

Khadijah

c. 555-619



HOW SHE AFFECTED THE REGION

Khadijah was one of the most important women in Islamic history. She was the first wife of Muhammad and his main supporter.

VOCABULARY

revelation something that is revealed by a god to humans



As you read the biography below, think about how Khadijah's loyalty played an important role in her husband's life.

Khadijah (ka-DEE-jah) was a prosperous Arabian widow and a wealthy merchant. She hired Muhammad to manage the caravan business that she owned. Muhammad's skill as a trader and his ability to handle the business impressed Khadijah. Soon her admiration toward Muhammad turned into affection.

In 595 Khadijah proposed marriage. Muhammad was surprised that such a noble woman would want to marry him, but he happily accepted her proposal. At the time of their marriage, Muhammad was 25 years old and Khadijah was 40. They had six children together, four daughters and two sons.

Their relationship was important to Muhammad's development as a religious leader. About 15 years after they married, Muhammad had a vision. Muslims believe that while Muhammad was meditating in a cave outside of Mecca, an angel appeared to him. The angel began delivering messages to him from God. At first, Muhammad doubted that his visions were truly a **revelation**. Khadijah encouraged him by saying, "I testify that you are the awaited prophet in this nation, and your time, if Allah wills, has come."

Khadijah stood by Muhammad as he struggled with doubts about his fate and many times later when others opposed his teachings. Khadijah was one of Muhammad's most loyal followers and became the first person to embrace Islam.

Muhammad went on to unite his people in the Islamic faith. Khadijah took care of their family and ran the household, which allowed Muhammad to dedicate himself entirely to his preaching. Khadijah eventually spent her entire fortune promoting Islam.

Muhammad loved and respected Khadijah so much that he took no other wives—even though customs of the time would allow him to do so—until after her death in 619. Many years after she passed away, Muhammad said that Khadijah “believed in me when all others disbelieved; she held me truthful when others called me a liar; she sheltered me when others abandoned me.”

Today, Khadijah serves as a role model for Islamic women. To many Muslims, Khadijah is one of the greatest women who ever lived.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- 1. Recall** Who was Khadijah, and what was her relationship to Muhammad before they married?

- 2. Analyze** In your opinion, what was Khadijah's main contribution to Muhammad's development as a prophet?

ACTIVITY

Write a letter from the point of view of a Muslim stating Khadijah's positive qualities. Address what you think might have happened if she had never encouraged Muhammad when he had his vision.

Kathleen Kenyon

1906–1978



HOW SHE AFFECTED THE WORLD

Kathleen Kenyon excavated the city of Jericho using an archaeological technique now known as the Wheeler-Kenyon Method. Kenyon's excavations of Jericho shed new light on the history of the ancient city.



As you read the biography below, look for the description of the method Kathleen Kenyon used to learn about Jericho and other ancient sites.



Bettmann/CORBIS

Kathleen Kenyon was born in London, England. She studied archaeology at Oxford University. She participated in many digs in England, but her most famous work took place in the Holy Land.

Kenyon studied for a time with Mortimer Wheeler, another archaeologist, who was developing a new method of digging. While other archaeologists were stripping layers one by one from the ground and examining them, Wheeler and Kenyon believed that seeing the layers in the middle of other layers was important.

After her work with Wheeler, Kenyon was invited by archaeologist John Garstang to examine his findings in Jericho. Garstang had **excavated** Jericho. He hoped to prove the Bible's story of Jericho's walls tumbling down was true. Kenyon looked at his work and decided she needed to do a more thorough excavation. She began her work in 1951.

Using the excavation method she had developed with Wheeler, Kenyon dug down through layers in sections. She left some areas **intact** so that she could see a cross-section of the site. This helped her to better understand when events happened in relation to one another. It also helped her date her findings.

VOCABULARY

excavated dug up

intact left in their original position

Kenyon set out to trace Jericho back to its earliest times. She found evidence of humans living in Jericho as early as 10,000 BC. She found the walls of the city of Jericho and noticed that they had been repaired many times. She thought that they might have been damaged by earthquakes. Kenyon dated the most recent wall to about 2300 BC. This would make it impossible for the city to have been destroyed by the Israelites in the 15th century BC as the Bible describes. Later archaeologists have analyzed her data, and some have concluded that her findings were inaccurate.

While there is still debate about Kathleen Kenyon's conclusions about Jericho, most people agree that she made important contributions to the field of archaeology.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- 1. Recall** What is the Wheeler-Kenyon method of excavation?

- 2. Express and Support a Point of View** Why is the work of archaeologists like Kenyon important? Explain.

ACTIVITY

Make a poster encouraging people to study archaeology. Use information about Kathleen Kenyon on your poster and include a picture of her. Conduct additional research about the Wheeler-Kenyon method to help make your poster more informative and persuasive.