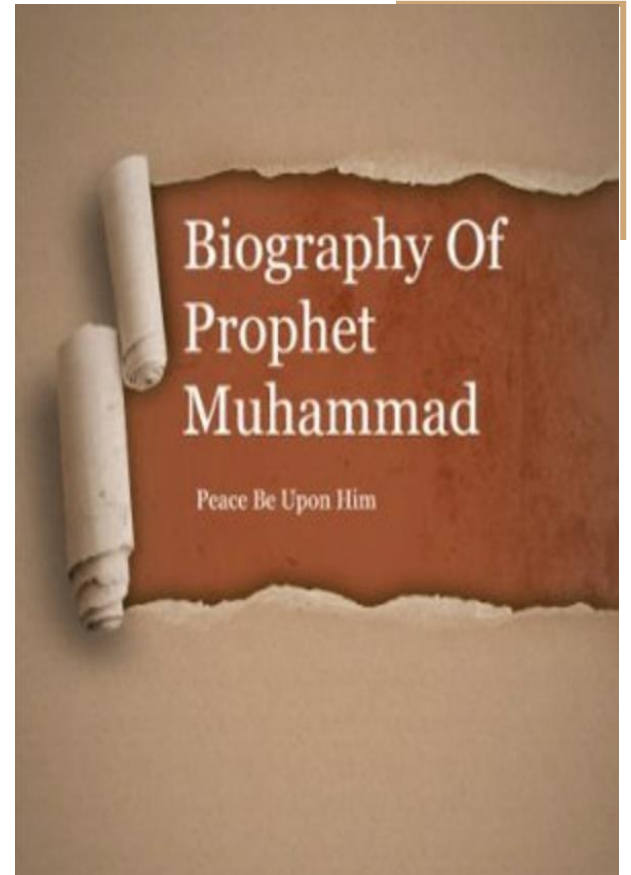


Muhammad and Early Islam

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Outlines



- Why do we study the biography of the Prophet?
- Overview of Muhammad's life
- The life of Muhammad and its sources
- Muhammad and Islam
- Questions/Discussions

I. Why do we study the biography of the Prophet?

1. Close connection between the Qur'an the life of Muhammad

On Meccan and Medinan chapters (sūrah)s)

- ❖ 610-622 Meccan period
- ❖ 622-632 Medinan period

Theodore Noldeke's chronology

- **Mecca 1:** short, rhymed, apocalyptic
- **Mecca 2:** prophecy and opposition
- **Mecca 3:** heaven and hell, liturgical
- **Medina:** longer, less rhythmic, less artful, Biblical and legal

2. *Sīrah* (biography) as a fascinating field of research

- Muhammad's biography has drawn much scholarly attention in the West even before scholars expressed their interest in the study of the Qur'an
- Research on "historical Jesus"

Ernest Renan: the birth of Islam is not shrouded in mystery, in contrast to the emergence of other religions. Unlike so many of the world's other religions, for instance, Islam was born "in the full light of history," in which we know about Islam's founding prophet "year by year the fluctuation of his thoughts, his contradictions, his weaknesses."

