racist, imperialist discourse bent on objectifying and dehumanising the Semites as the ur-monotheistic people incapable of scientific thought and historical development. Meanwhile, those who reject this characterisation seek to save the scientific status of the Islamicist discipline by denying that cultural or political motivations were instrumental in its formation and development. By tracing the actual development of *Islamwissenschaft* out of the 'science of religion,' my aim is not to downplay its political ramifications and agendas, nor its highly complex relationship with European imperialism. Quite the opposite. Rather, I argue that, in contrast to the convenient mythological equation of *Islamwissenschaft* and racist imperialism, the new Islamicist discipline and the science of religion tradition from which it emerged tabled still ongoing problems regarding the proper meaning and role of religion in the personal, political and cultural realms. As such, the discipline became embroiled in questions, not only as to whether there could be something that could be called modern religion or religiosity. More, it was the offshoot of debates as to whether true religion, more than any other experience, captured the modern spirit and, if so, then which religious tradition could lay claim to it. It was, in other words, the consequence of a competition between Christianity, Judaism and Islam for the mantle of 'religion' and Modernity. Just as the proletariat, in Marx's thought, were the true inheritors of bourgeois Modernity, in Goldziher's work, Islamic Modernity figured as the rightful legatee of the progress Europeans had made. In this light, he positioned 'Islamic Modernity' as ultimately proving more advanced than its European model. And, if the complications of the idea of a secular European Modernity were not enough, the ubiquitous problem of 'Islamic Modernity' in *Islamwissenschaft* came, in the 'Jihad debate' that broke out in the field during WWI, to undermine the modernist historicist logic of its discourse altogether. Hence, Carl Heinrich Becker, the pioneering Islamicist with which we began the paper, sought to explain the German backing of the Ottoman call to Jihad to his Islamicist colleagues, by arguing that being modern did not entail a normative process of progress, in line with which, non-Europeans would simply have to imitate what Europeans had already achieved. Rather, Modernity involved plural trajectories in which different countries and cultures would have to rethink and revive their own traditions, in order

anti-Semitism, despite his Hungarian nationalism, and by his rejection by fellow Hungarian Jews, despite his attempt to idealise the Jewish tradition. In these pages, Goldziher essentially sacralised his ongoing resistance, which had only been made possible by shifting his reformist scholarship on Judaism to a focus on the Islamic heritage. I argue that that this shift consisted of nothing less than a *conversion* of his reformist project from Judaism to Islam and thereby the founding of *Islamwissenschaft*. I thus see this retrospective account of the *Tagebuch* as the founding document of *Islamwissenschaft*. See esp. Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 80–124. On Goldziher's conception of his life as a "martyrdom," see 33, 104, 136, 205, 206, 237.

to create a coherent identity that would allow them to withstand the challenges of the present. In other words, the 'Islamic states' of the East—namely, the 'developing' non-European countries—reformulating their own heritage in light of the European challenge, were no longer the confused students of Europe, but instead paradigms of the modern condition.

Islamwissenschaft and Islamic Modernity

Let us return now to the question of what is lost in reading the history of *Islamwissenschaft* through the dynamics of the Orientalism debate, namely, the imperative to brand it as either politics, knowledge or culture. My task now will be to demonstrate that when viewed within the trajectory of the 'science of religion,' the Islamicist discipline aimed precisely at the critical historicisation of the relationship of 'religion' with knowledge, culture and politics, in order thereby to project what these relationships meant and were bound to become. To understand the dynamics of this critical historicisation in Goldziher's scholarship, let me begin by arguing that he founded *Islamwissenschaft* precisely by replacing the philological distinction between the Semitic (Medieval) and the Aryan (Modern), which was at the centre of the Orientalist scholarship of his time, with a universalist normative schema of human development, grounded on the presumed 'religious progress' made possible in the movement from the Medieval to the Modern. It is now widely understood that the starting point of Goldziher's scholarship was his opposition to Renan's anti-Semitic Philological Orientalism.[78] Pace Edward Said, Renan's was not in fact a secular historicist racism, but a racially or philologically oriented branch of the 'science of religion,'

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78 We owe the renewed and growing interest in recent years in Goldziher's life and work largely to the scholarship of Lawrence Conrad. See Lawrence I. Conrad, "The Near East Study Tour of Ignaz Goldziher," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 122/1 (1990): 105–126. Conrad, "The Dervish's Disciple: On the Personality and Intellectual Milieu of the Young Ignaz Goldziher," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 122/2 (1990): 225–266. Conrad, "The Pilgrim from Pest: Goldziher's Study Tour to the Near East (1873–1874)," in *Golden Roads; Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Medieval and Modern Islam*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (London: Curzon Press, 1993), 93–137. It was also Conrad, who made manifest the anti-Renan foundations of Goldziher's early reformist Jewish scholarship in his widely read article: Conrad, "Ignaz Goldziher on Ernest Renan," in *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, 137–180. Unfortunately, however, the full force of Conrad's analysis of the anti-Renan motivations of Goldziher's early scholarship stopped short of discerning its implications for his founding of the Islamicist discipline. Here, Conrad's conclusion as to 'professionalisation' (as against an anti-Renan universalist historicism focused on religious reform and progress) as the great upshot of Goldziher's contribution to the Islamicist field, further show the deleterious impact of the Orientalism debates on understanding the latter's history.

