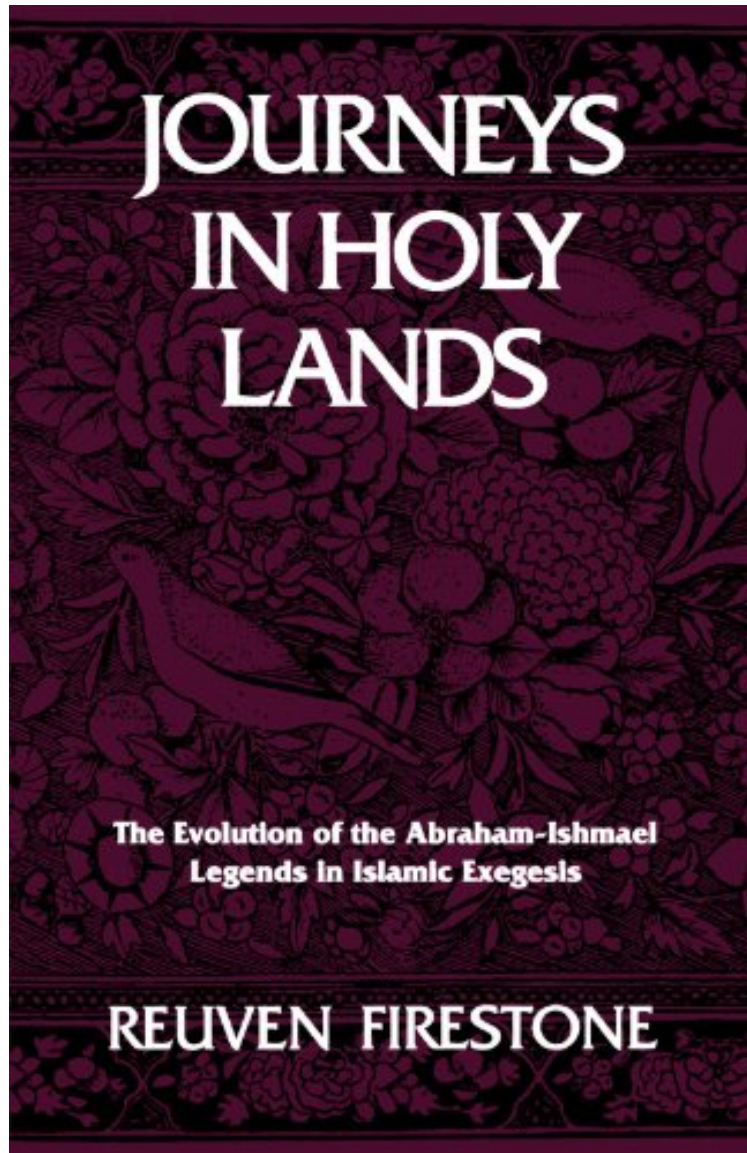


[Get free] Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis

Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis

Reuven Firestone

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Reuven Firestone : Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Journeys in Holy Lands: The Evolution of the Abraham-Ishmael Legends in Islamic Exegesis:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. valuable overview of the Abrahamic hadithBy David Reid RossThis

