A common perception in Europe and the United States is that virulent anti-Semitism, which was once centered in Europe, has shifted to the Muslim world, and that since the turn of the twenty-first century, it has spread throughout Europe among Muslim immigrants and internationally among supporters of global jihad. Following the Six-Day War in June 1967, scholars and political analysts interested in defending Israel and alarmed at what they saw as growing sympathy for the Arabs and Palestinians began to use the term “new anti-Semitism,” which they understood as anti-Semitism either expressed or disguised as anti-Zionism. At the core of the “new anti-Semitism” was Arab hostility to Israel and the Jews (“Arab anti-Semitism”), as well as Western support for the Arabs and Palestinians; anti-Zionism and opposition to the Jewish state was no different from anti-Semitism, for anti-Semitic concepts were projected onto Israel, which symbolized the Jews as a whole. With the growth of “Islamism,” promoted by radical Islamic revival movements in the Middle East in the decades following the 1978–1979 Iranian Revolution, the term “Arab anti-Semitism” merged with or was replaced by “Islamic anti-Semitism” or “Muslim anti-Semitism.” The use of this vocabulary implied that not only did hostility to the existence of the State of Israel reveal the Arabs’ venomous loathing of Jews, but both Muslim and Arab hatred of Jews and Israel originated in fundamental Islamic beliefs embedded in sacred scriptures and traditions.

I am grateful to Jonathan Judaken for persuading me to participate in this roundtable and for his many insightful and critical comments, to colleagues at the University of Minnesota for their constructive feedback, and to Scott Ury and Lena Salaymeh for inviting me to present to their seminar on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia at the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism at Tel Aviv University.

1 Indications of this shift of anti-Semitism to the Islamic world and to Muslims is found in the work of the late Robert S. Wistrich, who was among the most prolific and influential scholars in public discourse on anti-Semitism. The majority of Wistrich’s 1,184-page book A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad (New York, 2010) is centered on Muslims and the Islamic world and on anti-Zionism. The treatment of Muslims and the Islamic world is greatly expanded from his previous book, Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred (New York, 1991), which was written to accompany a British Thames Television series on anti-Semitism.

2 The use of the term “new anti-Semitism” to refer to anti-Zionism began to take root in the 1970s. This is the focus of The New Anti-Semitism (New York, 1974) by Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein, former directors of the Anti-Defamation League. See also Phyllis Chesler, The New Anti-Semitism: The Current Crisis and What We Must Do about It (San Francisco, 2003). For anti-Zionism as the core of the “new Judeophobia,” see Pierre-André Taguieff, La nouvelle judéophobie (Paris, 2002). For a critical discussion of ideas about the new anti-Semitism, see Jonathan Judaken, “So What’s New? Rethinking the
The political motivation that led many scholars and activists to study and expose the anti-Semitism of Arabs and Muslims has resulted in a tendentious reconstruction of history, based on the selective use of evidence that is often taken out of context. A myth of Islamic anti-Semitism was created, and this has served as the almost exclusive lens through which the history of Muslim-Jewish relations is understood. This deeply flawed scholarship fails to distinguish between scholarly analysis, political advocacy, and propaganda. Many writers, including some of the leading historians of anti-Semitism, have become active publicists in a political campaign aimed at exposing the threat of Islam to Israel and the Western world. Some scholars have joined forces with organizations, lobby groups, think tanks, governmental agencies, and centers that monitor, collect, and publish data on what they consider to be “Islamic anti-Semitism.”

Critics of these writings on “Islamic anti-Semitism,” among them scholars of the Middle East and Islam, are often equally biased, having as an underlying objective the defense of Palestinians and the condemnation of Zionism or Israeli policies. While some acknowledge the rise of Judeophobia among Muslims, their objective is not research on the phenomenon of anti-Semitism itself, but rather how the charge of “Islamic anti-Semitism” is exploited to support Zionism and Israel and to denigrate Muslims and Arabs. They counter the claim that anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism are one and the same by arguing that this fails to distinguish between criticism of Israel and Judeophobia and diverts attention from the role that Israeli policies and attitudes and their supporters play in the growth of anti-Semitism.


The prolific and influential scholar of anti-Semitism Robert S. Wistrich, e.g., wrote a primer for the American Jewish Committee: Muslim Anti-Semitism: A Clear and Present Danger (New York, 2002); as did Alvin Rosenfeld: “Progressive” Jewish Thought and the New Anti-Semitism (New York, 2006). The list of scholars and writers who are active in publishing and disseminating information on anti-Semitism among Muslims in conjunction with various organizations and centers is extensive, examples of which will be referred to below. The Anti-Defamation League measured anti-Semitic attitudes and opinions in a country-by-country and regional survey in 2013–2014, updated in 2015: Anti-Defamation League, ADL Global 100, http://global100.adl.org. The countries of the Middle East and North Africa scored by far the highest in the anti-Semitism index (74 percent). Built into the questionnaire are assumptions about the relationship of anti-Semitism to attitudes on Israel. Significantly, of the many questions in the survey, not one asked about Jews’ religious beliefs; thus there is no basis to measure “Islamic” aspects of anti-Semitism. Reports of organizations and think tanks that monitor anti-Semitism have in turn become an important source of information for scholars.

of anti-Semitism. Both scholars of “Islamic anti-Semitism” and their critics consequently reflect the competing and clashing narratives of Israel/Palestine, trapped in the legitimizing logic of their respective political positions and ideologies.

Few scholars would deny that Judeophobía among Muslims has increased since the 1960s, but most researchers on the phenomenon take it out of its historical context. The rhetorical use of the terms “Arab anti-Semitism” and “Islamic anti-Semitism” is a discursive strategy for demonstrating that anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are the same thing. Scholars, political activists, and pundits tend to present the most heinous anti-Jewish pronouncements and tracts of Muslims as the norm, paying little attention to differences between regions, social groups, and governments, and they fail to distinguish between theory and praxis. Writers who use “Arab,” “Islam,” or “Muslim” to modify “anti-Semitism” rarely conceptualize their choice of terminology. Instead, they make facile comparisons with the history of European anti-Semitism, Nazism, and the Holocaust. They tend to use European conceptions of anti-Semitism, in turn, to frame the history of Arab-Jewish or Muslim-Jewish relations. Scholars writing from this perspective tend to privilege anti-Semitism, rather than the clash of nationalisms, as the main cause of the Israeli-Arab conflict. According to this logic, if anti-Semitism is the determining factor that shaped Muslim-Jewish relations in history, then it is also the cause for opposition to Zionism and the State of Israel. Entangled in political debates, this rhetorical framing makes “Islamic anti-Semitism” misleading as an analytical category. A better understanding of the more aptly named “Judeophobía” in predominantly Muslim countries and among Muslims worldwide necessitates a critical analysis of the historical background and contested political terrain that has shaped research and writings on the subject, and how this has produced a widely accepted yet flawed narrative in both scholarly and popular discourse.

