

Yasminah Hashim and Muhammad A. J. Beg • *A Journey Through Islamic History: A Timeline of Key Events* • Kube • 2015 (reprint) • HB
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This colorful book chronicles fourteen hundred years of Muslim history and civilization in linear timelines, supported by maps, charts, photographs, and lavish illustration. Initiated by a personal desire to see the big picture in a nutshell and graphically encompass the incessant flow of time—that is history—in a manner that attaches individual lives to the greater collective, the book took shape through a collaborative effort of the Saudi lawyer Yasminah Hashim, who started to make out these timelines at the age of seventeen, and UK based historian Muhammad A. J. Beg, who passed away in 2014 in Cambridge. *A Journey through Islamic History: A timeline of Key Events* begins with the birth of the Prophet and ends with the mention of certain events of 2015. Within this sweeping timeframe, there are varying degrees of depth; coverage is scanty in certain cases, more elaborate in others, but since the narrative is kept to a bare minimum, the value of the book is in its timelines and charts. The book overviews, in chronological order, the time of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the Umayyads, ‘Abbasids, Mamluks, Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals, the rise of European power, and modern Muslim nation-States.

Color maps provide graphic depictions of their time period. “Conquests of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Umayyads” (p. 23) shows Arab advance from 11 AH till 40 AH; subsequent maps similarly portray the changing Muslim environs, for example: Crusader States of the Middle East 1096-1291 (p. 77), European Empires in the Muslim World, c. 1920 (p. 147), Muslims around the World, 2009 (p. 161) and Palestinian and Jewish Land 1945–1999 (p. 169).

The first chapter about the Qur’ān and the life of the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, presents certain information that is conjectural, or even inaccurate. The last verse of the Qur’ān to have been revealed is said to be Q 5:3, revealed at ‘Arafāt, whereas even though there is no scholarly consensus on the exact verse that was the last, there is consensus that the Prophet continued to receive revelation after the Farewell Pilgrimage (see al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, Type 8, “What part of the Qur’ān was revealed last”).

The floor plan of the house where the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, lived in Makkah, is totally conjectural; it identifies a very large room marked “Khadijah’s Office”, another room is labeled “Reception”—even the birthplace of Fatima and “The Prophet’s prayer room” are shown (p. 15)! All of this is imagination, as no such information is available anywhere in the sources. The timeline given for the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, so scanty; missing from it are the well-known journey to Syria with his uncle; it

inaccurately states that “six months after the first revelation, Gabriel reveals to Muhammad that he is the Messenger of God” (p. 18)! The timeline includes little information about the richly documented events of the twelve years in Madina. Fabled Central Asian cities like Samarqand and Bukhara are not considered worthy of much attention; scholars like al-Ghazālī are mentioned in passing. Mali, Mauritania, and Timbuktu do not seem to have caught author’s attention.

First published in 2012 with 164 pages, this revised edition has 184 pages. With over 175 photographs and illustrations, approximately 500 entries in its timeline, and textboxes highlighting personalities, events, and ideas, *A Journey Through Islamic History: A Timeline of Key Events* is for lay readers interested in a picture book on Muslim history. It should, however, not be taken as a primary or even secondary source of reliable information, for this is not a scholarly text rooted in sources. The picture credits on the last page acknowledge copyright of some of the photographs along with an offer from the publishers “to rectify any omissions in future editions following notification from the copyright holders”(p. 184), but it is somewhat disturbing to discover inaccurate or absent credits and that none of the 16 maps in the book cite their source.

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