

**ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN BRITISH TRAVEL WRITING ON  
TUNIS IN THE NINETEENTH  
AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES**

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**Abstract:** There is a widespread resentment towards Islam today which is harbored by many in the world including the West. Long phases of encounters between Islam and the West have been characterized by misconceptions ranging from the polemics of the early Christian writers to the distortions of the orientalists. These misperceptions still endure.

British travel writing about the Muslim world contributed to the popularization of such images and informed this long history of misunderstanding of Islam which has strongly pervaded the West so far.

This paper explores the patterns of such imagery as shown in British travellers' accounts of Tunis over a period of more than a century. It argues that orientalism is only one aspect of these stereotypes; that these images were motivated by cultural factors in the first place and that the socio-cultural setting in which these images were produced, reconstructed and shaped is essential for a proper understanding of these.

**Keywords:** Islam, Muslims, Tunis, Britain, travel writing

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