The effort to link anti-Semitism with the anti-Zionism of Muslims and non-Muslims is characteristic of many works on contemporary anti-Semitism. See, e.g., Neil J. Kressel, “The Sons of Pigs and Apes”: Muslim Antisemitism and the Conspiracy of Silence (Washington, D.C., 2012), and the works of Wistrich referred to above. On the tendency to homogenize all “Islamic anti-Semitism” regardless of important differences and backgrounds in societies with Muslim majorities, see the critique of Alexander Flores, “Western Perceptions of Anti-Semitism in Arab and Islamic Discourse,” in Schenker and Abu-Zayyad, Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism, 41–47. Few scholars would deny that Judeophobía among Muslims has increased since the 1960s, but most researchers on the phenomenon take it out of its historical context. The rhetorical use of the terms “Arab anti-Semitism” and “Islamic anti-Semitism” is a discursive strategy for demonstrating that anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism are the same thing. Scholars, political activists, and pundits tend to present the most heinous anti-Jewish pronouncements and tracts of Muslims as the norm, paying little attention to differences between regions, social groups, and governments, and they fail to distinguish between theory and praxis. Writers who use “Arab,” “Islam,” or “Muslim” to modify “anti-Semitism” rarely conceptualize their choice of terminology. Instead, they make facile comparisons with the history of European anti-Semitism, Nazism, and the Holocaust. They tend to use European conceptions of anti-Semitism, in turn, to frame the history of Arab-Jewish or Muslim-Jewish relations. Scholars writing from this perspective tend to privilege anti-Semitism, rather than the clash of nationalisms, as the main cause of the Israeli-Arab conflict. According to this logic, if anti-Semitism is the determining factor that shaped Muslim-Jewish relations in history, then it is also the cause for opposition to Zionism and the State of Israel. Entangled in political debates, this rhetorical framing makes “Islamic anti-Semitism” misleading as an analytical category. A better understanding of the more aptly named “Judeophobía” in predominantly Muslim countries and among Muslims worldwide necessitates a critical analysis of the historical background and contested political terrain that has shaped research and writings on the subject, and how this has produced a widely accepted yet flawed narrative in both scholarly and popular discourse.

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8 There have been a few recent attempts to conceptualize Judeophobía among Muslims and to rethink the vocabulary that is used. Bassam Tibi, a German scholar of Islamic politics, insists on the necessity to make a clear distinction between “the faith of Islam and the religionized politics of Islamism,” thus claiming, “There is no such thing as an ‘Islamic antisemitism.’” He uses instead the terms “religionized antisemitism” and “Islamist antisemitism” (emphasis added), as distinct from “Islamic Judeophobía.” Tibi, Islamism and Islam (New Haven, Conn., 2012), Preface and chap. 3, quotes from vii, 56, 58, 15. But in Tibi’s zealous condemnation of Islamism, he has produced a simplified binary opposition of Islam and Islamism, neither paying sufficient attention to the differences and spectrum of beliefs in modern Islam, including political Islam, nor providing adequate historical context for understanding the development of Islamist movements and their relationship to anti-Semitism. Another German scholar, Michael Kiefer, rejects both the terms “Islamic” and “Muslim anti-Semitism,” opting instead for “Islamized anti-Semitism.” He historicizes how Islamic sacred texts were grafted onto an anti-Semitic core that remained, in all its essential features, European and secular in form. Kiefer, “Islamischer, Islamistischer oder Islamisierter Antisemitismus?,” Anti-Semitism in the Arab World, Special Issue, Die Welt des Islams 46, no. 3 (2006): 277–306. See also Kiefer, Antisemitismus in den islamischen Gesellschaften: Der Palästina-Konflikt und der transfer eines Feindbildes (Düsseldorf, 2002), chap. 7. His emphasis on the secular and European source of Muslim Judeophobic discourse contradicts his very use of the neologism “Islamized anti-Semitism,” since semantically it might suggest that anti-Semitism became “religionized,” to borrow Tibi’s term.

9 For a discussion of the use of “Judeophobía” as the overarching category, see Jonathan Judaken’s introduction to this roundtable. For a good analysis and historicization of Judeophobía among Arabs and
Narratives of the history of “Arab” and “Islamic” anti-Semitism have evolved over the course of fifty years through three phases, not entirely discrete: The first, from the late 1960s, focused on “Arab anti-Semitism” as a product of a national, mainly secular conflict between Israel and the Arabs. During the second phase, which began in the 1980s with the rise of radical Islam, there was a discursive shift from “Arab” to “Muslim” as Muslims began to replace Arabs as the enemy of the Jews and Israel. While “Arab” as an ethnic and national category was still used in connection with anti-Semitism, the Arab was almost always coded to signify the Muslim, feeding into the popular perception outside the Muslim world that Arabs and Muslims were one and the same. The third phase followed the 9/11 attacks in 2001. Judeophobia, conflated with hatred of Zionism and the State of Israel, was integral to the worldview of “Islamist” jihadi terrorists. This well-documented fact is reflected in scholarly and popular writings on anti-Semitism that emphasize that Muslim hatred of Israel and Jews is the same as Muslim rage against the West. The last and current phase of writing about the history of anti-Semitism thus aligns Israel and Jews with the West, both threatened by Islam, a religion construed as irrevocably hostile to Western civilization. At each phase in the historiography on Judeophobia among Arabs and Muslims, the narrative of Muslim-Jewish relations was rewritten to accommodate presentist concerns in order to alert the public about the threat that Muslims posed to Israel and the Jews. It is against this background that the discursive construct of “Islamic anti-Semitism” emerged as an instrument to combat hostility to the State of Israel on a global scale.10

