ISLAMIC SOCIETIES TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

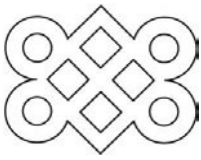
Ira M. Lapidus' global history of Islamic societies, first published in 1988, has become a classic in the field. For more than two decades, it has enlightened students, scholars, and others with a thirst for knowledge about one of the world's great civilizations. This book, based on parts one and two of Lapidus' monumental *A History of Islamic Societies*, revised and updated, describes the transformations of Islamic societies from their beginning in the seventh century, through their diffusion across the globe, into the challenges of the nineteenth century. The story focuses on the organization of families and tribes, religious groups and states, depicts them in their varied and changing contexts, and shows how they were transformed by their interactions with other religious and political communities into a varied, global, and interconnected family of societies. The book concludes with the European commercial and imperial interventions that initiated a new set of transformations in the Islamic world, and the onset of the modern era.

Organized in narrative sections for the history of each major region, with innovative, analytic summary introductions and conclusions, this book is a unique endeavor. Its breadth, clarity, style, and thoughtful exposition will ensure its place in the classroom and beyond as a guide for the educated reader.

Ira M. Lapidus is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Berkeley. His publications include *Contemporary Islamic Movements in Historical Perspective* (1983); *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (1967, 1984); *Islam, Politics and Social Movements*, co-edited with Edmund Burke (1988); and *A History of Islamic Societies* (1988, 2002).

ISLAMIC SOCIETIES TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A GLOBAL HISTORY



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PREFACE

Islam is the religion of peoples who inhabit the "middle" regions of the planet from the Atlantic shores of Africa to the South Pacific and from the steppes of Siberia to the remote islands of South Asia: Berbers, West Africans, Sudanese, Swahili-speaking East Africans, Middle Eastern Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Turkish and Persian peoples of Central Asia, Afghans, Pakistanis, many millions of Indians and Chinese, most of the peoples of Malaysia and Indonesia, and minorities in the Philippines – some 1.5 billion people adhere to Islam. In ethnic background, language, customs, social and political organization, and forms of culture and technology, they represent innumerable variations of human experience. Yet Islam unites them. Although Islam is not often the totality of their lives, it permeates their self-conception, regulates their daily existence, provides the bonds of society, and fulfills the yearning for salvation. For all its diversity, Islam forges one of the great spiritual families of mankind.

This book is the history of how these multitudes have become Muslims and what Islam means to them. In this book we ask the following questions: What is Islam? What are its values? How did so many peoples, so different and dispersed, become Muslims? What does Islam contribute to their character, to their way of living, to the ordering of their communities, and to their aspirations and identity? What are the historical conditions that have given rise to Islamic religious and cultural values? What are the manifold ways in which it is understood and practiced? To answer these questions, we shall see how religious concepts about the nature of reality and the meaning of human experience, embedded at once in holy scripture and works of commentary and as thoughts and feelings in the minds and hearts of Muslim believers, have given shape to the lifestyles and institutions of Muslim peoples, and how reciprocally the political and social experiences of Muslim peoples have been given expression in the values and symbols of Islam. Our history of Islam is the history of a dialogue between religious symbols and everyday reality.

This book covers the history of the Islamic world from its beginnings in the seventh century to the beginning of the era of European economic and political domination that began in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – the "modern" era. It includes the first two parts of the original *A History of Islamic Societies*, which covered the history of the Islamic world to the present day and was first published in 1988. A second edition, revising and bringing contemporary history up to date, was published in 2002.

Reviewing this work only a few years later, it is striking not only that recent events call for a still further updating but that as a result of scholarly research the past is changing too. The changes are generated in some instances by the discovery of new sources, but more commonly by new historical methods and theories that lead to both controversy and fresh insights.

To take account of these changes, the editors of Cambridge University Press and I have decided to modify the format of this work. This new edition will be published as two books. The first will contain a very substantially revised history of Islamic societies from their beginnings in early seventh-century Arabia to the eve of the modern era. The second will contain the entire work, recounting the history of Islamic societies from their beginnings to the present. The part devoted to modern history will be updated on crucial issues, such as contemporary Islamic movements, the recent uprising in the Arab world, the place of women in Muslim societies, and Islam in Europe and North America. *Islamic Societies to the Nineteenth Century: A Global History* will serve the needs of students and others interested in the early foundation and worldwide diffusion of Islam. *A History of Islamic Societies* is directed to readers who would like the entire history in one volume.

Both books have two goals. One is to tell the history of each particular population, country, or region of the Islamic world. The second is to identify the themes that give cohesion to the concept of Islamic societies. In this book, history is understood not as a sequence of stories but as an integral process in which state, religion, community, and cultures are related in many variable but definable ways. In all periods, Islam has to be understood in the context of previous and contemporary cultures. Islamic cultures are shaped by their connections to the ancient world before it; to other contemporary Islamic societies; to non-Islamic cultures; and to economic, technological, and political conditions that are not connected to religion and culture. In the present era, it has become debatable as to whether Islamic societies will continue to develop in their historic forms.