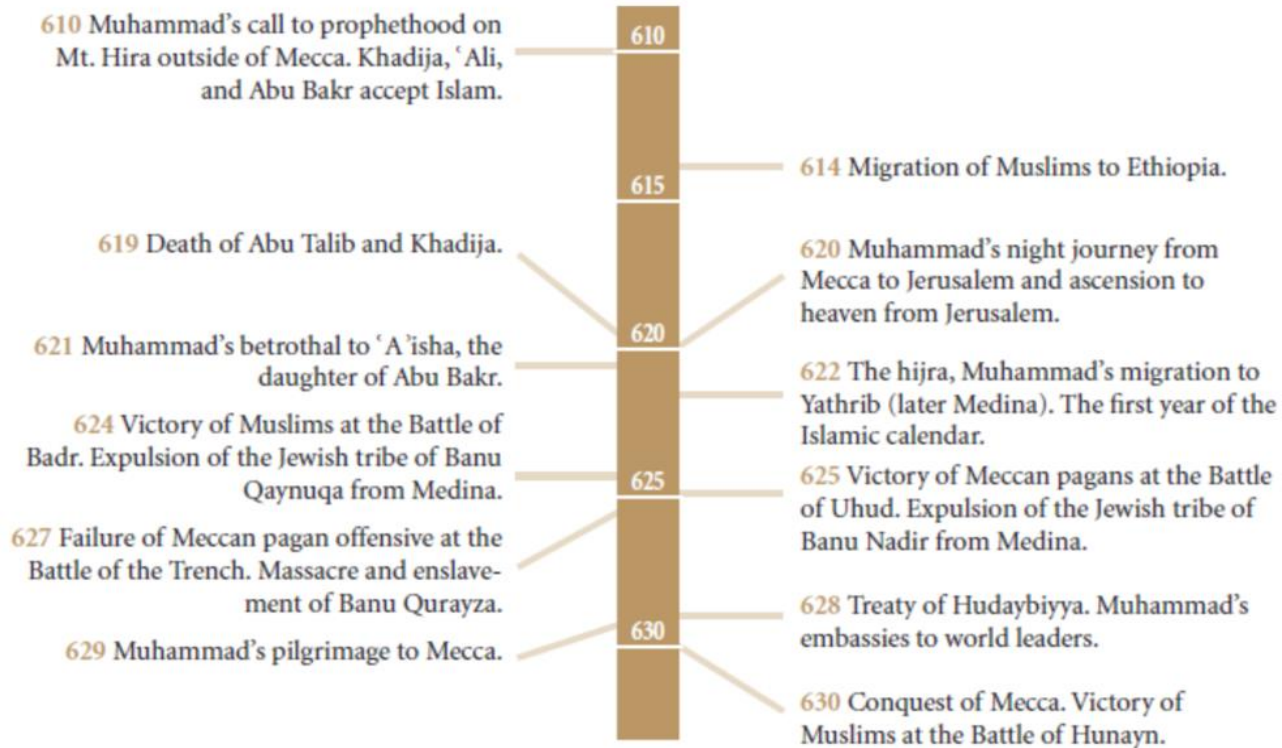
- Arthur Jeffery "The Quest of the Historical Muhammad" (1926); F.E. Peters (1991)

II. Overview of Muhammad's life

- Born in 570 in Mecca, the year of elephant Q [105](#)
- Muhammad's marriage
- **First revelation in 610 Q [96:1-5](#)**
- The sad year and the night journey
- Allegiance/pledge at 'Aqaba
- **Hijrah (emigration) to Medina in 622**
- The Constitution of Medina
- Battles (e.g. Badr, Uhud, etc.)
- Peace agreement at Hudaibiyyah
- The conquest of Mecca (*Fath Makkah*) Q [48](#)
- **Muhammad died in 632**



Timelines of Muhammad's Life



III. The life of Muhammad and its sources

The Earliest Source: Ibn Ishaq and his *sīrah* (Biography of the Prophet)

- Born Medina and died in Baghdad (d. 150 H/767 CE)
- Author of the earliest extant biography of the Prophet. Received traditions from his teacher al-Zuhri (d. 124 H/ 741 CE)
- Text only known from the transmission of Ibn Hisham (d. 218 H/833 CE)

Approaches to the reliability of the *sīrah*

Problems of the Muslim sources:

- Written more than a hundred years after the death of the Prophet
- Contains contradictions
- Reflects later developments

Between traditionalist/sanguine and revisionist/skeptic

IV. Muhammad and Islam

Two Primary Sources of Islam

- ❖ Qur'an
- ❖ Hadith (Muhammad's statements and deeds)
 - Literally, "speech". Hadith and Sunna (a tradition and the tradition)
 - Scope of Hadith: His words, his deeds/actions, words/actions done in his presence.
 - Hadith: *isnad* (chain of transmission) and *matn* (transmitted report/text)
- ❖ The Qur'an needs hadith more than the other way around

Islam: Al-Qur'an and Prophetic Tradition

Principles of Belief

- Belief in the oneness of God
- Belief in His Angels
- Belief in Messengers
- Belief in Scriptures
- Belief in the Day of Judgement
- Belief in the Divine Decree

Pillars of Islam

- Confession of faith
- Prayer (salat)
- Almsgiving (zakat)
- Fasting (sawm)
- Pilgrimage (hajj)

Discussions