The first scholarly works to study Judeophobia in the Middle East tended to define anti-Semitism as “Arab” rather than “Islamic.” This reflects the first phase of academic and political analysis, which emphasized the conflict’s national and secular center rather than a clash between two religious communities.11 In the dominant Israeli narrative, it was the Arab world that was the enemy of the Jew. If the conflict was in essence between two national-ethnic groups, then “Arab anti-Semitism” would subside when a settlement was achieved. This perspective informs the work of Yehoshafat Harkabi, the first scholar to write extensively about anti-Semitism in the Arab world.12 Harkabi Muslims that provides a convincing periodization, see Esther Webman, “From the Damascus Blood Libel to the ‘Arab Spring’: The Evolution of Arab Antisemitism,” Antisemitism Studies 1, no. 1 (2017): 157–206; Webman, “The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism.” For critical analysis of the field of Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism, and the various interpretative challenges for researchers in this field, see Gudrun Krämer, “Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World: A Critical Review,” Die Welt des Islams 46, no. 3 (2006): 243–276. See also Flores, “Western Perceptions of Anti-Semitism in Arab and Islamic Discourse”; Webman, “The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism.” Webman is critical of both Krämer and Flores for failing to recognize the extent of anti-Semitism in the modern Muslim world (691–692).

10 On the periodization of the historiography of Arab and Islamic anti-Semitism, see Webman, “The Challenge of Assessing Arab/Islamic Antisemitism”; Webman, “From the Damascus Blood Libel to the ‘Arab Spring.’”

11 In the early encounters of Arabs and Zionists, Muslims and Jews in Palestine often did view each other as separate yet entangled religious and racial communities, but with the intensification of conflict, the language of secular nationalism became the principal discourse. See Jonathan Marc Gribetz, Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter (Princeton, N.J., 2014).

12 His book, first published in 1968, was based on his Ph.D. dissertation, completed on the eve of the 1967 war. Yehoshafat Harkabi, 'Emdat ha-’Aravim be-sikhsukh Yisrael-’Arav (Tel Aviv, 1968); translated

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traced the growth and manifestations of Arab anti-Semitism as a modern phenomenon, linking it essentially to the Arab-Israeli conflict. He detailed how Arab scholars, political leaders, and public figures deployed familiar anti-Semitic tropes in their denunciation of Zionism, conflating Jews and Zionists, at the same time that they insisted on their respect for Judaism. However, he pointed out that these confluences were still “mainly on the literary and political plane,” cautioning against assessing popular sentiment on the basis of publications that reflect “views and tendencies among the political and cultural leadership.”

Harkabi attributed the idea of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy to foreign influence, but he also studied what he calls the “Islamization” of Jew hatred among Arabs, focusing on how Arab literature in the 1960s increasingly drew from Muslim traditions on the conflict between the Prophet Muhammad and the Jews and Qur’anic verses hostile to Judaism to denounce Jews as evil and the historic foes of Muslims. Harkabi insisted that such expressions were not an essential part of Islam. But the Six-Day War led to a growing emphasis on Islamic aspects of the hostility against Israel and Jews, reflected in the increasing frequency of anti-Jewish articles published in the monthly journal of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the leading center of Islamic theology in the Muslim world. Significantly, Harkabi avoided using the term “Islamic” or “Muslim” anti-Semitism, writing at a time when political analysts and scholars did not think that political Islam was a major factor in the Israeli-Arab conflict, nor in the Middle East more generally.

Norman Stillman, building on the groundwork laid by Harkabi, was among the first scholars to provide a succinct narrative of the history of modern anti-Semitism in the Middle East. Stillman wrote about premodern negative stereotypes of Jews in the Arab world. Arab Christians imported European-style “modern anti-Semitism” to the Middle East in the nineteenth century, though it remained marginal among the Muslim population. This shifted in the 1920s and 1930s, as Arab attitudes hardened over Palestine. Palestinian nationalists and the Arab nationalist press propagated anti-Semitism, including the blood libel accusation and notions of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy. Stillman detailed how The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, first published in Arabic translation in 1925, spread throughout the Middle East. Nazi anti-Semitism also influenced Arabs, and Germany gained sympathy and support from Arab nationalists. Yet it was particularly after 1948 and the subsequent Arab defeats, in Stillman’s analysis, that anti-Jewish attitudes grew, reflected in Arab texts that drew from both traditional Christian and Islamic themes and modern European anti-Semitism.
The shift in focus away from the secular or ethnic category of the “Arab” and toward Islam in discourses on anti-Semitism came amid the changes that took place in the period following the humiliating defeat of the Arabs by Israel in the 1967 war. The loss of Jerusalem, the third-holiest site in Islam, reverberated throughout the Islamic world, and the liberation of Palestine became a much more important religious cause for Muslims.17 The convergence of this change with the growth of radical political Islam, which came with the Iranian Revolution and grew in other parts of the Muslim world, alarmed many analysts about the threat that Islamic “fundamentalism” posed to Israel. Scholars began to emphasize the centrality of Judeophobia in Islamic beliefs and to project these beliefs of recent origin anachronistically into the past. While many continued to use the more secular category of “Arab” anti-Semitism, they often conflated it or used it interchangeably with “Muslim” or “Islamic.”

Many historians cite as evidence of the pervasiveness of Islamic anti-Semitism the Fourth Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research, which took place in 1968. Held at Al-Azhar University, it was an international meeting of ulama to deliberate on the religious and theological meaning of the struggle with Israel and Zionism in the wake of “the setback that had befallen the Arab nation and Islamic peoples.”18 Bernard Lewis, the renowned historian of both the medieval and modern Islamic world, made the unsubstantiated claim that the proceedings of the Azhar conference were widely disseminated in the Muslim world, and its anti-Semitic accusations “have spread from conferences to schoolbooks, from the Arab lands to the whole Islamic world, as far away as Malaysia and Indonesia and the Muslim peoples of tropical Africa.”19

Lewis’s claim has a backstory. In 1971, a British businessman, independent scholar, and political activist, David Littman, reproduced and published, with Lewis’s encouragement, some of the most inflammatory excerpts from the proceedings that attacked Jews as enemies of Islam and humanity. Littman published the booklet under the pseudonym D. F. Green, with the collaboration of Yehoshafat Harkabi, who co-authored the introduction. The authors warned: “The ideas expounded in this volume could lead to the urge to liquidate Israel (politicide) and the Jews (genocide). If the evil of the Jews is...
immutable and permanent, transcending time and circumstances, and impervious to all hopes of reform, there is only one way to cleanse the world of them—by their complete annihilation.”

