

We will all miss his creative mind, fascinating presence, and genuine friendship. ✂

DOI:[10.1017/rms.2015.39](https://doi.org/10.1017/rms.2015.39)

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Wolfhart P. Heinrichs 1941–2014

Wolfhart Heinrichs was professor of Arabic at Harvard's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations since 1978 and held the James Richard Jewett chair from 1996 until his unexpected death on 23 January 2014. Educated in Semitic languages, Islamic studies, and philosophy in Cologne, Giessen, Frankfurt, and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, he studied with such luminaries as Werner Caskel, Helmut Gätje, R.B. Serjeant, Rudolf Sellheim, and Ewald Wagner. He soon became a luminary in his own right, cooperating with Fuat Sezgin on the monumental *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* and authoring more than fifty articles in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (second edition), for which he was also co-editor.

Wolfhart Heinrichs was a philologist in one obvious sense of the word: a lover of language. Not only was he one of the foremost Arabists of his generation, but he also knew an astonishing number of other languages: German (his mother tongue), French, English, Russian, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Persian, Turkish—and even this impressive list is not exhaustive. In his last years, he was intensely interested in the southern African language Mbarakwengo, and eagerly sought to pass on this knowledge.

For Wolfhart Heinrichs, interest in language went hand in hand with a keen interest in—and sympathy for—the history, ideas, and culture of the people who used it. What the German hermeneutic tradition called *Sitz im Leben* (roughly “social and cultural context”) was central to his understanding of the challenge of interpreting historical texts. He explicitly invoked *Sitz im Leben* in his classic article, “On the Genesis of the Ḥaḳīqa-Majāz Dichotomy” (*Studia Islamica*, 1984). The article traces in masterly fashion how the Arabic term *majāz*, which later came to mean “figurative usage,” in earlier times

tended to mean simply an explanation of idiomatic usage. The later sense of figurative as opposed to literal evolved from this earlier sense because of—and this is where Sitz im Leben comes in—the efforts of early theologians to make sense of apparent anthropomorphisms in the Qur'an. In his concise and elegant *Hand of the Northwind* (Steiner, 1977), Wolfhart traced an analogous evolution in the central concept of *isti'ārah* (metaphor) from a poetic license to attribute things (like hands) to other things that do not have them (like the northwind) to the use of a term to refer to something for which it was not originally intended. This development was driven to some extent by a shift in the focus of medieval Arabic literary scholars from pre-Islamic poetry to the stylistic inimitability of the Qur'an. Wolfhart's findings on the importance of the literary theorists' ideas to the broader concerns of their time are of immediate relevance to anyone working on the early history of Qur'anic exegesis, jurisprudence, and rational theology.

Wolfhart is equally remembered by his students as a teacher and mentor: his legendary Arabic philology class, where he would write personally tailored exams for each student; his meticulous analyses of term papers and dissertation chapters as if they were one of the classical texts themselves; his creativity in writing General Exam questions, which would always include one he knew the student could probably not answer (just to instill in the student that all-important humility in the face of what he or she does not know); his trust in his students to pursue whatever paths their research led them to (even if it meant taking a year longer to finish); and the much-awaited limerick he would write when the student finally did finish. All of these, together with his humble, kind and shy demeanor, made Wolfhart Heinrichs an object of admiration and inspiration for a generation of Arabists.

Wolfhart is survived by his loving wife, the Arabic scholar Alma Giese, as well as nine pets (rabbits, rats, a guinea pig, and Charlie and Pumpkin the cats). Students and colleagues around the world mourn his passing and feel privileged to have known him.

The following poem by Ibn Fāris (d. 1004) and translated by Wolfhart encapsulates, according to Wolfhart, the life of a scholar (He wrote three different versions of the translation, varying by meter. The one here is *parlando* or free rhythms.):

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|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ريخ تل قف تنأ فيك اول اقو | جاح تشوفيو ة جاح ي ضقت |
| انلق بلقلا مومه تم ح ذرا اذا | جارفن امل نوكي أموي يسع |
| يبلق رورسو يتره يم يدن | جارسلل يقوش عمو يل رتافد |

“How are you?” they said, and I said “not too bad,
 one wish is fulfilled but many pass me by.”
 When sorrows crowd out my heart, I say:
 Maybe one day there will be surcease of sorrow!
 My companion is my cat, and the joy of my heart
 is notebooks I have, and my beloved the lamp.
 (translation by Wolfhart Heinrichs) ✂

DOI:[10.1017/rms.2015.40](https://doi.org/10.1017/rms.2015.40)

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Annie Higgins **1957–2014**

Annie Campbell Higgins was born and raised in the Chicago area. After receiving a BA in geography from Northwestern University, she entered the University of Chicago’s Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) in 1988 and graduated with a PhD in Islamic thought in 2001, having been awarded the prestigious Stuart Tave Award in the Humanities. During this period, she taught Arabic language and several Middle Eastern subjects at the University of Chicago, Loyola University, the University of Illinois in Chicago, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Florida. After graduation she held tenure-track positions in Arabic literature and language at Wayne State University and then at the College of Charleston. The key to Annie’s academic career was her love of and commitment to the study of Arabic language and culture. Even before entering NELC, she had spent a year in Egypt (1985–86) studying Arabic and making a point of mixing with Egyptians, learning about their culture and speaking their dialect with enthusiasm.

Annie spent another year in Egypt (1992–93), this time concentrating on studying the Qur’an, its text, and recitation, with specialized Egyptian professors. This sojourn was connected with her PhD dissertation topic, namely the references to the Qur’an in the poetry of an early Islamic sect called by the historians the Kharijites (“the seceders”). Annie did not consider this name appropriate and preferred to call them by the name they called themselves, the Shurat (“people who sell their souls for God’s sake in exchange for God’s pleasure”). This allowed her to dwell