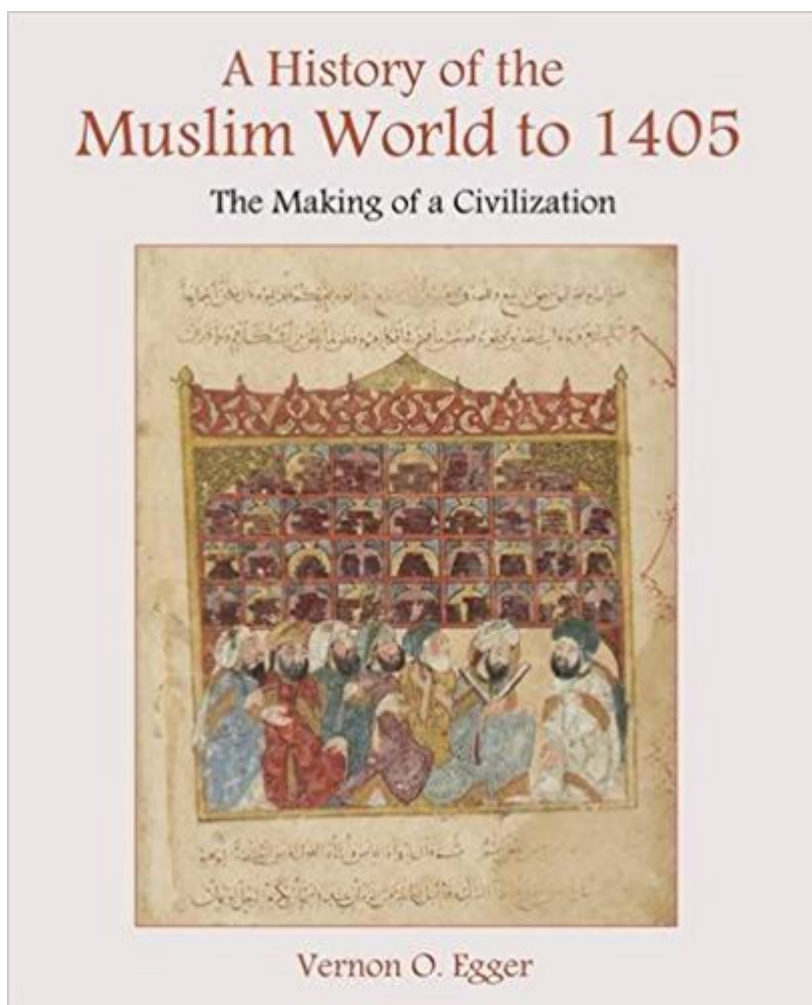


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A History Of The Muslim World To 1405: The Making Of A Civilization



Synopsis

Muslims first appeared in the early seventh century as members of a persecuted religious movement in a sun-baked town in Arabia. Within a century, their descendants were ruling a vast territory that extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indus River valley in modern Pakistan. This region became the arena for a new cultural experiment in which Muslim scholars and creative artists synthesized and reworked the legacy of Rome, Greece, Iran, and India into a new civilization. A History of the Muslim World to 1405 traces the development of this civilization from the career of the Prophet Muhammad to the death of the Mongol emperor Timur Lang. Coverage includes the unification of the Dar al-Islam (the territory ruled by Muslims), the fragmentation into various religious and political groups including the Shi'ite and Sunni, and the series of catastrophes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that threatened to destroy the civilization.

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Customer Reviews

Muslims first appeared in the early seventh century as members of a persecuted religious movement in a sun-baked town in Arabia. Within a century, their descendants were ruling a vast territory that extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indus River valley in modern Pakistan. This region became the arena for a new cultural experiment in which Muslim scholars and creative artists synthesized and reworked the legacy of Rome, Greece, Iran, and India into a new civilization. A History of the Muslim World to 1405 traces the development of this civilization from the career of the Prophet Muhammad to the death of the Mongol emperor Timur Lang. Coverage includes the unification of the Dar al-Islam (the territory ruled by Muslims), the fragmentation into various

religious and political groups including the Shi'ite and Sunni, and the series of catastrophes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that threatened to destroy the civilization. Features: Balanced coverage of the Muslim world encompassing the region from the Iberian Peninsula to South Asia. Detailed accounts of all cultures including major Shi'ite groups and the Sunni community. Primary sources. Numerous maps and photographs featuring a special four-color art insert. Glossary, charts, and timelines.

This book is an introduction to the history of the Muslim world for readers with little or no knowledge of the subject. I use the term Muslim rather than Islamic because this is a study of the history made by the Muslim peoples rather than a history of the religion of Islam: It is important to make a distinction between Muslim and Islamic; properly speaking, Islamic should refer to elements of the religion, while Muslim relates to the adherents of the religion. Thus, not all customs followed by Muslims are Islamic, and although a mosque is an example of Islamic architecture, a palace is not. A generation ago, the great scholar Marshall Hodgson wrestled with this problem and coined the term Islamicate to describe the cultural features of Muslim societies that were not strictly religious, such as secular architecture. The term has not gained widespread acceptance, and this book will avoid it. If the distinction between Islamic and Muslim seems strained, suppose that someone said that the White House is an example of Christian architecture because a Christian designed it, or that Bastille Day is a Christian holiday, since it is celebrated in a country with a Christian majority. No one is tempted to make such assertions, and yet they are equivalent to speaking of Islamic palaces or Islamic medicine, as many historians do. Much of the history related in this book is not directly related to Islam, and so it is more appropriately called Muslim history. The phrase Muslim world, as used in this book, refers to regions ruled by Muslim-dominated governments, as well as areas in which the Muslim population is a majority or an influential minority. For several decades in the seventh century, the Muslim world was coterminous with the region often referred to today as the Middle East, but it soon expanded far beyond that heartland. By the tenth century, many of the most important cultural developments in the Muslim world were taking place outside the Middle East. The size of the Muslim world has alternately expanded and contracted over time, and we will be concerned to see how and why that has happened. The themes of the book are tradition and adaptation. The history of any society is one of the preservation of core values and practices, but also one of adaptation to changing conditions. Muslims follow a religion that is strongly anchored in both scripture and authoritative codes of behavior and are conditioned to adhere closely to the canon of their religious tradition. On the other hand, from the very beginning Of their history,