that defined the teleological trajectory of 'religion' in terms of the very different roles played by the Semites and Aryans within its progress. Semites were said to be more prone to monotheism because of the very nature of their language, allowing them to get 'religion' right at the beginning. However, the proper understanding and universalisation of 'religion' that was to be the culmination of Christianity, had been and was to be the work of the Aryans.[79] Goldziher worked throughout his scholarship to displace this philological by a universalist historicism moving towards a critically purified monotheism. In his initially reformist focus on the Jewish tradition, his primary aim was to show that the Jews were in no sense 'instinctive' monotheists. They had had mythology, like all other peoples, as this was the universal beginning of all human culture.[80] Monotheism was an achievement over time and its first full ideal potential had been announced in Prophetic Judaism, which Goldziher saw as the locus for the coming critical idealisation and fulfilment of Judaism as 'religion.'[81]

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79 See again Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, 68–74; also, Renan, *The Future of Science* (composed 1848–1849) (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1891), 263.

80 See Ignaz Goldziher, *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern und seine geschichtliche Entwicklung: Untersuchungen zur Mythologie und Religionswissenschaft* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1876), 1–19. As Goldziher put it, in describing mythology as starting point of development for all peoples: "Mythology is something universal so that one cannot, as a starting point, deny the capacity to form it as such to any race." Goldziher, *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern*, x. Hence, he argued that "it is precisely the historical moment that is left out" in the "Renanian ethno-psychological schema." Namely, Renan's identification of 'polytheism' and 'monotheism' as racial markers missed that "polytheism and monotheism are two developmental stages in the history of religious thought and that the latter does not appear spontaneously without the first developmental stage having preceded it." Goldziher, *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern*, 6. Golziher set out a universal history of religious progress moving from mythology to paganism to traditional(ising) monotheism to critical monotheism.

81 On the initially national and theocratic roots of monotheism, focused on the centralization of state power, see Goldziher, *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern*, 314–333. On Goldziher's highly reverential discussion of 'Prophetic Judaism' as the ideal high point of the Jewish tradition that projected the promise of a purified monotheism, see Goldziher, *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern*, 348–369. Like Baur and Geiger, Goldziher made it clear from the start that his critical scholarship on the sources of the Jewish tradition was to be the progressive pivot through which it would become purified towards its prophetic destiny: "It is our sacred (*heilige*) conviction, that not only the scientific interest demands that these studies gain their due place in the scholarly literature, but that this has in an extraordinary manner also meaning for the religious life of the present. For, anyone, who has come to grasp the true concept of religion, is bound to welcome in such studies a degree of progress towards the highest religious ideal, towards the pure, clouded by nothing gross and pagan **Monotheism**, that makes itself not dependent on tales and ethnic traditions (*Stammestraditionen*), but rather finds, in the climax towards the one living original source of all truth and morality, its centre and **exclusive** living element and the inspiration for restless research and self-perfection. We are also imbued by the sense that each stride we make in the correct understanding of the mythical brings us closer to that centre. The confusion of the Mythical with the Religious makes religious life centrifugal; it is the task of progress in this realm to empower a

However, the way in which Goldziher's rejection by both his Hungarian Jewish and national communities drove him to transfer his reformist project from the Jewish to the Islamic heritage, serves to demonstrate that his subject, in challenging the Aryan/Semitic distinction and Renan's philological historicism, was the universal history and telos of monotheism: a universal history in which the critical reform of the Jewish and Muslims traditions equally allowed for the religious idealisation by which pure monotheism could establish itself beyond Christian paganism.[82] It was again in his reformist reading of the Islamic heritage that Goldziher definitively displaced the Semitic/Aryan distinction as the organising principle of the Orientalist scholarship of his time, with a universalist historicist division between the Medieval and Modern. Along the lines of the Tübingen school and Geiger, Goldziher envisioned the religious growth of Islam and Islamic history in terms of the canonical formation of an Islamic Orthodoxy that had proven capable of assimilating the ideal aspects of 'religion' within itself, but only in confused form with much that was not truly religious and less than ideal, namely, in a traditionalising, uncritical manner, that read all historical development back into an eternal, transcendental origin.[83] Geiger had already made clear that the ultimate

centripetal tendency. The insight into this relation of pure Monotheism to the pre-historical parts of the biblical literature is not of today or yesterday; the most ideal[istic] representative of Hebrew Monotheism [Deutero-Isaiah is meant], in whom Yahwism as a harmonious worldview achieved its most exalted florescence, already expressed this relationship clearly enough." Goldziher, *Der Mythos bei den Hebräern*, xxiii–xxiv.

82 For this conversion, as I call it, of his reformist project from the Jewish to the Islamic heritage, see Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 107–108. Rather than this shift to Islamicist scholarship suggesting an abandonment of his critical reformist project, Goldziher claimed that it entailed a sharpening of his understanding of "the religious system and the historical conception of development" and of his commitment to the "Messianic Judaism" he taught his children. He claimed his house was "now Jewish in a higher sense." Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 110–111. Moreover, Goldziher admitted that, the methodology of the Islamicist discipline he founded followed the great Jewish reformer "Geiger's guidelines" in judging "the documents of Islam," namely, setting them "in relation to the spiritual tendencies, to the forces struggling with one another, ['from whose oppositions the documents themselves arose'], whose result ultimately was the unified Church." Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 122–123.

