For an illustration of a variety of scholarly approaches to the study of Muḥammad see the collection of articles assembled in Uri Rubin (ed.), *The Life of Muḥammad*, Aldershot, Ashgate Variorum, 1998.


**Muslim sources for the life of Muḥammad**

For an attempt to use the Qurʾān as a historical source for the life of Muhammad see Alford T. Welch, “Muḥammad’s Understanding of Himself: the Koranic Data,” in Richard G. Hovannisian and Speros Vryonis, Jr. (eds), Islam’s Understanding of Itself, Malibu, CA, Undena Publications, 1983, pp. 15–52. It must be remembered, however, that the only way the author is able to draw the conclusions which he does is by assuming, a priori, the basic framework provided by the Siīra material. On the overall question see Andrew Rippin, “Muḥammad in the Qurʾān: Reading Scripture in the 21st Century,” in Harald Motzki (ed.), The Biography of Muḥammad: The Issue of the Sources, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 2000, pp. 298–309.

The life of Muḥammad in the sources


On the hijra see Uri Rubin, “The Life of Muḥammad and the Qurʾān: the Case of Muḥammad’s hijra,” Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam, 28 (2003), 40–64; also see Patricia Crone, “The First-century Concept of Hiğra,” Arabica, 41 (1994), 352–87, for ideas related to the underlying meaning of hijra. On the structure of the Islamic calendar see the convenient summary (along with a clarification of the Gregorian and Julian calendars) by Paul Lunde, “Patterns of Moon, Patterns of Sun,” Saudi Aramco World, 60/6 (November/December 2009); the same text is available online:
Difficulties with the biography

Contemporary discussions of the life of Muḥammad have provoked a great deal of scholarship and polemic and sometimes seem to have lost sight of any sense of historical method. For what is, in essence, a reaction to that state of affairs from the most provocative writer on the subject see Patricia Crone, “What do We Actually Know about Mohammed,” openDemocracy, published online 31 August 2006, http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/mohammed_3866.jsp (the article contains an excellent selection of links that are worth reviewing also).

The mythic dimension of Muḥammad’s biography


The significance of the figure of Muḥammad

For a sampling of hadith material, including a commentary on a hadith text see Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi and Andrew Rippin, Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature, London, Routledge, 2003, sections 3.1 through 3.4, all dealing with zakāt, “alms tax.”

The problem of hadith reports


The authority of Muḥammad

**The significance of Muḥammad**


**The night journey of Muḥammad**


Note that *Sūra* 53 is also sometimes connected to the night journey; see Josef van Ess, “Vision and Ascension: *Sūrat al-Najm* and its Relationship with Muḥammad’s *miʿrāj*,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies*, 1 (1999), 47–62.

A text providing many vivid details of the heavenly journey ascribed to Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 687) is translated in Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi and Andrew Rippin, *Classical Islam: A
Sourcebook of Religious Literature, London, Routledge, 2003, section 2.2; the origin and dating of the text is quite uncertain and the version presented is just one of many such traditions. For the role of this narrative overall see Brooke Olson Vuckovic, Heavenly Journeys, Earthly Concerns: The Legacy of the Miʿraj in the Formation of Islam, London, Routledge, 2005.


For an example of another miracle related to Muḥammad see Harris Birkeland, The Legend of the Opening of Muḥammad’s Breast, Oslo, Jacob Dybwad, 1955.

Muḥammad as intercessor