book is a scholarly overview of the Islamic take on Abraham's career and family. It is organised per topic. The Islamic tradition upon the Patriarch's life holds that he had spent his childhood in Iraq, was persecuted for his Islam, and fled to Syria / Palestine. Firestone's book skips all that, to the accounts of Abraham meeting Sarah in Harran (chapter 3). Soon enough, a tyrant takes Sarah, and so Abraham frees her (4). Ishmael is born (5). Angels announce the birth of Isaac as well (7). Abraham takes Ishmael to Mecca (8-10) and builds the House (11). He announces the Hajj (12). He sacrifices his son (13-15) who may be Isaac or Ishmael (16). The book was published in 1990, and is aware of Norman Calder's 1988 revisionist essay "From Midrash to Scripture" but cites it only in chapter 7 (p. 54 n. 11) and not in the more relevant 16 (pp. 135-51). Firestone appears to have no agenda one way or another; he wants to list out all the hadiths he can find within his limits, wherever they take him. In some chapters, Firestone will write out an outline for how the hadiths organise that chapter's topic: ch. 4, pp. 31-2 v. 33-4; ch. 8, pp. 63-4 v. 69-70. Sometimes a synopsis between hadiths is possible: pp. 34-6. Sometimes an Islamic tradition is comparable to the Bible: p. 65. A bundle of hadiths can share an important feature, which hints that their common source did teach that as part of the tradition. Alternately, some hadiths (this is notoriously common with Ibn `Abbas traditions) are wildly different from one another, hinting that their "common source" was not consulted at all and therefore spurious. This leads Firestone to some discoveries. Taking Ibn `Abbas as our theme, the man apparently did teach about the House, but he made no note of the Black Stone there: p. 92. Ibn `Abbas traditions on the Hajj are so wild that he may, also, not have had much to say on that either - and there was confusion about the Hajj in other traditions as well. Firestone also finds that the Bible, where it intersects with Islamic doctrine, is important but not as primary as Jews and Christians would expect it to be. Pious Muslims cared about explicating the Qur'an and about ensuring that Abraham behaved in an Islamic manner. But Islam also had storytellers, and some of the information they delivered may be Biblical, or otherwise pre-Islamic (p. 75). I recommend this book to scholars of comparative religion and to specialists in the "isra'iliyat" Hadith.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Isaac or Ishmael? Flip a coin
 By James I say all concerned about Islam should read this book. Isaac or Ishmael? From the current Islamic view its' Ishmael. This book shows it wasn't always that way. Isaac or Ishmael? Flip a coin. Who it was that was to be sacrificed is crucial if one is to decide to take a life in the name of religion. The book should be translated into Arabic and given away in the Middle East. Christian missionaries to muslims: buy this book! Politicians instead of either bombing as evil people (Republicans) or downplaying the violence as simply criminal (Democrats) why not look at all the ?'s about "official" Islamic teaching and at the people (95%) as being victims of a deceit that took place before the year 1000 AD? Fight with knowledge and questions thereby defeating Islam as it now stands and redeeming the people as fellow believers.

Scholars have long pointed to the great affinity between stories found in the Bible and the Qur'an, yet no explanation has been proposed that satisfactorily explains the odd combination of incredible likeness and unique divergence. Firestone provides a refreshing, new approach to scriptural issues of textuality, exegesis, and the origins and use of legend. This book clearly presents the full range of Islamic legends from the Qur'an and early Islamic exegesis about Abraham's journeys and adventures in the Land of Canaan and Arabia, many of them available for the first time in English translation. The author examines this broad sample of Islamic legends in relation to those found in Jewish, Christian, and pre-Islamic Arabian communities, and postulates an evolutionary journey of the literature. He presents a thorough textual analysis of the material and proposes a model for understanding early Islamic narrative based in literary theory, approaches to comparative religion, and the history of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic Middle East.

Reuven Firestone discusses the relationships among Jewish, Christian, and Islamic treatments of Abraham and Ishmael without resorting to the older and invidious terms of borrowing and dependency. He is sensitive to the individual genius of each tradition while still demonstrating that they all operate in a shared universe of religious ideas. Firestone's work should become one of the models that future students of comparative religions will look to for this type of study. Gordon Newby, North Carolina State University I have done some work in the same field and found myself constantly reacting with growing excitement and enthusiasm to the author's approach, methodology, and conclusions. His division of the sources into biblist, pre-Islamic Arabian, and Islamic, is in itself, a very new and useful approach. William M. Brinner, University of California at Berkeley

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About the Author Reuven Firestone is Assistant Professor of Hebrew language and literature in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literature at Boston University.