83 See Goldziher, "Die Fortschritte der Islam-Wissenschaft in den letzten drei Jahrzehnten," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Joseph Desomogyi, vol. 4 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970), 449–453; Ignaz Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, vol. 1–2 (Halle a. S.: Max Niemeyer, 1889–1890), vol. 2: 131–152; Ignaz Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1910), 41–42. For Goldziher, the high point of this traditionalist development in Islam was the Orthodox integration and consolidation of Islamic law, theology and mysticism in the ethical mystical devotion of al-Ghazali in the eleventh century, which would allow for its critical historical idealisation, just as the Jewish prophets constituted this high point in the Jewish heritage. Al-Ghazali was thus the hero of Goldziher's historical teleologies of Islam. See Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 176–185; Ignaz Goldziher, „Die Religion des Islams," in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart. Ihre Entwicklung und ihre Ziele*, ed. Paul Hinneberg, part 1, section 3: 1, *Die orientalischen Religionen* (Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1906), 114–115.

universalisation of Jewish monotheism was to be achieved through a critique of the medieval character of Jewish law. According to this critique, the notion of a sacred, eternal law did not in fact prevent the development of the Jewish tradition, it did however confuse such development and render it unconscious, by reading changes back into an alleged immaculate origin, represented by Orthodoxy and the Orthodox canon. Such unconscious, medieval development meant the ideological rationalisation by way of theological sacralisation of extant cultural practices had hampered the ideal development of monotheism. Goldziher argued that this traditionalising attitude and unconscious mode of development had then led to the 'medieval' abuses he likewise associated with the function of Islamic law in 'traditionalist' Muslim societies. The critical historical spirit of Modernity was to unlock the true religious spirit of the Islamic and Jewish monotheistic traditions.

The new distinction between the Medieval and the Modern, on which Goldziher based the new Islamicist discipline, came to be formulated through a ubiquitous critique of Islamic law, focused on a projected gap between its theory and practice. In their critique, Goldziher and his Islamicist colleagues argued that Islamic law envisioned itself as a transcendental, all-encompassing ideal that did not and could not function as positive law.[84] Two prime historical vectors of this Islamicist critique were saint veneration: a practice so inimical to the monotheistic ideal that was, however, highly characteristic of popular worship in the Islamic world and as such accommodated by Islamic law;[85] and, 'Jihad,' which was portrayed as opportunistic rhetoric feeding an unsustainable 'fetish' of Muslim expansion and supremacy.[86] In this account, Islamic law, as against the allegedly inherent theologocentrism of *Islamwissenschaft*, did not rule Islamic societies but was rather an abstract ideal that masked social and cultural developments; that is, honoured in the breach, it functioned as an ideological language

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84 He thus glossed Islamic law as in fact a "doctrine of duties," (*Pflichtenlehre*) in contrast to any kind of Napoleonic code. See Goldziher, „Die Fortschritte der Islam-Wissenschaft" (see note 83), 456; Ignaz Goldziher, „Muhammedanisches Recht in Theorie und Wirklichkeit," in *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* 8 (1889): 406–423, here at 407, 409–412, 414–416, 418–420; Goldziher, „Katholische Tendenz und Partikularismus im Islam (1913)," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970), 292–295, 303; Goldziher, „Fikh," in *First Encyclopedia of Islam* 1913–1936, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 105.

85 See Goldziher, „Die Heiligenverehrung im Islam," in *Muhammedanische Studien* (see note 83)*,* vol. 2: 277–378. Goldziher, „Die Fortschritte der Islam-Wissenschaft" (see note 83), 461–467. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (see note 83), 286–289.

86 See C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Holy War "Made in Germany"* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), 6–29. This notorious pamphlet, which set off a very public, emotionally raw debate in *Islamwissenschaft* on Jihad in World War I, began with a history to show the rhetorical, opportunistic use and development of "holy war" and Pan-Islamism in Muslim societies. Snouck, whose official remit it was to deal with the questions of Jihad and Political Islam in the context of Dutch *Kolonialpolitik*, developed the early prevailing positions on such thematics in the field.

for rationalising them and, if they proved long lasting, for legitimating them by reading them retrospectively into the origin and ideal.[87] Modernist reform meant the critical, historicist rescue of the social and cultural as encompassing the positive realm of the nation;[88] it meant the equally critical, historicist demarcation of 'religion' as belonging to the universal personal and devotional realm. Only a critical reconstruction of the Islamic heritage and of the history of Muslim societies could serve to change Islam from 'ideology' to Islam as 'religion.'[89]

87 See Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (see note 83), 63–70; Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung* (Leiden: Brill, 1920), 370. Hence, in most areas of life, Islamic law did not regulate practices so much as accommodate them ex post facto. See Goldziher, „Muhammedanisches Recht in Theorie und Wirklichkeit" (see note 84), 418–420. He noted that "If a practice found general tolerance and acceptance over a long period of time, then it became through just this fact finally Sunna. For some generations the pious theologians rant and rave about the *bid'a* [innovation]; but over the course of time it becomes, as an element of *ijmā'* [juristic consensus], *tolerated* and ultimately even *required*. It is then viewed as *bid'a* to set oneself against it; whoever demands the old way is now abused as 'innovator' (*mubtadi'*)." Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, 282.

