

IN MEMORIAM

Andrew Rippin
1950–2016

Andrew Rippin, the British-Canadian specialist of the Qur'an, classical Islam and the study of religion passed away on Tuesday, 29 November 2016 in his home in the city of Victoria, Canada. He began his intellectual journey forty years ago while studying traditions ascribed to 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas (d. 68/687), the “founding father” of Qur'anic Studies. Since then Andrew's many writings on Islamic scripture and Muslim life made him a prolific scholar of international repute. His penetrating critical insights were welcomed by the students he taught and the colleagues with whom he collaborated, both in the western academe and among the Islamic seminaries of Iran, Turkey, and Indonesia, and at various academic conferences around the world. Andrew is known best, perhaps, for his critical studies of the body of Qur'anic exegetical tradition (*Tafsir*) and subsequent literary and historical studies of the text known as the Qur'anic sciences (*'Ulum al-qur'an*).

The breadth of Andrew's knowledge, his commitment to rigorous academic research, and the coolness of his temperament made him a sober source of reason, especially during turbulent academic exchanges between colleagues in the field. He took no interest in fighting ideological battles or protecting intellectual territory. Andrew shared the skepticism of his mentor at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, John Wansbrough (d. 2002), about the narrative structures of Qur'anic exegesis and prophetic traditions. This skepticism, however, did not cause Andrew to dismiss these corpora outright, but rather to deepen his exploration of classical Islamic tradition as a whole.

On the importance of rigor when studying Islam after the dark shadow of the 11 September 2001 attacks and the so-called “war on terror,” Andrew states,

There seems to be little concern for a critical analysis of the approaches to the sources which modern Muslim writers are

employing, continuing the general lack of critical reflection upon the Muslim historical sources in general. Avoiding scholarly analysis in order not to appear “anti-Islamic” or to make the subject “easy” is neither academically responsible nor respectful of Islam itself which, it seems to me, simply deserves the full rigour of analysis that humanistic and social scientific study can provide: in doing that we are in fact saying that Islam is a subject worthy of study, something which is essentially denied when a less than rigorous approach is undertaken.

-*Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, 3rd edition. New York: Routledge, 2006, 2

The tomes of Andrew’s scholarship speak profusely on his behalf. Among roughly one hundred publications he contributed: monographs including *The Qur’an and Its Interpretive Tradition* as well as three special essays on the Qur’an, *Tafsir* and *Theology* for the Oxford Bibliographies series; edited collections including *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur’an*; textbooks including *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*; and sourcebooks including *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature*. As editor of the Routledge Studies in the Qur’an he built the largest English language series for cutting edge research on the Qur’an. During his final days a festschrift in honor of Andrew was published. *Islamic Studies Today: Essays in Honor of Andrew Rippin* (eds. Majid Daneshgar and Walid Saleh, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016) is an important scholarly contribution in its own right, and a final celebration of Andrew’s prolific and fruitful career.

In 2012 the International Qur’anic Studies Association (IQSA) was established. Within three years IQSA became a non-profit organization convening international conferences and publishing scholarship. Andrew Rippin served as inaugural president of IQSA, delivering the keynote address at the 2014 San Diego Annual Meeting. It would be the final time I would see Andrew. Prior to his passing the IQSA board of directors announced the Andrew Rippin Best Paper Prize at its business meeting November 18, 2016. The prize recognizes an outstanding paper delivered at the annual meeting, granting the winner the opportunity to publish in IQSA’s flagship journal and also carrying a modest reward. Since the announcement of this prize a number of contributions have been made to IQSA in Andrew’s name—a testament to all the students, colleagues, and friends whose lives he touched.

Andrew’s intellectual sobriety extended to his personal life as well. He was a mindful vegetarian and outdoorsman. His time away from scholarship included trekking, biking, and an altogether healthy way of life. Even at conferences in bustling downtown metropolises, which is where many

colleagues interacted with him, Andrew remained an avid walker. His notoriety made him formidable in the boardroom and conference session alike. However, Andrew never failed to stay down to earth with his choice in plain T-shirts.

Andrew Rippin is survived by his wife Beth, his daughter Courtney, his sons Lucas and Casey, and his sister Jill. ✂

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Emran El-Badawi

Mustafa Olpak **1953–2016**

Mustafa Olpak, author of *Kenya-Crete-Istanbul: Human Biographies from the Slave Coast*, a family history of African slaves in the Ottoman Empire and their descendants in the Turkish Republic, as well as founder of the Africans Culture and Solidarity Association, died of heart failure on 3 October 2016. He was 63 years old.

Mustafa was born the fifth child of Kemale and Mehmet in the Aegean town of Ayvalik. His first job following primary school was in a lathe workshop. Not long after, Mustafa also became involved in the labor movement.

In 1978 he married his first wife Sevgi and had two children, Özgür and Zeynep (he and Sevgi later divorced). Around the time of the coup d'état of 1980, Mustafa was arrested and imprisoned for a brief period. Following his release, Mustafa found employment as a marble worker.

What differentiates Mustafa from others with a similar trajectory is that, beginning in the 1990s, he put pen to paper to understand and explain his experiences. Mustafa began to follow the trail of stories his grandparents had told him. As he explored his family's history he discovered its connection to slavery.

In 2002 he published a volume entitled *Kemale*, which recounted his mother's life story. Following subsequent research, it evolved into his masterpiece, *Kenya-Crete-Istanbul: Human Biographies from the Slave Coast* in 2005 (in Turkish). In it, he provides a personal story of the relatively little understood history of African Slavery in the Ottoman Empire. As such, Mustafa single-handedly raised the profile of people of African descent in Turkey.