While the Al-Azhar conference proceedings probably had little impact on shaping attitudes in the Muslim world, it seems certain that the booklet, more than any other publication, shaped discourse on Islamic anti-Semitism in Western writings. Circulated widely, with editions in English, French, and German, it was used for a period of time by the Foreign Ministry of Israel, and was frequently cited as evidence of widespread Islamic anti-Semitism. The booklet was published and disseminated by the Centre d’information et de documentation sur le Moyen-Orient (CID), an organization founded in 1970 by Littman and his Egyptian-born wife, Gisèle Littman (née Orebi), known by her nom de plume Bat Ye’or. In the 1970s, the CID became a platform for the dissemination of their ideas about Islam and the Jews, based on the selective reproduction of documents intended to expose the eternal intolerance of Islam and the oppression of Jews in the Islamic world.

Bat Ye’or’s and David Littman’s research and publications coincided with a new trend in the historiography on Muslim-Jewish relations, which began to reverberate in Israeli political discourse following the demise of Labor and the election for the first time of the new right-wing coalition party, the Likud, in 1977. Likud’s electoral victory can be attributed in part to the support given to Menachem Begin by the Mizrahim or “Oriental” Jews, who came predominantly from Muslim countries. They found themselves marginalized by the Labor political establishment, which was dominated by Europeans, and their history of immigration to Israel was excluded from the national narrative, in which Zionism was justified by the long history of European anti-Semitism and the State of Israel by the Holocaust. By emphasizing that Jews from Arab and Is-


21 In his preface to the 4th edition of Arab Theologians on Jews and Israel, written in 2011, Littman reveals that he would have “preferred . . . Muslim Theologians . . . as the title,” but Harkabi (who died in 1994) “preferred not to ruffle religious feathers” (n.p.). Littman claims that the Israeli Foreign Ministry stopped using the booklet after President Anwar El Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem in 1977.

22 Littman refers to the founding of the CID ibid. (n.p.).
Islamic countries were victims of anti-Semitism that was akin to that directed toward European Jewry, that the Holocaust was also part of their story, and that they had fled from persecution in their countries of origin, Mizrahim were carving out a place in Israel’s national history that could serve to redress the discrimination that they suffered in Israeli society. While a small group of anti-Zionist Mizrahi intellectuals and activists who defined themselves as “Arab Jews” reject the portrait of eternal anti-Semitism in the Islamic world, the idea that the flight of Middle Eastern and North African Jews from Islamic countries was primarily a consequence of the longer history of Muslim anti-Semitism has continued to shape discussions in the public sphere, and has influenced representations of Muslim anti-Semitism outside of Israel.

Bat Ye’or, who fled Egypt with her family, became, through the resources of the CID, the leading proponent of the view that Islam was intolerant and persecuted its religious minorities. Her book Le Dhimmi, published in 1980, was subsequently translated into Hebrew, German, Russian, and English. The book consists of a lengthy essay, followed by a selection of primary sources, that makes the case for the immutable oppression of Jews and Christians under Islam throughout history. This thesis is intended to prove the impossibility for Muslims to recognize the “dhimmi state” of Israel. The book became an important source for discourse on Islamic anti-Semitism, used and often cited as a reliable work of scholarship by many scholars of anti-Semitism, even among those who recognized its polemical tone. It also resulted in the use and conflation of the term dhimmi with Islamic anti-Semitism. Dhimmi (lit. protected person) refers to the juridical status of dhimma (contract of protection), granted in Islamic law to non-Muslim “people of the book”—primarily Christians and Jews—which guaranteed them the security to practice their faith in exchange for the recognition of their subordinate status and legal disabilities. Before the publication of Bat Ye’or’s book and


27 The Pact of ‘Umar, attributed to the second caliph of Islam, ‘Umar ibn Khattab (d. 644), was more likely the compilation of traditions of later generations. Scholarly literature on dhimma/dhimmi is
its adoption by many scholars and activists as the most important source on Muslim-Jewish relations, the term *dhimmi* was still largely unknown outside the Muslim world except by scholars of Islam and Middle Eastern history. For specialists on the Islamic world, the *dhimma* contract enabled Jews to exist in security in most circumstances, allowing them to thrive despite their inferior legal status. Scholars have favorably compared the relative tolerance of Islam toward the Jews, reflected in their legal status as *dhimmis*, to the position of Jews in Christian Europe before the modern age. Bat Ye’or sought to counter the image of a tolerant Islam by focusing on *dhimmis* as the ontological condition of the oppression of non-Muslims under Islam, a status that since the mid-1980s she has referred to with the neologism “*dhimmitude*.”28

Although *dhimmitude* denotes a legal status that applies to non-Muslim “people of the book” generally, especially Christians, who were much more numerous in the Islamic world than Jews, scholars and activists who write on anti-Semitism without expertise on Islam and the Middle East use the term as an alarm bell regarding the dangers of Islam to the Jews. This shows the success of Bat Ye’or’s discursive strategy to mythologize Islam as inherently repressive by conceptualizing *dhimmitude* as a moniker of the oppressed that aligns Christians with Jews as common victims of Muslims in a civilizational conflict. It shifts focus away from Christian anti-Semitism and toward Islam, which is now depicted as essentially hostile to Jews, and this hostility is part of a larger hatred toward Western civilization.29

Bernard Lewis, too, spoke of “a clash of civilizations” when writing about Islam, depicting it as “the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.”30


29 This discursive strategy is more explicit in Bat Ye’or’s subsequent publications, including *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude, Seventh–Twentieth Century*, trans. Miriam Kochan and David Littman (Madison, N.J., 1996). As the threat of Islam to Europe appeared to be increasing, Bat Ye’or’s publications focused increasingly on Christian *dhimmitude*. See, e.g., *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide*, trans. Miriam Kochan and David Littman (Madison, N.J., 2002). Both academic and popular writers continue to refer to *The Dhimmi* as a source for evidence on Islamic anti-Semitism, but many have distanced themselves from Bat Ye’or’s later polemics, which have become increasingly shrill and anti-Muslim in tone. Bat Ye’or also aligned herself with right-wing extremists, notably the self-confessed “Islamophobe” Robert Spencer, promoter of several anti-Muslim groups and creator of the online Jihad Watch (https://www.jihadwatch.org), which is associated with the David Horowitz Freedom Center. See Mark Tapson, “Confessions of an Islamophobe: Robert Spencer’s Courageous Personal Declaration,” *Front Page Mag*, December 26, 2017, https://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/268800/confessions-islamophobe-mark-tapson. With Pamela Geller he created the organization Stop Islamization of America (SIOA), designated as an anti-Muslim hate group by the ADL; see https://www.adl.org/news/article/stop-islamization-of-america-sioa. Robert Spencer edited a book, *The Myth of Islamic Tolerance: How Islamic Law Treats Non-Muslims* (New York, 2005), in which eighteen of the fifty-eight chapters were authored by Bat Ye’or, who also co-authored another chapter with David Littman. Littman contributed nine chapters of his own, as well as co-authoring chapters with Bat Ye’or, Spencer, and René Wadlow. In addition, there is a chapter by Robert Wistrich.