Muslims have found ways to adapt elements of their faith to their culture, as well as to adapt their cultural values and practices to the core of their faith. Islam is no more of a homogeneous world religion than is Christianity or Judaism. The themes of tradition and adaptation allow us to make sense of some important issues in Muslim history. By being aware of the premium placed on faithfulness to the scriptures, we can understand more clearly how Muslims were able to maintain a common sense of identity throughout the wide expanse of the world in which they settled. Further, we can more readily appreciate why Muslims have accepted certain features of alien cultures and rejected others. From the first century of the Islamic calendar, when Muslims were having to decide how to administer a huge majority of non-Muslims in the former Byzantine and Sasanian empires, until today, when many Muslims are concerned about the impact of a secular, global economy on their heritage, the tension between adherence to tradition on the one hand and adaptation to changing conditions on the other has been at the center of Muslim concerns. This book treats economic, political, intellectual, and social developments over a wide area and across many centuries. Of these topics, the intellectual and political developments receive more attention than social and economic history. The study of the social history of the Muslim world is in its infancy. Therefore, it is not possible at this point to write the history of the daily lives of ordinary men and women in large areas of the Muslim world. Economic history tends to stress connections among areas of the world, which is why it is a popular theme in the field of world history. The motif of connections and of global integration that economic history can convey runs throughout this book as a powerful undercurrent. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, I am convinced that our awareness of connections in Muslim history needs to be balanced by an awareness of diversity and discontinuities. Troubling stereotypes of Islam and of Muslims loom large in our culture and can be modified only by our becoming aware of the diversity of religious and political expressions within the Muslim world. A widely held assumption in our society is that Islam is a crystallized artifact from the seventh century—or, at best, from the tenth or eleventh century, when Islamic law is often said to have stopped developing. It is important to be aware of the important stages in the historical development of Islam and to realize that critical periods in history have encouraged Muslims to be either flexible or inflexible in their reception of new ideas. It is also important to be aware of the varieties of expression of Islam. Many generalizations about Islam are actually applicable only to Sunni Islam, and even then, to the Sunni Islam practiced in certain countries, not to regions in other parts of the world. The history of Shiite Islam is usually ignored—or recognized only in passing. Shiites have played a major role in history and should be recognized for having done so. Another widely held stereotype is that Muslims form a monolithic, homogeneous mass that acts in concert on

given issues. In recent years, this assumption has given rise to the notion that "Islam" and "the West" are on the eve of a "clash of civilizations." According to this theory, when Muslims in one area have a grievance against "the West," other Muslim groups will come to their aid on the basis of their civilizational "kin." The impression of a monolithic Muslim world is reinforced by the fact that many world history books discuss the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258) as though it were an empire that united the great majority of the world's Muslims of that age, leaving the impression that Muslims have a history of political unity. Even the textbook discussions of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals rarely note their great differences. The fact is that Muslim political unity was shattered in the third decade after the Prophet's death. There have been numerous Muslim political entities ever since then. Not only have conflicting interests divided them, but Muslim states have also frequently allied with Christian, Hindu, or other states against fellow Muslims. Just as intellectuals prior to the seventeenth century thought that the universe possessed different physical properties from those on earth, so have historians and political theorists often treated Muslim history as different in kind from the history of the rest of the world. This book attempts to show through an examination of their history that Muslims are an integral part of the world community and have functioned as other human beings have under similar conditions.

This book is pretty good as it covers everything in the history of Islamic civilization in chronological order, including a number of things I never knew of before (For example, the fact that the sunni Abbasid caliph was at one point pretty much controlled by the shia Buyid). A downside to the book I've noticed is that a few of the events are either not covered extensively or I've read differing accounts of it (For example, the part pertaining to the rise of the Seljuk Empire, in regards to the origins/rise of it's founders Tughril and Chaghri). However, another good thing about this book is that it covers the origins and beliefs surrounding the different sects quite well. In fact, a few of them such as the Jabariyya, I have not read about elsewhere. It also has good information with regards to the Mutazili controversy. I bought this book for class, and I believe the Professor followed the book pretty closely. I learnt a good number of things from it, and would definitely recommend non-students to buy this book as well. There's a lot to be learnt from it.

great

I got this book for a college class and actually found it to be a pretty good read. A lot better than a

lot of other texts that I have been subjected to. It seemed factual without being biased to one side or the other.

I keep it by my side at the kitchen table for reference and recommend it to friends interested in the current mess in the Middle East to better understand the Muslim mind.

One of the best books on history of Islam and Muhammad you will ever read.

Excellent buy

Poorly structured book. Had a long discussion with my professor about why this is terrible.

The description of the product was very accurate. The book was in great condition. The seller shipped promptly. I really loved buying my book here because it was cheaper and great. I highly recommend this, I had no problems and I am very satisfied with the service.

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