



Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam)

By Robert G. Hoyland

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This book offers a new approach to the vexing question of how to write the early history of Islam. The first part discusses the nature of the Muslim and non-Muslim source material for the seventh- and eighth-century Middle East and argues that by lessening the divide between these two traditions, which has largely been erected by modern scholarship, we can come to a better appreciation of this crucial period. The second part gives a detailed survey of sources and an analysis of some 120 non-Muslim texts, all of which provide information about the first century and a half of Islam (roughly A.D. 620-780). The third part furnishes examples, according to the approach suggested in the first part and with the material presented in the second part, how one might write the history of this time. The fourth part takes the form of excurses on various topics, such as the process of Islamization, the phenomenon of conversion to Islam, the development of techniques for determining the direction of prayer, and the conquest of Egypt.

Because this work views Islamic history with the aid of non-Muslim texts and assesses the latter in the light of Muslim writings, it will be essential reading for historians of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, or Zoroastrianism--indeed, for all those with an interest in cultures of the eastern Mediterranean in its traditional phase from Late Antiquity to medieval times.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Robert Hoyland was Lecturer in Arabic and Islamic History, Pembroke College, Oxford, and is now a Research Fellow in the History of the Middle East at St. John's College, Oxford. He has written a number of articles of an interdisciplinary nature on cultures of the Middle East.

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