88 Goldziher viewed the cult of saints as "national survivals" of the pagan past, which, properly understood, were not to be banished or destroyed, but recovered in their national/historical role. In this connection, see in particular his very enthusiastic review of a work of his friend, the great contemporary Egyptian intellectual Ali Mubarak: Goldziher, Alī Mubārak's *al-Khitat al-Jadīda* (1890), in: Goldziher, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968), 383–384.

89 Goldziher's prescriptions for religious reform in Islam focused on the prospective critical transformation of the developmental capacities the Islamic heritage itself contained in the fundamental role he took *ijmā'* (the consensus of Muslim jurists), to play in Islamic jurisprudence. Considered one of the sources of the latter, Goldziher took *ijmā'* it to be its heart, arguing that "in this principle [*ijmā'*] are contained for Islam the facultative seeds of free movement and developmental capacity." Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (see note 83), 55. The consensus of jurists, deemed infallible, thus allowed each generation to reinterpret the Islamic heritage by reading engrained, ongoing social practices into it: saint veneration, already noted as a practice deviating far from Islamic monotheism, had been thus traditionalised, retrospectively accommodated and idealised. Goldziher and other Islamicists referred to this great accommodationist capacity of Islam as its "Catholic" tendency. See Ignaz Goldziher, "Katholische Tendenz und Partikularismus im Islam," 285–312. Goldziher never tired of reiterating that *ijmā'* was "the key for the understanding of the developmental parameters (*Entwicklungserscheinungen*) of historical Islam." Goldziher, "Die Fortschritte der Islam-Wissenschaft (see note 83)," 457–458. And, even when implicitly, he made clear what the critical progress and idealisation of Islam towards its destiny as the universal "religion" entailed: a "consistent" application of the principle of *ijmā'*, namely, the development of a consensus that would no longer traditionalise and develop unconsciously but become conscious and progress critically, historically. See Goldziher, „Katholische Tendenz und Partikularismus im Islam," 312; Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, 56. And, as Goldziher generally reminded his hoped-for Muslim audience at the close of his texts, this meant a "scientific-historical examination of [Islam's] sources." Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (see note 83), 313; also, Goldziher, „Die Religion des Islams" (see note 83), 131–132.

The links Goldziher made between religious experience and critical historical knowledge, his demarcation of the universal devotional sphere from the cultural, national and political, as well as the critique of the traditionalist consciousness of Islamic Orthodoxy as ideology, *ergo* the theory/practice gap in Islamic law that underlay his schema, had, to say it once more, a direct counterpart in his understanding of Jewish law.[90] All of these make clear that his reformist scholarship of monotheism embodied a reformist practice. Unlike the usual quip about Orientalists as philologists for whom ancient texts represented the only living Orient, Goldziher was deeply engaged with the religious, cultural and political movements of the Islamic world of his time, and was friends with some of the great protagonists of early Islamic modernism and reform.[91] His attitude to the Islamic modernism he experienced was dialectical: he welcomed its embrace of modern cultural and political forms, but argued that the Islamic heritage (like the Jewish) had always been capable of historical development, if only by unconscious reading of fundamental changes into the supposedly immaculate origin. Rather than claim Islamic origins as the original Modern, Goldziher argued that true reform entailed a fully critical historicist reconstruction of the Islamic tradition and the ideal elements within it that could move it towards its purified destiny.[92] On the other hand, he was adamantly in agreement with the anti-imperialist

90 In fact, he excoriated the Rabbinic Judaism of his own Neolog Conservative community in Budapest in virtually the same terms he applied to traditional Islamic jurisprudence: these 'jurists' were hypocrites who made a business out of a religion they themselves as such could not believe in. See Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 84.

91 For Goldziher's description of his lasting friendship with Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, starting from their meeting in Cairo, see Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 68, 71, 108. After Afghani's death, Goldziher, who never forgot their common anti-Renan front, wrote the entry on him in *First Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913–1936,* vol. 2: 1008–1111. Here, Goldziher portrayed Afghani as a heroic, anti-imperialist agitator for liberty who had fought against exploitation by European foreigners and native autocrats alike. Acknowledging his Pan-Islamic call, he saw Afghani's influence as having actually encouraged a "nationalist revival and liberal constitutional institutions."

92 This dialectical engagement with Islamic modernism was quite clear in his treatment of Abduh: Goldziher concluded his last great work, which was on *Tafsir* (Quranic exegesis), by citing his friend's denunciation of the corrupting and debilitating impact of the casuistic, rationalising application of Islamic law. See Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung*, 370. In an extensive treatment of the Quranic exegesis of Islamic modernism, Goldziher compared Abduh's Egyptian school, focused on the revival and renewal of *ijmāʿ*, with the Indian school's tendency to treat the entire tradition outside the Quran as fabrications and fairy tales. He called the Indian movement a mere "*Kulturbewegung*," focused on justifying Islam in European guise and thus lacking religious seriousness. He called Abduh's *Tafsir* a "*Kultur-Wahhabismus*," which understood that the Islamic tradition and consensus were the genuine means of Islamic development and so rightly focused on reviving and renewing them but did so by still seeking to read the ideal (present) back into the origin, whereas the true renewal of tradition and consensus was one that was historically conscious and critical. See Goldziher, *Die Richtungen der islamischen Koranauslegung*, 321, 311–370.