Although there are many controversies among Muslims and others over the correct version of Islam, this book attempts to recognize, depict, and respect its enormous richness and diversity.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ISLAM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The first part of this book deals with the beginnings and early development of Middle Eastern Islamic societies. The new edition emphasizes how early Islam was

a part of and a continuation of the civilizations that preceded it. We review the basic structures of ancient empires, including a new section on women and family, tracing the precedents set by ancient norms for Islamic laws and values. The controversial historiography of the last thirty years dealing with the "origins" of Islam, the validity of the early sources, and the authenticity of the Quran is reevaluated, and new perspectives are incorporated into the text. There are important changes in the study of architecture as a display of imperial legitimacy. A revised history of early Islamic law and the veneration of the prophet give new perspectives on early Islamic religiosity. A new chapter situates the non-Muslim minorities under Muslim rule.

These new themes are integrated into an overall perspective on the interconnections of ancient, Mediterranean, and early Islamic cultures. Although bedouin elements made pre-Islamic Arabia different from many of the settled regions of the Middle East, in politics, trade, material development, and religious cultures, Arabia was already closely connected to the larger Middle Eastern region. Pre-Islamic Arabian religious and literary culture not only stemmed from bedouin practices but was modeled on the general system of culture found in the cities of the Middle East since the third century.

Cultural interactions continued and were intensified after the Arab-Islamic conquests. Arab-Muslim participation in the antique heritage continued approximately to the eleventh century. Islamic civilization developed out of a cultural matrix that included Arabian tribal culture and religious practices; Jewish beliefs, religious practices, and community institutions; Christian theology and eschatology; and Roman and Sasanian arts, literatures, legal systems, and political institutions. Pre-Islamic cultures were adapted through specific texts and translations, oral recitations, and ordinary social and business contacts among peoples with different backgrounds. Arab-Muslims shaped the linguistic and religious cultures of the region, while the emerging Islamic civilization was itself shaped by the earlier Middle Eastern and Mediterranean civilizations. I call this phase the Arab-Islamic renaissance, a period of assimilation, adaptation, and creative transformation of previous, late antique Middle Eastern cultures into an Arabic-Islamic form.

Similarly, political, economic, and social institutions were carried over from the ancient into the Islamic epoch. The modes of production in agriculture, trade, services, and taxation remained the same – indeed they were ratified in Islamic law for commerce and property. The Caliphate understood imperial rule as it was understood and proclaimed by the Roman-Byzantine and Sasanian emperors and similarly defined and legitimated its rule through architecture, art, and the patronage of literary and religious activities. Family life and the position of women in society carried on the concepts and practices of late antique societies.

The religion of Islam itself, although newly revealed, shared the theology of its predecessors and provided similar codes for ritual and social behavior and communal loyalties. The Quran presents Islam as a correction and the true version of corrupted older religions. Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Muslims all believed

in God, the angels and the prophets, the last judgment, and the purpose of human existence as being the fulfillment of God's commands and faith in his truth. Early Islam also shared folk traditions and popular spirituality with non-Muslims. Eastern Syriac Christians who believed in the human nature of Jesus had common ground with Muslims. Jews were, like Muslims, committed monotheists. Sufism drew inspiration from the Quran and from neo-Platonism and Hindu mysticism. To all Middle Eastern peoples, similar beliefs implied a community, and all believed that religious communities had a founding prophet. Gnosticism, messianism, magic, mysticism, science, and philosophy were also found in all the Middle Eastern religions.

The distinctive cultural achievements of the early Arab-Islamic era linked Islamic civilization to its predecessors. Philosophy was translated from Greek and Syriac into Arabic, and Muslim theology (*kalam*) was built on the same dialectics and concepts as Christian theology. Islamic law (*fiqh*) was a continuation of Roman provincial law, canon law, Talmudic law, and Persian law, progressively integrated with the teachings of the Quran and hadith to form what we now know as Islamic law. The Arabian poetic forms (*qasida*) became the basis of classical Arabic poetry. Persian literature (*adab*) was translated into Arabic. Poetry and *adab* became the basis of the literary "formation" of the cultivated gentleman. In architecture, the basics of the design and decoration of mosques and even their placement in the urban environment created a distinctive Arab-Muslim presence, although based on an older visual vocabulary. A substantially new chapter deals with the interactions of Muslims, Jews, and Christians in Spain.

