Western Studies of the Quranic Narrative: from the Historical Orientation into the Literary Analysis

Munirul Ikhwan

Abstract

The beginnings of Western interest in the Quran can be traced back to the appearance of the first complete translation of the Quran into Latin by Robert of Ketton in the twelfth century when the Muslim and Western Christian worlds has begun a long-running confrontation. In the eighteenth century, Western scholars began to be interested in studying the history and sources of the Quran. The Quranic narrative, which has its parallels in the Judeo-Christian traditions, has been studied from the historical perspective. In this approach, everything in the Quran that can be also found in earlier scriptures, is considered as borrowed, and every story that the Quran modifies is viewed as distorted. Recent Western studies have shifted into a new arena, studying the contents and styles of the Quranic narrative by analyzing its discourse and narrativity.

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The Revisionist school of Islamic studies, (also Historical-Critical school of Islamic studies) is a movement within Islamic studies which started in the 1970s and initiated a paradigm shift in Islamic Studies. The core concern of the Revisionist School is to finally show consequence concerning the knowledge, practically available since Ignác Goldziher's time, that the traditional Islamic accounts about Islam's early times - written 150 to 200 years after Muhammad - are highly questionable as
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Munirul Ikhwan
Training Indonesia’s Young Leaders (TIYL)-Islamic Studies Master Program, Leiden University, Netherlands