ethos of the Islamic reformists he most respected, because he believed that critical reform represented the internal telos of the Islamic heritage itself and thus required absolute national and cultural autonomy.[93] It was because he believed the critique of the medieval character of Islamic law to be the internal destiny of the Islamic heritage that he positioned Islamic monotheism, when properly reformed, to realise the ideal elements within it, as meant to become the universal religion of humanity. In other words, Goldziher's position suggested that reformed Islamic monotheism was, like reformed Jewish monotheism, the highest Modernity available. True religion, true Modernity was not simply European, it was Jewish, it was Muslim. Goldziher's application of the Medieval/Modern schema to Islam was meant to show that Islam, like Judaism, was capable of the normative progress of religion in a way Christianity simply was not. Hence, to put the matter programmatically, in terms of our discussion of modern European historicist consciousness, if Modernity began as European, then its globalisation rendered it a contested site. In Goldziher's scholarship, it turned out that, in the scheme of universal history, it was Jews and Muslims that were to be the true inheritors of the cultural progress Europeans had made. The highest Modernity was to be not secular European but Jewish and Muslim.

93   Arriving in Cairo during his 1873–1874 Oriental study trip at the age of twenty-four, Goldziher complained bitterly about how much he despised this "European Orient," compared to his idyllic stay in Damascus; he particularly hated the Europeans in Egypt and blamed them for having deracinated a great people. See Raphael Patai, ed., *Ignaz Goldziher and His Oriental Diary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 140–149. Writing in 1890 about the same experience, he noted again how he hated this Cairo of Isma'il Pasha, "where European civilisation was to be pasted on the Muhammadan state." Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 65–66. Despairing at first of learning anything about Islam in this environment, soon all changed, as he came into contact not only with the group around Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, but also a nationalist group of Egyptian intellectuals who had been pushed out of government by "European reform swindlers, who took it upon themselves, without any understanding for the traditions of the people, to import at high ransom the foreign culture." Despising "Europeanization" as much as them, he counted himself a member of this "national party" and advocated on its behalf in the bazaar. Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 67. He added eventually: "During the celebrations put on by the Viceroy [Khedive] on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter, I agitated in the Bazaars against the privileges of the Europeans; in Sālih al-Magdī's circle [the national party], I tabled *Kulturhistorische* theories on the neo-Mohammedan indigenous culture and its development in opposition to the ruling European contagion. What 'Urābī and his colonels a decade later rattled with their sabers, with that I harangued the circles in which I moved. I refused to take part in festivities with Europeans. If they wanted to invite me with the Shaykhs [of Al-Azhar], that way I'd show up, and so on and so forth." Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, 71.

(Islamic) Modernity Beyond 'Europe'—Conclusions

An anti-imperialist Orientalist who engaged with Islamic reform to idealise the Islamic heritage as the universal faith of humanity and, ipso facto, the highest Modernity, it is no wonder that while Goldziher has not been adequately understood in these terms, that the very intimations of this picture have driven scholars to view him as a thoroughly exceptional figure.[94] This is, on the one hand, to save Goldziher from his connections with imperialist colleagues, on the other, to save oneself from having to rethink the trajectory of Islamwissenschaft as a discipline. In this concluding section of my chapter, I argue that such Goldziher exceptionalism is untenable, and that his scholarship can only be understood within the context of the broader Islamicist scholarship his colleagues acknowledged he had founded. It is certainly true that no other Islamicist thought that Muslims had as much to teach Europeans (monotheism) as Europeans had to teach Muslims (critical consciousness). However, Goldziher's fashioning of a Judeo-Islamic modernist historicism that would culminate the European one, points the way to even more pregnant disruptions, in Islamwissenschaft, of triumphal accounts of secular European Modernity as the end of universal history. The question in the field that always led to these disruptions was, to come back to our starting point, the 'problem of Islam,' namely, the problem of 'Islamic modernity.' How was it to be achieved? Who would achieve it? What was the role of European

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94   From every side of the Orientalism debates, Goldziher has come to be characterised as an exceptional figure: for one group, he should be viewed primarily as a Jewish Orientalist and even a philosemite, because he fought against the prevalent anti-Semitic commitments of his Christian Orientalist colleagues: see Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, 115–135; Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (see note 48), 294–295, 321–332; and Susannah Heschel, *Die Wissenschaft des Judentums und der Islam: Ein Vorbild für Deutschland im 21. Jahrhundert?*, lecture delivered on July 6, 2009, for the opening of the Kollegium Jüdische Studien at the Humboldt University, Berlin. For others, Goldziher is exceptional because, a la Conrad, the relinquishing of his Jewish reformist project allowed him at least to found *Islamwissenschaft* as a professional academic pursuit. See Conrad, "Ignaz Goldziher on Ernest Renan," 161–163. And, naturally Hamid Dabashi then felt the need to reply from the Saidian side that if Goldziher's professionalism was exceptional, the fact that he did not have a personal stake in what he studied made him objectify it, which ultimately vindicated Said. See Hamid Dabashi's long introduction, "Ignaz Goldziher and the Question Concerning Orientalism," in *Muslim Studies*, Ignaz Goldziher, vol. 1 (New Brunswick NJ: Aldine Transaction, 2006), ix–xciii, esp. xix, lxi–lxv. It would be more fruitful, I argue, to let go of the "exceptional Goldziher" in order to think through how extant pictures of the history of *Islamwissenschaft* must be rethought in light of the fact that Goldziher was viewed, very much in his own time, as the founder of the field. As Carl Heinrich Becker put it in his memorial essay on him: C. H. Becker, "Ignaz Goldziher": "What we today call the Science of Islam (*Islamwissenschaft*) is the work of Goldziher and Snouck Hurgronje," in *Islamstudien: Vom Werden und Wesen der Islamischen Welt*, vol. 2: 499–500.

