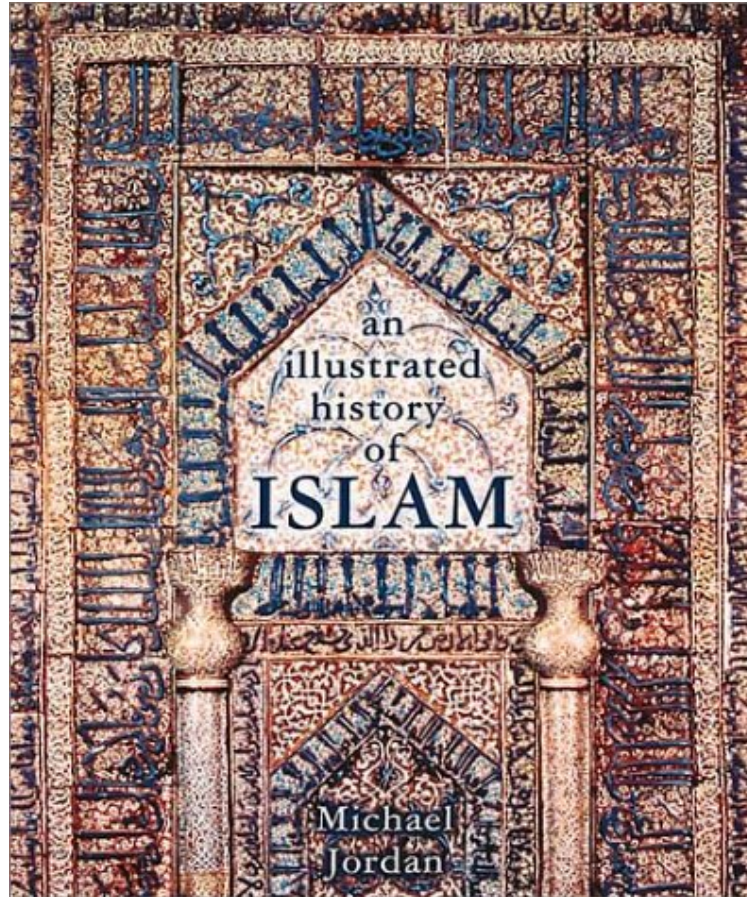


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An Illustrated History of Islam

Michael Jordan

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Michael Jordan : An Illustrated History of Islam before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Illustrated History of Islam:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Doulos72Beautiful book and pictures. The author's commentary is a bit less objective about Islam than I had hoped.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy hjhuntGorgeous visually, and impressive text as well. Highly recommend

Islam has been viewed as a militant and destructive force bent on conquest, but religious anthropologist Michael Jordan urges us to lay aside this perception. In this richly illustrated volume, Jordan presents an objective, accessible, highly informative introduction to the Islamic faith. Delving deep into Islamic history, he beckons us to look beyond the headlines to its riches, its accomplishments, and its profound impact on the world. Among the topics are the origins of the religion and its earliest years; Muhammad and his legacy; the spread and consolidation of Islam and its impact on the West; The Quran and Muslim beliefs; the rituals of Islamic worship and its holy places; and the future of Islam. It is a balanced, beautifully produced guide to the second largest religion in the world.

From Publishers Weekly This lavishly illustrated history compensates in balanced content for what it lacks in felicitous prose. Jordan, a former BBC broadcaster whose previous books include *Encyclopedia of the Gods* and *The Pagan Encyclopedia*, tackles the major movements, people and places of Islam, the world's second-largest religion. The book's greatest strength is its objective tone at a time when bookstore shelves are crammed with apologist primers on the one hand and alarmist screeds on the other. Jordan charts a sensible middle course, particularly in the last chapter where he explores the future of Islam. Another strength is his focus on Islam not just as a political phenomenon or a historical tradition, but as a religion that must be lived faithfully, day in and day out. To this end, he provides a wealth of detail about the specifics of Muslim prayer, almsgiving, fasting and Qur'anic study. Jordan is sensitive to the ways that religions must change over time to accommodate evolving circumstances and cultural conditions. He is willing to set the record straight in key areas, arguing, for example, that the claim that early Muslims spread their religion only by "amicable persuasion" is "simply untrue." The book's only real problem is its gauche writing style; from the first page to the last, it is plagued with missing commas, run-on sentences and an excessive use of the passive voice. Readers who can see past such stylistic peccadilloes will appreciate the book's strong, well-researched content and its 120 color illustrations. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal These two illustrated volumes attempt to address the ongoing need for accessible books on Islam. Jordan (*The Pagan Encyclopedia*), a former broadcaster with a personal interest in religious anthropology, presents a readable introduction to Islamic history. Jordan divides his subject into manageable proportions, treating Islam's origins, the life of the Prophet, the Islamic empire, the Qur'an, worship, branches of Islam, holy places, and law. He renders the religion understandable by making comparisons that will speak to a Christian audience. Well-chosen illustrations complement the text. The main caveats are that Jordan is not academically trained and sometimes strays into areas with which he is unfamiliar. His statements regarding movements arising in Islam are suspect-e.g., he mischaracterizes the Babi movement as a Sufi order and incorrectly states that Baha'u'llah claimed to be the Twelfth Imam. A photojournalist whose work has appeared in publications in America and Britain, Laurance has created a coffee-table book on the Muslim world. This volume is less a review of Islam than a visual record of the lives and surroundings of Muslims. Aside from a few images of mosques and people at prayer, the photographs depict children, women, and men in various daily activities-for instance, veiled women talking, men conversing while tending camels, markets, street vendors, a family sacrificing a lamb for Eid al-Adha, and artwork painted on a truck in Karachi. The photographs are arranged by region-North and West Africa, Near and Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Jordan's volume is appropriate for public libraries, while Laurance's may be useful in public libraries with shelf space for photography books. Both books require that the purchasing library already have or be ready to acquire additional works on Islam.

William P. Collins, Library of Congress Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

About the Author Michael Jordan began his writing career after spending ten years as a successful broadcaster working for the BBC, Granada, Anglia, Channel 4, BBC Radio 4 and World Service. He has pursued two avenues of deeply personal interest - the anthropology of religions and natural history - which have produced numerous published works including *Gods of the Earth*, *Encyclopedia of the Gods*, *Myths of the World* and *The Pagan Encyclopedia*. He is the author of *Cults*, *Eastern Wisdom* and *Nostradamus* and the *New Millennium* for Carlton Books. He lives in Axminster, Devon.