

The Heirs of MuhammadIslam's First Century and the Origins of the Sunni-Shia Spl: Islam's First Century and the Origins of the Sunni-Shia Split

Barnaby Rogerson

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The Prophet Muhammad brought his vision of the word of God to the Arabs, and within a generation of his death, his followers--as vivid a cast of heroic individuals as history has known--had exploded out of Arabia to confront the two great superpowers of the seventh century and establish Islam and with it a new civilization.

The Heirs of Muhammad is a swaggering saga of ambition, achievement, self-sacrificing nobility and blood rivalry. In it, acclaimed historian Barnaby Rogerson recounts the lives of the handful of individuals--the first four Caliphs, the Prophet's widows and the conquering generals--who led and influenced Islam after the death of Muhammad. Within the fifty-year span of conquest and empire-building, Rogerson identifies the seeds of discord that destroyed the unity of Islam and traces the roots of the schism between Sunni and Shia Muslims to the rivalry of the two people who best knew and loved the Prophet: his cousin and son-in-law Ali and his wife Aisha.

The Heirs of Muhammad is the best kind of history--the kind that brings a forgotten era back to life while simultaneously illuminating a neglected history that is vital to an enlightened understanding of our present world.



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