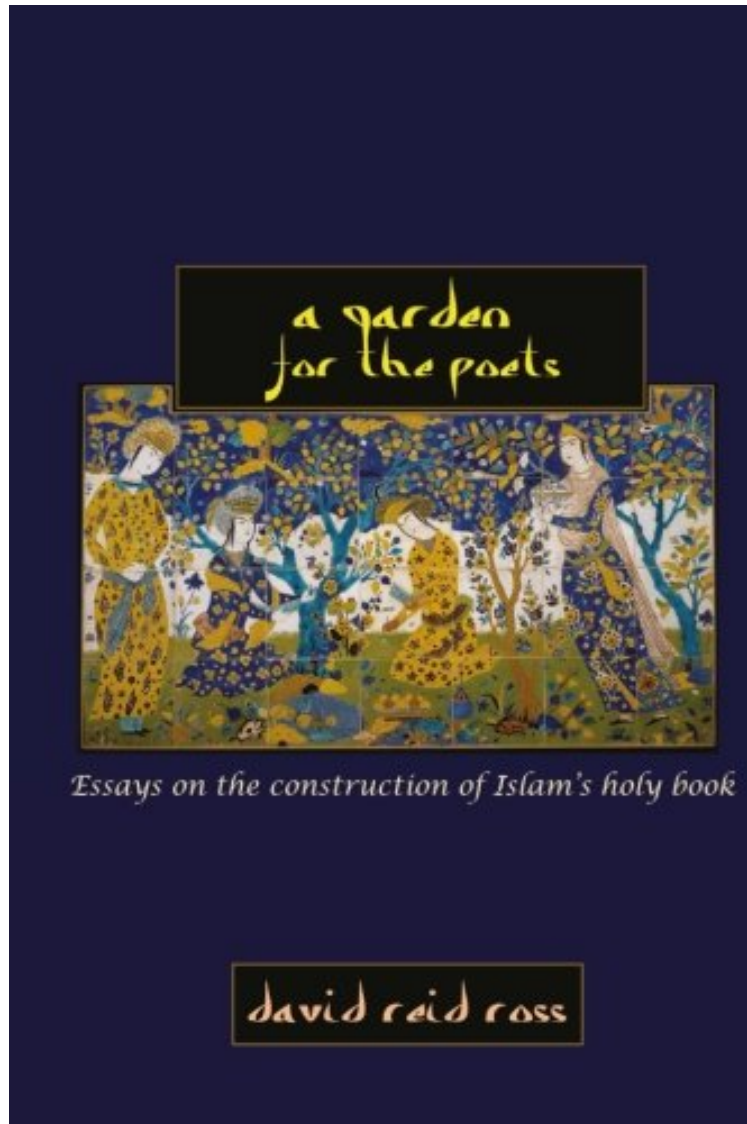


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A Garden for the Poets: Essays on the construction of Islams holy book

David Reid Ross

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How did the Arabs become a people of the book? In the first three decades of the Hijri era, all the world knew that a

prophet had come to the children of Ishmael. They were less sure on what the prophet had brought with him. The essays in *A Garden for the Poets* discuss what may be deduced from the earliest sources available. Such sources include Arabic monuments, Arab battle-cries and threats recorded by their foes, and Arab traditions often later dismissed for unorthodoxy. These sources reveal that the pre-Muhammadan Arab tribes had not one but several prophets, and pilgrimage rituals that did not involve Mecca. Rhymed religious texts, when they appeared (notably suras 10 and 17), were oral and exposed to variant readings and recastings. When the Arab conquerors settled down to become administrators, among their projects was the organisation of the Qur'an. This was accomplished through the *sirat al-an'mi*, now sura 6; likely in 30 AH / 650 CE.

About the Author David Reid Ross is the author of *House of War* (2012) and *Throne of Glass* (2014).