While Lewis rejected Bat Ye’or’s portrayal of the immutable hatred of non-Muslims in Islamic beliefs, he did see modern developments in terms of a Manichean struggle between Islam and the Western world. Lewis analyzed how in earlier centuries Jews were a part of what he defined as “the Judaeo-Islamic tradition,” but the modern period brought “the end of the tradition” of Jewish-Muslim symbiosis. These underlying beliefs informed Lewis’s view on the development of anti-Semitism in the modern Muslim world.

Recognized as one of the world’s leading specialists on the history of the Islamic world, it was Lewis, above all, who brought public and scholarly attention to Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism with the publication of his *Semites and Anti-Semites* (1986). Lewis’s book gained wide acceptance by many scholars and Israel advocacy groups as authoritative. It became an instrument in the campaign to demonstrate that at the heart of the “new anti-Semitism” was anti-Zionism or political opposition to Israel. Lewis’s book focused on the Islamization of anti-Semitism, and its growth and dissemination in the Arab world in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Lewis suggested that anti-Zionist or anti-Israel positions might often conceal anti-Semitism among supporters of Arabs and Palestinians. While he proposed that the new anti-Semitism was primarily the result of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the humiliation of defeat by the previously subservient Jewish minority, Arab or Muslim anti-Semitism (Lewis often used the two interchangeably) became closely akin to the European form with its historical and ideational link to Nazism.

Lewis’s book was harshly criticized by some for its poor scholarship: its reliance on questionable secondary sources and its sparse and tendentious selection and presentation of primary sources, its misleading and inaccurate generalizations about Arabs, its inattention to the context of Middle Eastern politics, and its evasion of the issue of anti-Arab racism in Israel as an exacerbating factor that needed consideration. Edward Said, who regarded Lewis as one of his chief adversaries and polemically attacked him in his influential book *Orientalism*, minced no words in an *ad hominem* attack at the conclusion of a book review published in *The Guardian* in 1986: “What *Semites and Anti-Semites* adds up to is not so much history as sleazy propaganda in the age of Reagan and Begin.” Said had already unconvincingly asserted in *Orientalism* that Lewis represented Islam as a kind of unchanging anti-Semitic ideology.

From the opposite end of the political spectrum, Lewis was also criticized for arguing that anti-Semitism was not intrinsic to Islam, but was primarily a European import that became a part of Islamic religious discourse only in the modern period, largely as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Lewis’s book is more judiciously critiqued in Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, 276–277.

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consequence of the Israeli-Arab conflict. But in shifting the focus from Europe to the Middle East, where in Lewis’s problematic view Islam is the principal lens through which history and society must be analyzed, the idea that anti-Semitism is intrinsic to Islam was increasingly adopted in both scholarly and popular discourse. As long as anti-Semitism was defined as “Arab” rather than “Muslim” or “Islamic,” it was more legible as essentially a secular variation of modern European anti-Semitism, more nationalist than religious. Yet unlike Harkabi, Lewis referred to the phenomenon interchangeably as “Muslim” and “Arab,” and this anticipated the discursive shift away from “Arab” anti-Semitism as the primary category to “Islamic” or “Muslim” anti-Semitism, which developed in the 1990s.

The changing orientation of works on “Islamic anti-Semitism” was the accumulative consequence of three interconnected historical developments that began before this discursive shift became apparent. The first was the growth of radical political Islam in the 1970s and its expansion throughout the Muslim world, especially following the Islamic Revolution in Iran with the attendant growth of Judeophobia in Muslim discourse. Scholarship followed suit. Historians and specialists on the Middle East increasingly focused on the roots of Islamism (usually referred to in the 1980s and 1990s as “fundamentalism” or Islamic “resurgence”), for example, tracing its historical development back to the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928.

Second, much greater emphasis was placed on Palestinian Muslims as an essential source of and influence on anti-Semitism. Previously the focus had been on “Arabs,” with Egypt as the most important center in the production and dissemination of anti-Semitic ideas, sponsored by the state under President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who was the charismatic leader of pan-Arabism throughout the Middle East. This changed with the demise of pan-Arabism and the end of the Nasser era. With the abandonment of a dis-


36 While Said’s invective against Lewis is replete with mischaracterizations of the latter’s oeuvre, his generalizations about Orientalists’ homogenizing Islam as a religious and cultural totality, though over-reaching for rhetorical effect, have some validity for understanding the problems of Lewis’s “Islam as civiliza-


38 There are numerous works by scholars on Muslim “fundamentalism” or “Islamism” from the 1980s that attempt to explain its roots. For a good compilation of essays that reflect the scholarship of the early 1980s, see John L. Esposito, Voices of Resurgent Islam (Oxford, 1983); for an introductory text, see Henry Munson Jr., Islam and Revolution in the Middle East (New Haven, Conn., 1988). For an excellent succinct analysis, see William Shepard, “What is Islamic Fundamentalism?,” Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses 17, no. 1 (1988): 5–26. While many examine relations to Israel as a factor, few of the general works on Muslim fundamentalism pay much attention to Judeophobia. Some reference is made, e.g., in Emmanuel Sivan, Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics (New Haven, Conn., 1985; enlarged ed. 1990). Sivan also was interested in Muslim anti-Semitism.

