

## *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture*

**Coeli Fitzpatrick and Adam Hani Walker, eds. *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2014. 2 vols: 784 pp. \$189.00. Hardcover. ISBN: 9781610691772. E-book. ISBN: 9781610691789.**

Fitzpatrick and Walker, in their work *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God*, seek to provide a solid exploratory encyclopedia to a diverse readership. It is an accessible work that provides introductory focus on the influence of Muhammad to the scholar of religious studies at the baccalaureate and master's level. For those who are new to the study of Muhammad, the resource is both helpful and insightful, providing adequate information on a specifically defined group of subjects.

The two-volume format (Volume One alphabetically lists A-M; Volume Two, N-Z) in the hardcover edition of this encyclopedia provides ease of use for the researcher. Page numbers continue from the end of the first volume to the beginning of the second volume, and this corresponds to the e-book presentation. Both hardcover volumes contain an identical introductory section (i-xxxvi) listing tools for reference. Along with an alphabetical list of entries, a brief lexicon of related topics is provided under eleven subheadings: Art and Architecture; Culture; Ethics and Philosophy; Geography; Law; Life, Times, and Character; Literature, Poetry, and Devotionals; Other Religions and the West; Themes; Theology; and Worship, Prayer, and Ritual. A "Chronology of Important Dates" from the birth of Muhammad to the end of the Ottoman Caliphate concludes the introductory section.

Written and presented in English, the work organizes topics alphabetically, transliterating into Latin characters those Arabic terms and names for which articles are written and which are interspersed among other general categories. As this work is a compendium of related topics rather than a defining dictionary of terms, articles have been chosen to highlight the magnitude and prominence of Muhammad in human history, thought, and culture. The descriptions providing insights on the subjects covered within the encyclopedia provide the reader with specific subsections (for example, the article on "The Illiteracy of Muhammad" is divided into three subsections; "The Creed of Islam" features six subsections; "Human Rights and the Prophet" includes four subsections). Related topics and subjects also covered within the work are identified at the end of the article. The topical index (723-84) provides a fair listing of topics discussed with page identifiers, and directs the scholar to the information provided.

Throughout the material there are approximately seventy-five black-and-white pictures. There are also twelve highlighted frames of information or subject themes editorially inserted into this work, specifically relating to essential topics within the surrounding article. These highlighted frames include *Bayt al-Hikma* (House of Wisdom); Finality of Prophethood (*khatam al-nabiyyin*); African Americans and Islam; *Durad* (Sending Blessings upon the Prophet); *Al-Andalus*: The Muslim Presence in Medieval Spain; *Ziyara* (Visitation); *Jahiliyya* (The Pre-Islamic Period); Hell; Five Pillars of Faith; Excellences of Muhammad; Ottomans; and the 'Abbasid Caliphate.

The strength of this resource is clearly seen in the quality of the scholarship and the layout of the material. As a work that specifically defines its parameters to be the historical and cultural influences produced by Muhammad's life, it offers a readable reference providing solid research. Using an economy of words, the various authors have created a succinct but accurate tool for quick referral and information. The general length of articles has been edited into a format of one to five pages in a readable font size. This provides swift information access without extended or unnecessary discourse. The two notable article sections which provide more information through page count and subsections are those discussing *Sira* (collections and recording of information about the life and practices of the Prophet Muhammad, twenty-nine pages) and *Sunna* (customary, established, or normative practice, ten pages).

The weakness of this resource is found in its value as a concise but introductory work. Its limitation is due to its being an encyclopedic resource providing general information. Though this work provides strong commentary, it is not intended to be used as an extensive or exhaustive source document. This is evidenced by a small glossary of words and topics (705-8) and a limited bibliography (709-13). Citations for resources for further investigation of subjects and articles are provided but are not consistently strong or comprehensive. The book is intended for introduction and insight for the subjects covered, not as a primary reference. Its purpose is to begin the conversation and to point to other places for greater knowledge and definition of a topic.

I appreciated the global viewpoint of this work in its description of the positions of different Islamic traditions with clarity and candor. For example, in presenting the topic *Jihad* (327-21), the encyclopedia provides an article that accurately describes how the topic has culturally impacted both the Islamic community and communities outside of the *umma*. The impact of *Jihad* is discussed within its historical context, in its specific “greater” and “lesser” manifestations. Information from commentators viewing *Jihad* within Islam, specifically regarding the present-day understanding of lesser Jihad resulting from European colonial and Western cultural expansion into and within the *dar al-Islam*, is also provided.

I would recommend *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture* for purchase as a reference work not only in academic libraries but also in public libraries. The objective nature of this work is certainly essential for the scholar within the academy but also provides a solid reference work for a general readership. The ever-transforming religious and social climate of society requires strong and durable reference material that is both reflective and reputable. Fitzpatrick and Walker have created such a reference work.

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