

## **TH 605 - 5-3-1 – *Stille, Scholars Are Quietly Offering New Theories of the Koran & Klein, Islam’s Origins***

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### Questions:

1. When do all the scholars agree as the first evidence of the Koran?
2. When is Muhammed life and sayings recorded?
3. What was the fundamental paradox Ms. Crone insisted about the Koran?
4. According to Donner, who made up the ecumenical phase of Islam?
5. What does Donner’s interpret as the meaning of Muslim mean and suggest about that name?

### Answers:

1. In 691, 59 years after Muhammed’s death – at the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem and not in Mecca.
2. Based on texts written 130 and 300 years after Muhammad’s death.
3. The official history insists that Muhammad, an illiterate camel merchant, received the revelation in Mecca, a remote, sparsely populated part of Arabia, far from the centers of monotheistic thought, in an environment of idol-worshiping Arab Bedouins, but is filled with stories and references to Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, and Jesus. Unless one accepts the idea of the angel Gabriel, Ms. Crone says, historians must somehow explain how all these monotheistic stories and ideas found their way into the Koran. “There are only two possibilities,” Ms. Crone said. “Either there had to be substantial numbers of Jews and Christians in Mecca or the Koran had to have been composed somewhere else.”
4. Donner, following the Quran, calls them “the Believers” – that may have included Jews and Christians.
5. Donner interprets the Quran’s use of the Muslim, literally “one who submits,” to connote a monotheist rather than a follower of Muhammad . This would suggest more of a monotheistic revival movement rather necessarily starting a new religion.

### Terms:

1. Fatwa: a legal opinion or decree handed down by an Islamic religious leader
2. Hagarenes: the name to describe what would later be known as the followers of Muhammad, which referred as the descendants of Hagar, the servant girl that the Jewish patriarch Abraham used to father his son Ishmael.
3. Historical Revisionism: In historiography, historical revisionism is the reinterpretation of a historical account. It usually involves challenging the orthodox (established, accepted or traditional) views held by professional scholars about a historical event or timespan or phenomenon, introducing contrary evidence, or reinterpreting the motivations and decisions of the people involved. The revision of the historical record can reflect new discoveries of fact, evidence, and interpretation, which then results in revised history.

### Summary:

Alexander Stille shares the new theories of the Koran from those questioning the historicity of the Koran by using similar analysis used of biblical criticism. The first evidence of the Koran was written 59 years later in Jerusalem rather than in Mecca. The first recorded writings of the life or sayings of Muhammed are written 130 and 300 years after his death. Klein shares the historian Fred Donners interpretation of the evidence found that challenges the narrative given by the traditional Muslim. The early followers were committed to monotheism more than they were to Muhammad which consisted of Jews and Christians.