39 On Egypt as a center of production of anti-Semitic works, see Rachel Maissy-Noy, “Issues of Jewish History as Reflected in Modern Egyptian Historiography,” in Michael M. Laskier and Yaacov Lev, eds.,
credited pan-Arab nationalist ideology that had failed to liberate Palestine, coupled with the growing political strength of the Palestinian struggle, Palestinians now began to replace “Arabs” as Israel’s main adversaries. The peace settlement with Egypt in the late 1970s was crucial in this shift, for not only did it remove Egypt and pan-Arabism as Israel’s existential threat, but it permanently inscribed the Palestinians into Israeli political discourse. The focus on “Islamic anti-Semitism” increased with the development of Islamism among the Palestinians, especially with the growth of Hamas, a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1987 at the outbreak of the Intifada. In the dominant Israeli narrative, Palestinian anti-Semitism has become a central reason why the conflict continues, while the counter-narrative proposes that it is a reaction of Palestinians to the injustice perpetrated against them.

Third, as Islamism spread globally outside the Middle East, especially in the post-9/11 era, scholars of the Holocaust and European anti-Semitism increasingly focused their attention on Islamic anti-Semitism and its relationship to global jihadist terrorism. Islamic anti-Semitism became a matter of crucial public and governmental concern in Israel, Europe, and North America, and the subject of numerous books, articles, studies, and reports.

A consequence of the growing attention to radical political Islam and its tendency to link anti-Semitic ideas to core Islamic texts and beliefs was the anachronistic rewriting of the historical narrative on Islamic anti-Semitism. It was above all Sayyid Qutb who became the central focus of numerous studies on Islamic anti-Semitism. A leader and theorist of the Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb was long imprisoned in Egypt by the Nasserist government. He was executed in 1966. Yet before the 1990s, Qutb hardly figures in studies of the development of anti-Semitism among Muslims, even though many scholars were studying his influence in the development of radical political Islam. This is not surprising, since Qutb wrote relatively little about Jews. He mainly focused his criti-

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The Divergence of Judaism and Islam: Interdependence, Modernity, and Political Turmoil (Gainesville, Fla., 2011), 227–253. The disappearance of Jews from Egypt that followed the Arab-Israeli wars, and the changing political landscape after the peace accords with Israel did not cause anti-Semitic writing to diminish; hostility to Jews was “almost entirely expressed in conception and ideas,” not on a “social level,” according to Rivka Yadlin, An Arrogant Oppressive Spirit: Anti-Zionism as Anti-Judaism in Egypt (Oxford, 1989). 7. Joel Beinin explains that the post-1979 anti-Semitic representations of Egyptian Jews “have been motivated not by racial or religious animosity, but by opposition to the peace agreement with Israel,” adding apogetically, “This contextualization does not excuse expressions of anti-Semitism; it merelyhistoricizes them and differentiates them from ideologically or theologically based sentiments that have long histories in European culture.” Beinin, The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry, 242.

40 On the historical context for the religious turn in anti-Semitism among Muslims and Palestinians, see Webman, “From the Damascus Blood Libel to the ‘Arab Spring.’”


42 Many of these writings draw from the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), an organization founded in 1998 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., that devotes its energies to translating and analyzing media from the Middle East and the Muslim world, usually selecting inflammatory examples to illustrate anti-Semitism, Islamist extremism, and global jihad with the purpose of influencing the public, scholars, policymakers, and governments. The chairman of the Advisory Board of MEMRI, Menahem Milson, was a key player in the Israeli military and administration of the West Bank in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He also has contributed to the analysis of anti-Semitism based on MEMRI’s findings. See Milson, Countering Arab Antisemitism (Jerusalem, 2003), 3–17. Wistrich relied heavily on MEMRI as a resource for the later chapters of A Lethal Obsession.

43 Significantly, Qutb is absent from Bat Ye’or’s book The Dhimmi. In Radical Islam, Sivan analyzes the ideology and influence of Qutb, but does not discuss Qutb as an influence on Islamic anti-Semitism. He mentions a comment that Qutb made about the Jews in the context of criticizing Muslims (48).
criticism on Muslims and Muslim governments in power, who he argued had abandoned Islam. His few writings specifically on Jews, published in Egypt in the weekly newspaper of the Muslim Brotherhood, Al-Da‘wa, in the 1950s, were assembled in a booklet, Our Struggle with the Jews (Ma‘rakatun ma‘a al-Yahud), which was published in 1970 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and was then widely disseminated in the Arab world. Drawing from an interpretation of certain passages of the Qu‘ran, as well as familiar European anti-Semitic tropes, Qutb sought in this essay to demonstrate the evil role of Jews in history by linking them eternally to the period in Medina when the Islamic state was first established. Jews are thus portrayed as the primal enemies of Islam, who have conspired and plotted against Muslims throughout history. There was very little that was new in the essay at the time it was written, but anti-Jewish writings that amalgamated European anti-Semitic ideas with Muslim sacred texts and traditions were not yet widespread. However, by the time that the Saudi edition of the book was disseminated in the 1970s, Qutb’s ideas about the Jews in his essay were well represented by ulama in some of the established Sunni institutions. Qutb’s succinct anti-Semitic diatribe against the Jews, which was little noticed in the 1950s, thus fell on receptive ears when it was published in Saudi Arabia in 1970, with many subsequent editions in the decades that followed.

After 2001, Qutb became increasingly known outside the Muslim world as the progenitor of “salafi jihadism” and the instigator of Islamic anti-Semitism. “The significance of Qutb to Islamism,” writes Bassam Tibi, “is comparable to that of Marx to Marxism.” For Tibi, “Qutb is also the mastermind of the antisemitism inherent in Islamist ideology. In Ma‘rakatun ma‘a al-Yahud (Our Struggle with the Jews), he laid out all the essential features of the Islamization of antisemitism.” According to a number of scholars, Qutb’s “manifesto” is the single most influential text in Islamic (or Islamist) anti-Semitism, and Qutb was influenced by Hitler. Several scholars point to the title, suggestive of Mein Kampf (My Struggle), and draw parallels between Qutb’s essay and Hitler’s infamous book.

