



Muhammad in Europe: A Thousand Years of Western Myth-Making

Minou Reeves

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Generations of Western writers from the Crusades down to the present day have claimed to depict the life and personality of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. Over the course of thirteen centuries, biased and stubbornly negative representations have persisted, presenting images which bear no resemblance to the noble figure familiar to Muslims. Muhammad in Europe traces this consistent tradition of distortion and provides an account of the reasons behind it.

Prefaced by a biographical sketch of Muhammad's life based on original sources, this book traces the defining eras of Western history and thinking, showing how Muhammad and Islam have been used as foils to Western thought. Today, most Westerners have inherited the assumption that there was something wrong with Muhammad's character and behaviour, a belief that has helped to kindle the suspicion and resentment toward the West manifested in what is popularly called Islamic Fundamentalism.

Drawing on works dating from the Middle Ages to the last decade of the twentieth century and spanning Latin, Italian, French, German and English language sources, the book culminates with a critical analysis of Salman Rushdie's controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Muhammad in Europe tells the riveting story of Muhammad's reception in the West, a story of rivalry and confrontation.

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