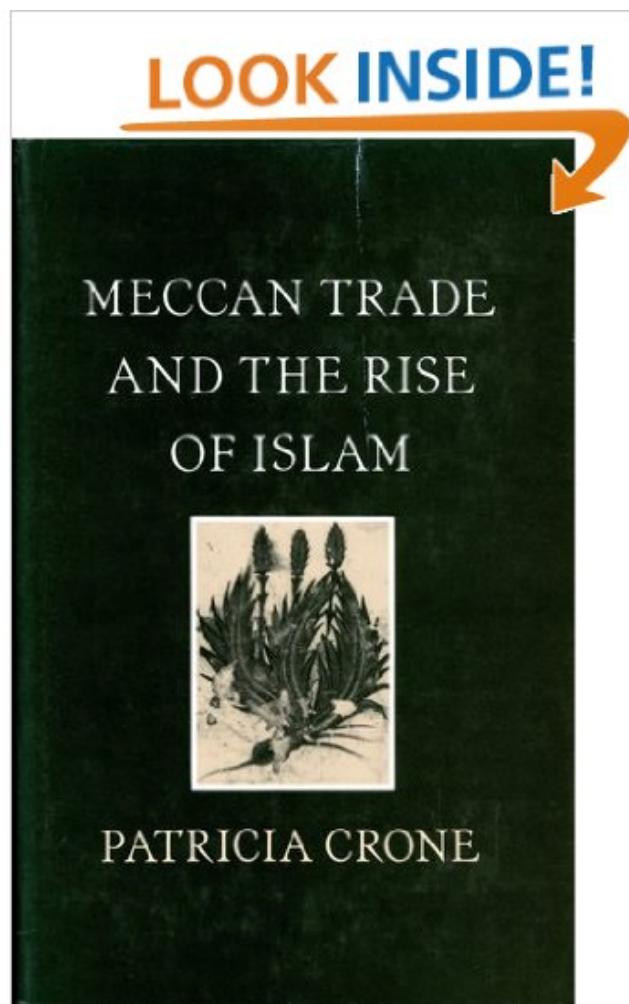


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Meccan Trade And The Rise Of Islam



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

When I was a teenager I was always fascinated with the history of the rise of Islam. Looking at maps of Arabia and the location of Mecca, I always found it somewhat strange that Mecca should be located on a major trade route and that trade goods would pass through the desert on caravans that stopped at Mecca when it seemed that they could quite easily go by boat up the Red Sea. I had already studied the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians and was well aware that with the technology available, it was far cheaper to transport goods by sea than by land, so why would the Arabs not use the Red Sea to conduct their trade? At the time I just assumed that the experts must know why, perhaps the Red Sea was not navigable in the same way as the Mediterranean? Perhaps there were not enough natural harbors and that the currents are treacherous? Or there were just too many pirates. So I did not give it too much thought after that, assuming that the experts in the field simply understood why, though I never read any book that explained this curious anomaly. Twenty years later I came across the work of the skeptical school of early Islam who are beginning to question that a great trading center known as Mecca could have even existed in such an empty remote part of the desert not directly on a major trade route. Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam is an incredibly detailed study of what pre-Islamic trade 'might' have been like. Crone explains that there are too many uncertainties and far too little written or archaeological data to draw any definite conclusions, but what we do know is that the traditional narrative about a prosperous trading city in

the middle of the desert simply do not add up.

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