In this discursive shift of the twenty-first century, Islamic anti-Semitism as exemplified by Qutb threatens both Israel and the West. But Judeophobia among Muslims is also often disentangled from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This has led to two inter-

44 Sayyid Qutb, Ma‘rakatun ma‘a al-Yahud (Jeddah, 1970). The Saudi editor added notes with frequent referral to The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which is not referred to explicitly in Qutb’s original text. A version of the book that left out the Saudi editor’s introduction was published in Cairo and Beirut in 1976, by a major publishing house based in Egypt, Dar al-Shuruq, with many subsequent editions. The 13th edition, published by Dar al-Shuruq in 1997, is advertised on the publisher’s website (in Arabic) as “a collection of articles published in the Islamic weekly newspaper al-Da‘wa in the early fifties concerning the fedayeen and their resistance to the English, jihad, Islam as a social system, and a presentation of the history of the Jews and their animosity to Islam” (http://www.shorouk.com). Saudi Arabia was at the forefront of disseminating anti-Semitic literature, as part of its larger effort to spread its Islamic ideology to Muslim countries. Its opposition to Israel and Zionism was centered on religion and the occupation of Islam’s holy places. See William Ochsenwald, “Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Revival,” International Journal of Middle East Studies 13, no. 3 (1981): 271–286.

45 For a translation of part of the essay, with commentary, see Ronald L. Nettler, Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist’s View of the Jews (Oxford, 1987).

46 Tibi, Islamism and Islam, 63.

47 See David Patterson, A Genealogy of Evil: Anti-Semitism from Nazism to Islamic Jihad (New York, 2011), 84–89; Jeffrey Herb, Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World (New Haven, Conn., 2009), 255–260. Most of the familiar anti-Semitic tropes, especially as found in The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, were already circulating before Hitler. Translations of Mein Kampf also circulated in the Muslim world, so it is not implausible that it was Qutb’s inspiration for the title of his essay.
connected claims: (1) Islam from its origins is anti-Semitic, and (2) Islam as expressed in its modern Islamist form is genocidal. The view of eternal Islamic anti-Semitism is evident in numerous books by a host of scholars and writers without expertise on the Islamic world. They are almost always written as a clarion call about the dangers of Islam for Jews and for Israel and a warning about those who remain silent or who deny that Islamic anti-Semitism is a threat to the West.\footnote{Among the works included in this category are Bostom, The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism; Kressel, “The Sons of Pigs and Apes”; Tarek Fatah, The Jew Is Not My Enemy: Unveiling the Myths That Fuel Muslim Anti-Semitism (Toronto, 2010); Elias al-Maqdisi and Sam Solomon, Al-Yahud: Eternal Islamic Enmity and the Jews (Charlottesville, Va., 2010).} Robert Wistrich, the most prolific and arguably the most influential scholar of anti-Semitism, adopted this essentialist view of Islam’s relationship to Jews, contending that Muslim anti-Semitism is genocidal and eliminationist, and that this is derived from Islam’s origins.\footnote{See especially A Lethal Obsession and “Muslim Anti-Semitism.” On the assumptions that underscore Wistrich’s voluminous studies on anti-Semitism and his influence on the field, see Scott Ury’s contribution to this roundtable.} An explicit parallel is thus drawn between Nazi genocidal ideology, the Holocaust, and Islam.

What was new in the post-9/11 period was the explicit linkage and emphasis of Nazi genocidal ideology and Islamist thinking. Earlier studies tended to focus more on the relationship of Arabs to the Nazis during the Holocaust. Since the foundation of the State of Israel, Israeli political leaders had frequently made pronouncements that compared Arabs to the Nazis. The Holocaust certainly served as a justification for the establishment of the Jewish state, but it also became the privileged template of the dangers that Israel faces in the Middle East. Accordingly, Israeli leaders, in defense of the beleaguered Jewish state, sought to demonstrate the dangerous intent of Israel’s anti-Semitic adversaries, the Arabs. The collaboration of Arabs and Nazis during the Holocaust became a part of Israel’s national narrative by equating Arab leaders and countries to Nazis and Nazi Germany, most famously in the case of the Hajj Amin al-Husayni’s connections to the Nazis.\footnote{On the scandal surrounding Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s claim in 2015 that Amin al-Husayni was Hitler’s inspiration for annihilating the Jews, see Webman, “From the Damascus Blood Libel to the ‘Arab Spring,’” 180.} As Idith Zertal put it, “[the] transformation of the Arabs into Nazis,” or “[the] Nazification of the enemy,” became an integral part of the political culture of Israel.\footnote{Idith Zertal, Israel’s Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood, trans. Chaya Galai (Cambridge, 2005), 98–103, 173–174, quotes from 173, 174.} The ways in which the Holocaust and its memory have been exploited politically by Israel since the 1990s have been the subject of numerous works by both Israeli and non-Israeli scholars, and this has generated acrimonious debate on the meaning of anti-Semitism among Arabs.\footnote{The first major work that brought attention to this issue was Tom Segev, The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust, trans. Haim Watzman (New York, 1993). Various other works have followed. While acknowledging and critical of the Judeophobia among Arabs, Gilbert Achcar, in The Arabs and the Holocaust, turns the tables by focusing on how the Holocaust and anti-Semitism are exploited in support of Zionism and against Muslims and Arabs. For a polemical critique of Achcar and other scholars, see Matthias Küntzel, “The Roots of Antisemitism in the Middle East: New Debates,” in Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ed., Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives (Bloomington, Ind., 2013), 382–401. Achcar’s book parallels and contrasts with Meir Litvak and Esther Webman, From Empathy to Denial: Arab Responses to the Holocaust (New York, 2009). The authors present a great amount of material based on scattered writings of Arabs and Muslims on the Holocaust, including both Arab Holocaust deniers and their Arab critics.}

At the turn of the twenty-first century, there was a discursive shift in the narrative of the relationship between the Arabs, the Nazis, and the Holocaust, with much greater em-
phasis placed on the Islamic connections to Nazism, and the history of Islamic anti-Semitism has been rewritten accordingly. A number of scholars have recast Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the Palestinian Muslim nationalist leader who notoriously found common cause with Germany and the Nazis during the Third Reich, as the most important fore-runner to and influence on radical Islamist anti-Semitism alongside Qutb. Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, for example, describe him as the “father of modern Arab and Islamist politics.”

Al-Husayni’s support for and ties to Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which he first fostered during the Nazi era and continued during his exile in Egypt after the war, are presented as further evidence of the lasting legacy of al-Husayni in the development of the “Islamist” movement and its radical anti-Semitic ideology. This anachronistic use of terminology, and the emphasis on al-Husayni as an “Islamist,” serve to put the Palestinians of today at the center of Islamism. The authors of another book represent al-Husayni as a foundational figure in the development of radical Islam, part of an evil trio that includes Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, and as the major ideological influence on “Yasser Arafat, Ayatollah Khomeini, . . . Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and al-Qaeda,” among other Islamic terrorists and extremists.