Islamicists in bringing it about? The answers to these questions marked the political divisions in the field.

   Goldziher's anti-imperialist insistence on Muslim autonomy as key to the autonomous development of an Islamic 'modernist' historicism of universal religious significance for all humanity, led him to adopt what the Germans at the time called *Kulturpolitik* (cultural engagement with non-Europeans, precisely so as to strengthen their sovereignty against European imperial encroachment), as the only proper mode of cross-cultural engagement between Europeans and Muslims. However, his colleague and scholarly partner, the Dutch Orientalist and colonial administrator, Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936), deployed the very same ideological critique of the gap between the theory and practice of Islamic law that Goldziher engaged in to invite religious reform, for the purposes of Dutch *Kolonialpolitik*. Snouck, who turned *Islamwissenschaft* into the 'policy science' it has remained since, focused on the gap between social practice and the all-encompassing claims of Islamic law to argue that the colonial state, by making the right social alliances, could have its sovereignty acknowledged by its Muslim subjects, despite its illegitimacy from an Islamic point of view.[95] In this way, however, it would merely conform to the pattern of the administration of most 'Islamic' polities in Islamic history that did not in fact abide by Islamic law, though they legitimated themselves through it.[96] Dutch colonialism, Snouck argued, could only secure its power if it went beyond such ideological subterfuge and made a commitment to overcoming itself through the modernising reform of Muslim natives. By imposing an embargo from the outside on the politically opportunistic use of the Islamic ideal (i.e. the ideological use of Jihad), it could aid in developing a positive cultural and national consciousness within its Muslim subjects[97] (as Snouck saw it, ultimately through union and miscegenation

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95   See C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Politique musulmane de la Hollande* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1911), 86–92, but especially, Harry J. Benda, "Christian Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia," in *Journal of Modern History* 30/4 (December 1958): 338–347, esp. 341–344.

96   See C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mohammedanism: Lectures on Its Origin, Its Religious and Political Growth and Its Present State* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), 98–103, 109–111, 113–114.; Snouck, *Politique musulmane de la Hollande*, 48–54.

97   See Snouck, *Mohammedanism*, 104; Snouck, *Politique musulmane de la Hollande*, 75–76, 93–102, 106–107. Hence, Snouck was vehemently opposed to ongoing colonial attempts to codify Islamic law. He argued this would not only mar the character of its practice and be suspect as a project undertaken by non-Muslim, colonial governments, but above all, because either Islamic law did not represent actual customary practice, or, where it did, in areas such as personal status law, the point was to tolerate such practices while allowing them to change with modernising transformation. Codification of Islamic law meant reification of Muslims by implementing reified ideas that were not even practiced, or legitimating reified practices, thus delaying the modernist development that was both necessary and inevitable. See Snouck, *Politique musulmane de la Hollande*, 57–70, 85–86.

between the Dutch and Indonesian elite).[98] Snouck's colonialist version of *Islamwissenschaft* was—as the invocation of Dutch Indonesian national consciousness and the racial miscegenation required to achieve it should make clear—also committed to the achievement of 'Islamic Modernity' beyond European racism and the medieval theologocentrism of Islamic Orthodoxy. Yet, Snouck's was clearly a European modernist historicism, one in which the Dutch nation-state served as both the necessary model and agent for the Islamic Modernity that was to be realized.

The complexity of the political divides in *Islamwissenschaft*, namely, the radical divergence in political applications of much the same Islamicist disciplinary discourse to which they could lead, is well exemplified by the fact that the division between '*Kulturpolitik*' and '*Kolonialpolitik*' I have cited, to outline Goldziher's and Snouck's attitudes to engagement with the Muslim subjects of their study, comes from the German geopolitical context of the *Kaiserreich*. It reflects the standpoint amongst the pioneering German Islamicists of the time that *Kulturpolitik* was the appropriate stance of the German Empire towards the modernising, 'developing' states of the Islamic East (like the Ottoman Empire) while *Kolonialpolitik* was to be applied to black Africa.[99] The greatest confrontation between *Islamwissenschaft*'s divergent imperatives

98 Snouck himself was married successively to two indigenous women, the first the daughter of a Javanese nobleman. For Snouck's "educational" policy leading to an equalised "association" between the Dutch and Indonesians, see Benda, *Snouck and the Foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy*, 344–346. Benda criticised him for both not believing in the "growth of Islam" and for not realising that "the separation of religion and politics […] [he advocated] was at best a temporary phenomenon of Islam in decline." For Snouck, of course, it was the other way around; the confusion of religion and politics was responsible for the decline of Muslim societies, and although Islam could not change this from the inside, it would "catch up" and become mere religion in the context of a modernised national politics. See C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Nederland en de Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1915), 79. On his deep collaboration with and reliance on native Muslim Indoneisan elites in constructing his "association" policy and on the way he shifted Dutch policy away from combatting to containing Islam, see Jajat Barhanudin, "The Dutch Colonial Policy on Islam. Reading the Intellectual Journey of Snouck Hurgronje," in *Al-Jāmiʿah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 52/1 (2014): 25–58. On his dreams for Indonesia, see also Arnoud Vrolijk and Richard van Leeuwen, *Arabic Studies in the Netherlands: A Short History in Portraits, 1580–1950* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 142–143.

