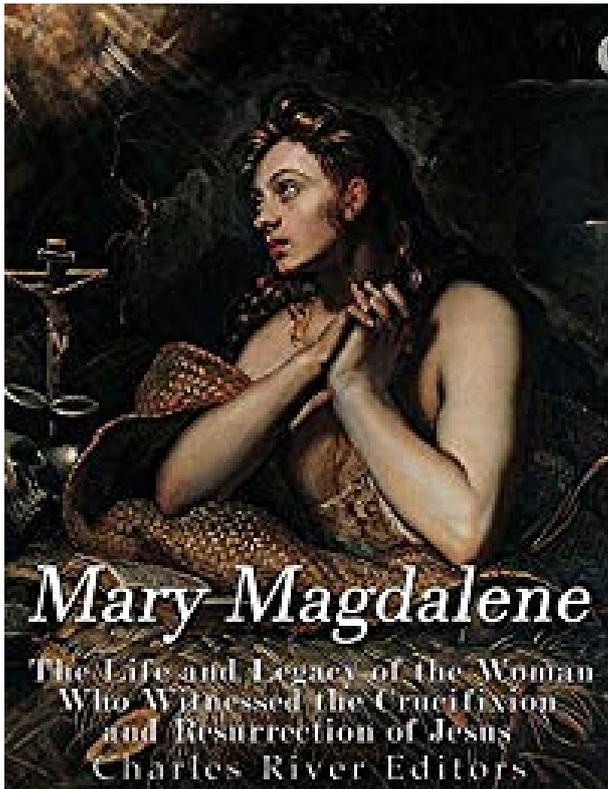


Mary Magdalene: The Life and Legacy of the Woman Who Witnessed the Crucifixion and Resurrection of

Jesus

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| Genre: | Nonfiction |
| Published: | October 26th 2017 by Charles River Editors |
| Pages: | 72 |
| Author: | Charles River Editors |
| Goodreads Rating: | 4.05 |
| ASIN | B076XF2RCZ |



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*Includes pictures *Includes Gospel passages and apocryphal passages *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading *Includes a table of contents “After that, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Mary Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out—and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.” - Luke 8:1-3 Mary Magdalene is one of the most talked about figures in modern Christianity, a woman who mainstream media and modern sensibilities can hold with more conviction. The media, press, movie industry, and airport literature have been obsessed with this redhead for more than 100 years, a fascination that reached its climax in the first decade of this century, and does not seem likely to end any time soon. Mary Magdalene is frequently depicted as young and attractive, liberated and intelligent, a symbol of a freer spirituality, and not controlled by a male-dominated church. In the minds of many, she embodies opposition to a system dominated by old men in white cassocks, the "sacred feminine." As if that is not enough, she has the best bachelor in the world: Jesus Christ himself. The French-made, fair-haired Mary Magdalene who appears in innumerable works of medieval and modern art with a red robe, a symbol of rebellion and freedom (although in the Middle Ages the intention was to show her as a loose woman), is a creation of the Western Church and, more recently, the media. It is a depiction laden with centuries of intertextual struggles, patronizing homilies, medieval legends, novels looking for bestseller status, and documentaries for cable television.

But there was a historical Mary Magdalene, a woman named Miriam (Hebrew for Mary) born in Galilee in the time of King Herod, and she died, most likely in present-day Turkey, when Christianity was only a variant of Judaism.

Mary Magdalene would not recognize herself in modern portraits or the perception the average Christian of the last 1500 years has of her. If there has been a search for the historical Jesus since the 18th century, the real man who walked in the hills of Galilee and died on a cross in Jerusalem, a similar quest is necessary for the historical Mary Magdalene, but not out of mere curiosity, because she is important in the narrative of Jesus's life. If the early sources are accurate, Mary of Magdala was the first Christian in history, and the first to announce the fundamental kerygma of early Christianity: Jesus is risen! Despite the shortage of information, there are a few certain facts historians know about Mary Magdalene. For example, she was a respected and well-remembered follower of Jesus, one of the female disciples who supported the movement of the Galilean preacher. Some scholars studying the gospels believe that Mary Magdalene was an elderly woman and probably well-to-do, if not wealthy. "For all we know," opines E.P. Sanders in *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, "she was eighty-six, child, and keen to mother unkempt young men." She not only remained by Jesus' side in his darkest hour, the crucifixion, she also had a strange experience at Jesus's tomb on Easter morning. The gospels disagree on the details, but not in the fact that it happened to her. *Mary Magdalene: The Life and Legacy of the Woman Who Witnessed the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus* examines what is known and unknown about one of the Bible's most famous figures. Along with pictures depicting important people, places, and events, you will learn about Mary Magdalene like never before.