Works that follow the “Islamic anti-Semitism as genocidal” template advanced by Wistrich trace what they see as a linear development between the Arab anti-Semites of the 1930s and 1940s who had relations with Germany and the Nazis, and the anti-Semitism of radical political Islamists since the 1960s from the Muslim Brotherhood to ISIS. This blueprint sometimes paradoxically also attributes genocidal anti-Semitic tendencies to the origins of Islam. Whether genocidal anti-Semitism was ostensibly based in the primordial stages of Islam’s development or connected to Nazi influence, it is severed from having any origins in the Arab-Zionist conflict. The culmination results in the myth of Nazi-like Islamic anti-Semitism.

This view lacks any historical nuance regarding the Middle East in the Nazi era. Omitted from such studies are the many instances of Arab and Muslim opposition to fascism and viewpoints that considered Nazism and racism as antithetical to the goal of Arabs and to Islam. With the almost singular focus on al-Husayni to show that Arab

53 Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East (New Haven, Conn., 2014), 87. Unlike most scholars, the authors of this monograph use the term “Islamist” to refer to the Muslim Brotherhood and pan-Islamic politics for the period before World War II.

54 Rubin and Schwanitz, Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East, 118, 199, 248–254. The commonality between Hassan al-Banna and Amin al-Husayni is stressed by Herf, Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World, 243–244, 253.


56 See, e.g., Küntzel, Jihad and Jew-Hatred.

57 For an example of this approach, see Edwin Black, The Farhud: Roots of the Arab–Nazi Alliance in the Holocaust (Washington, D.C., 2010).

and Muslim support for Nazism was the norm, other key figures are ignored.  

For example, the Lebanese Arab nationalist Shakib Arslan was the leading figure in the pan-Islamic movement of the 1930s from his exile in Geneva, and even more influential than Amin al-Husayni. Though Arslan was a well-known Nazi sympathizer and sought a strategic political alliance with Germany and fascist Italy, he invoked Islamic traditions to critique the ideology of National Socialism and Nazi racial laws. Even Hassan al-Banna was critical of Nazi racial theories as antithetical to Islam, despite his political support for Amin al-Husayni and the Nazis. In colonial North Africa, some Muslim intellectuals joined the ranks of the Ligue internationale contre l’antisémitisme (International League against Anti-Semitism, LICA) in the 1930s, and during the war, some Algerian Muslim leaders and nationalists denounced the anti-Jewish measures adopted by the colonial Vichy government. In Morocco under Vichy rule, the sultan and future king of independent Morocco Mohammed V assured Moroccan Jews of his protection financially and in kind. The book offers little context for understanding the Nazi relationship to Arabs and Islam, but suggests continuity between Nazi propaganda to Arabs and Muslims, especially through a study of translated transcripts of Arabic radio broadcasts, as studied by Herf in Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World. The book offers little context for understanding the Nazi relationship to Arabs and Islam, but suggests continuity between Nazi propaganda in the Middle East and radical Islam after the war. For more contextualized and balanced studies of Germany’s position toward Islam and the Arab world, see David Motadel, Islam and Nazi Germany’s War (Cambridge, Mass., 2014); Francis R. Nicosia, Nazi Germany and the Arab World (New York, 2014).
maintain German support for their movements, or whether it was a combination of both conviction and pragmatism. Nonetheless, in the writings of Arab nationalists who collaborated with Nazi Germany, anti-Semitic writings about Jews from a religious or racial perspective were few and far between, even as the political question of Palestine loomed large.

This more complicated and nuanced perspective on the relationship of Arab Muslims to Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, represented in a few studies, challenges the understanding of Islamic anti-Semitism prevalent in much of the scholarship and popular writings that are driven by the political concerns of the present. Defining Judeophobia among Muslims as “Islamic anti-Semitism,” that is, described as a linear development from the Jew hatred of early Islam through Nazi anti-Semitism during the Third Reich—especially highlighting the role played by the Palestinian nationalist leader al-Husayni recast as “Islamist”—then jumping from the Nazi era to the radical jihadi Islamists of the present, reveals the extent to which scholars are engaged in presentist anachronism, harnessing fears about the Islamic threat in the West in defense of Israeli policies.

To sum up, two fundamental assumptions underlie Arab and Islamic anti-Semitism discourse: the first is that the center of gravity of anti-Semitism, no longer acceptable in the West in the post-Holocaust age, shifted to the Muslim world; the second is that anti-Semitism and invective against the Jewish state, the so-called “new anti-Semitism” of many scholars and activists, has become the principal conduit through which anti-Semitic ideas are expressed. In the Muslim world, animus toward the Jews is more blatantly manifested in religious discourse, while in the Western world, anti-Semitism is concealed through the guise of anti-Zionism and criticism of Israel. Within these commonly held and intertwined assumptions, “new anti-Semitism” proponents debate whether anti-Semitism was primarily a European import that amalgamated with Islamic beliefs or was rooted in the origins of Islam and evidenced throughout Islamic history, or, as a kind of compromise between these two positions, whether there was a latent anti-Semitism embedded in Islamic scriptures that was activated in the modern period because of political developments in the Middle East.64

The position that anti-Semitism was essentially a foreign import, largely absent from the origins of Islam, and mainly a consequence of the Israeli-Arab conflict was more common among the scholars of Islam and Middle Eastern history who dominated studies on anti-Semitism in the Muslim world until the 1990s. The viewpoint that anti-Semitism is rooted in the origins of Islam, and that it was Muslim anti-Semitism that was the cause of the Israeli-Arab conflict, a view expressed by specialists on anti-Semitism with no expertise in Islam and the requisite languages of the Middle East, became more dominant in discourse after 9/11. But all exponents of the “new anti-Semitism” agree that Arab and Islamic Judeophobia has morphed into a European and Nazi-like anti-Semitism expressed through anti-Zionism, which became prevalent in the post-Holocaust age. When the European characteristics of anti-Semitism produced by

very different conditions are transposed to the Middle East, where Judeophobia developed differently, a thoroughly distorted picture of Muslim-Jewish relations is produced, one in which anti-Semitism becomes the defining characteristic of the relationship, if not throughout history then at least in the modern era. When we historicize how “Islamic anti-Semitism” developed as a myth, a better understanding of the complexities of the evolving relationship of Muslims and Jews in history can be achieved.