99 Martin Hartmann, for example, relied on a prevalent distinction between the "*kulturlosen*" Africans versus the "*Völker alter Kultur*" in the Muslim East; see Hartmann, *Islam, Mission, Politik* (Leipzig: Otto Wigand, 1912), 66. He justified German *Kolonialpolitik* in Africa with the reasoning that there the natives first had to be protected from threatening Islamicisation, which is why he begrudgingly accepted a pivotal role for the Christian missions in this context; see Hartmann, *Islam, Mission, Politik*, 67–68, 1–51. By contrast, he argued that despite the damage done by Islam, the cultural basis of western and Near Eastern societies was the same: a concept of the state, defense of the person, commitment to work. Hence, such societies were ready for national autonomy, meaning, the "peoples of ancient culture" in the East were the proper subjects of *Kulturpolitik*, a kind of *Kulturarbeit* Hartmann entrusted to German civil society in general

of *Kulturpolitik* and *Kolonialpolitik* came in the context of the Jihad debate that broke out within the field upon the German Islamicists' backing of the Ottoman declaration of Jihad against the Allies in WWI. In Snouck's view, the fact that the Ottomans, while allied with European Christian powers, could brand their war against the Allies a holy war against all infidels was a stark contradiction that perfectly demonstrated the ideological opportunism and accommodationism of Islamic law.[100] That his German friends and colleagues had allegedly instigated such a reactionary, culturally stultifying medieval fetish for short-terms gains—Snouck dubbed the Jihad "made in Germany," eliminating all Ottoman agency—was the epitome of German Islamicists' betrayal of their own scholarship as well as of the moral madness that had led to and sustained the war.[101] Snouck notoriously counselled the Germans to help ensure the progress of their future 'protectorate,' rather than standing in its way.[102]

and to groups representing it, like the *Deutsche Vorderasienkommitee*, of which he was a leading member. See Hartmann, "Deutschland und Islam," in *Der Islam* 1 (1910): 72–92, esp. 75, 90–91. Meanwhile, Carl Heinrich Becker, the other great Islamicist of the *Kaiserreich*, made a comparable distinction, focusing on how German *Kolonialpolitik* should deal with Islam to solidify its colonial power in Africa. He argued that Islam, still struggling to emerge from the Medieval era, was closer to black Africans and so would be more effective in their civilisation. It would then depend on their historical development whether they proved themselves capable of advancing Islam further. Pace Hartmann, he said missionary activity had to be curtailed to tie Muslims more closely to the state; eventually, he acknowledged a limited role for missions in more pagan areas as a divide-and-conquer strategy in the interests of the motherland. See C. H. Becker, "Ist der Islam eine Gefahr für unsere Kolonien?" (1909), in Becker, *Islamstudien*, 2: 178–185; Becker, "Der Islam und die Kolonisierung Afrikas" (1910), in *Islamstudien*, Becker, vol. 2: 202–210. But, in the case of the Middle-East and the Ottoman Empire, he proffered rather *Kulturpolitik* and the German model of an autonomous cultural reconstitution (the Protestant Reformation) to argue for the prospect of an Islamic Renaissance: just as the Germans had remade Christianity through their "un-Christian" ideas, "the rebirth of the Orient can realise itself not only through the importation and imitation of European notions, but mainly through its own spiritual activity, also on the ground of religion." See Becker, *Christentum und Islam* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1907), 49–50. Becker's conceptions of *Kulturpolitik* first became explicit in the course of World War I. See Becker, *Deutschland und der Islam*, vol. 3 of *Der deutsche Krieg*, ed. Ernst Jäckh (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1914), 11–12, 18–24. This is the pamphlet, whose support of the Ottoman Jihad led to the public debate with Snouck. See Becker, "Die Türkei im Weltkriege" (1915), in *Islamstudien*, vol. 2: 253–254 , 262–265, 271–276, 280; also Becker, "Die Kriegsdiskussion über den heiligen Krieg," in *Islamstudien*, vol. 2: 297, 302. For the broader German notion of *Kulturpolitik* as the paradigmatic approach to "developing states" in the German *Kaiserreich* before World War I, see the pivotal work, Jürgen Kloosterhuis, *"Friedliche Imperialisten": Deutsche Auslandsvereine und auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, 1906–1918, parts 1–2 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1994).

100 See Snouck, *The Holy War "Made in Germany,"* 51, 57.

101 See Snouck, *The Holy War "Made in Germany,"* 58–80.

102 See Snouck, *The Holy War "Made in Germany,"* 58–59, 73–80 and Snouck's reply to Becker's reply: Snouck, "Deutschland und der Heilige Kriege," in *Internationale Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik* 9 (1915): 1025–1034, esp. 1028–1029.

C. H. Becker, who in fact viewed both Goldziher and Snouck as his great mentors, replied that what Snouck read as contradiction in the Ottoman Jihad, was in fact the long-sought conscious Islamic reform, an 'Islamic modernism' that critically appropriated and rethought traditional vocabularies to craft a coherent cultural identity that would enable survival in the face of present crisis.[103] Being modern, Becker argued, meant not copying others according to supposed normative historicist verities, but the conscious dynamism that could create a coherent cultural identity by innovating out of one's own heritage. Becker cited the German *Sonderweg* as the model for the kind of cultural modernisation being embarked on by what we would now call 'developing' states like the Ottoman Empire, and thereby toppled the whole normative conception of Modernity and religion's role within it, replacing it with a pluralist one.[104] If Germany's special path to Modernity was now an example, however, it was meant to demonstrate the opposite of a future the Ottomans and other Muslims could at best reach for but never achieve The German example was meant rather to show that the non-European countries, cultures and civilisations would have to go and find their own way. It put them, in their search for a coherent cultural identity on the basis of the dynamic appropriation of their own heritage and traditions, within the same temporal field as Europeans themselves. They were now embodying, to use Chakrabarty's phrase about what European historicism denied its Others, the same coeval space.[105] Arguably, the notion of an Ottoman *Sonderweg*, encompassing a new and distinct 'Islamic Modernity' (now with a coeval capital M), went even further. For, it serves to demonstrate the ways in which the contours of Modernity were themselves redefined in the context of Islamicist scholars' intellectual and political engagement with Muslims and Muslim societies. Islamicists began with confident critiques of Islamic discourse and Muslim societies and took it upon themselves to advise Muslim modernists on how to achieve autonomy for their cultures and traditions in the contemporary world. But, as the Jihad debate and the world war showed, instead of Muslims being brought into the modern world, 'Modernity' itself seemed to be shifting in meaning, to encompass much more the problems faced by the modernising, 'developing' countries. Hence, 'Jihad' went from being read as the paradigmatic antipode of Modernity—the illegitimate intervention of 'religion' into politics, the private into the public—to being read as a cultural tradition dynamically appropriated by the Ottomans in order to form an effective identity to overcome crisis, i.e. as the very definition (or redefinition) of

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103 See Becker, *Deutschland und der Islam*, 14–17; Becker, "Die Kriegsdiskussion über den heiligen Krieg," 288–293, 298–299, 303; Becker, "Die Türkei im Weltkriege," 258–261.

104 See Becker, "Der türkische Staatsgedanke" (1916), in *Islamstudien*, Becker, vol. 2: 361. See also in this vein, Becker, "Das türkische Bildungsproblem" (1916), in *Islamstudien*, Becker, vol. 2: 63–384, where he argued that Turkish cultural modernisation was bound to be an internal, holistic dynamic rather than an external imposition.

105 See Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe* (see note 35), 8.

Modernity. 'Islamic Modernity' could thus be viewed as the very paradigm of what it now meant to be modern.

I close with this programmatic glance at the Jihad debate, by reiterating that Goldziher founded *Islamwissenschaft* as a 'science of religion'; that he displaced the Semitic/Aryan distinction by focusing on the critical reform of traditionalist, 'Medieval' Islam, in order to project it as the modern purified monotheism that would fulfil 'religion'; that, rather than engage in theologocentrism, his scholarship was based on a reformist ideology critique that challenged what it read as the medieval theologocentrism of Islamic Orthodoxy. Goldziher's post-racial, post-theologocentric approach thus positioned a reformed Islam as the very telos of Modernity; it signaled that Jewish and Islamic monotheism, rather than secular Europe, were the universal subjects of modernist historicism. It displaced European modernist historicist with a Judeo-Islamic one. In this way, it already made clear that the historical categories of 'Medieval' and 'Modern,' while European in origin, would, in the very process of their globalisation as *chronotypes*, become contested sites in which different actors and cultural traditions could come to compete and fight for the future of what it means to be modern. Goldziher's founding of *Islamwissenschaft* on a post-racial, post-theologocentric basis though, went even further in the debates it inaugurated on the question of 'Islamic Modernity' and the political deployment of all manner of *Kolonialpolitik* and *Kulturpolitik* to achieve it. In the Jihad debate, the very normative modernist demarcation of religion from public life that supposedly defined Modernity, was challenged by a pluralist conception of cultural Modernities. Hence, in our preoccupation with 'religion,' we find ourselves also still within the same temporal horizon of the early history of *Islamwissenschaft*, of a Europe that began by teaching Muslims how to be modern and that, in the process, found itself, like the 'Muslim societies' it studied, struggling to define what it meant to be modern. Today, the conflation of Europe, Islam and Modernity is still envisioned by many as a desperate, perhaps utopian political pose. The reality is that this conflation has a deep history and encompasses our contemporary temporal and political horizon in a fundamental way, as societies across the globe continue to grapple with the problem of deciding the proper role of religion in public life, the proper character of cross-cultural engagement, the proper understanding of whether modern development should be understood in a normative or plural sense.