In all these respects, a new civilization had come into being, one that was creative and distinctive and yet a continuation of the basic institutional structures and cultural forms of previous Middle Eastern and Mediterranean civilizations – an innovative expression of the historic Middle Eastern cultures. Over centuries, however, the process of assimilating, Arabizing, and Islamizing historic cultures led to the consolidation of a distinctively new civilization whose ancient sources were forgotten, concealed, and perhaps obliterated, and whose roots can now only be uncovered by scholarly investigation.

Thus, Islam is part of a common Eurasian civilization. It continues directly from Roman, Byzantine, and Persian late antiquity. Islam integrated the existing political forms, modes of economic production, religious values, and family structures. It shares the conceptual world of Judaism and Christianity, although there are major differences due to the accidents of language and vocabulary and of historical and cultural references. Islam did not change the fundamental institutions of civilization so much as it changed languages, ideologies, and identities.

This distinctively Middle Eastern Islamic civilization achieved dominance in the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. In the midst of repeated nomadic invasions from the east and Crusades from the west, a new quasi-imperial, quasi-feudal system of political institutions was consolidated. Nomadic forces and military slavery supported by the assignment of benefices and fiefs became the regional

norm. Muslim communities were organized into Sunni schools of law, Sufi fraternities or brotherhoods, and Shiʿi sects. This was the era of the cultural consolidation of "normative Islam" based on the integration of law and Sufism and of alternative forms of Muslim belief based on philosophy, theosophy, and the popular veneration of saints. In this era, a political ethic was defined. Most important, there grew up alongside Arabic literatures a new Persian literary and poetic culture that became the dominant language and culture for the eastern regions of the Muslim world. Henceforth, Islamic culture would be expressed in both Arabic and Persian media (and later in Turkish media and that of other languages). This new edition contains newly written or extensively reworked chapters on the Timurid Empire and its political and cultural importance, the development of Persianate Islam, the social structure of Middle Eastern communities, and women and family.

THE GLOBAL DIFFUSION OF ISLAM TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The third part of the book describes how Arab–Middle Eastern Islam was the paradigm for the re-creation of Islamic societies in other languages, cultures, and regions of the world. Everywhere Islam took shape as a hybrid of local cultures and Middle Eastern Islam. From the seventh to the tenth centuries, Arab conquerors brought Islam and the Arabic language and culture to North Africa and Spain, Iran and Transoxania. Persians, Turks, and Soghdians in the east and Berbers and Goths in the west were incorporated into the Arab-Muslim empire. Merchants and missionaries, often Sufis, brought Islam to the steppes of Inner Asia. From Egypt, the Sudan, and North Africa, Islam and Arab culture reached Saharan and Sudanic Africa.

After these direct contacts, Islam was carried further by newly Islamized Persian, Turkish, and African peoples. Arab-Islamic culture followed later conquests, colonization, missionary proselytization, and commerce. On the mainland of Eurasia, migrating, conquering, and empire-building Turkish peoples brought Islam westward into Anatolia, the Balkans, and southeastern Europe; eastward into Inner Asia and China; and southward into Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent. Here, they established the Mongol, Timurid, Shaybanid, Mughal, Safavid, and Ottoman empires. The new empires patronized Muslim schools, courts, Sufi hospices, and other religious and communal institutions. The empires are newly described in terms of recent scholarship. The Ottoman chapters have been expanded to discuss women, family, and religious minorities. The three great early modern Muslim empires – the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal empires – are discussed in terms of processes of decentralization and networking among central and local elites. The Muslim empires are presented in the context of the worldwide development of early modern empires and are compared with one another.

In the Indian Ocean region, merchants and Sufi missionaries carried Islam from Arabia to India and East Africa (tenth to twelfth centuries). From Arabia and India,

Islam reached the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries). From the coastal zones, it spread to the interior of the islands and continents.

In Africa, Arab and Berber traders and settlers in the Saharan and Sudanic regions, Arab and Persian settlers on the East African coasts, and Dyula communities in West Africa were the nuclei of Muslim influences. Often, colonies of Muslim traders allied with local political elites and induced the rulers of the states of Ghana, Mali, Kanem, Songhay, Hausaland, and Dogomba to accept Islam. African history chapters have been expanded and updated to deal with not only Islam but also slavery and European colonialism.

The global diffusion of Islam is discussed in the context of the rising power of Europe and in terms of the regional interconnectedness of Muslim societies – in the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and the great inner "seas," the Taklamakan desert in Inner Asia, and the Sahara in Africa.

As I explain later in this volume,

> By the nineteenth century, Islamic societies the world over had acquired similar types of Muslim elites, beliefs, religious practices, and social organizations. In each Muslim region, we find not one but several variant types of Islam. There were the scholars who represented formal learning, organized education, and judicial administration, affiliated through schools of law. There were also the scholars-cum-Sufis, who combined legal learning with mystical discipline and contemplation, in an effort to live their lives in imitation of the Prophet. Such religious teachers perpetuated a tradition of learning that combined law, theology, and Sufi wisdom representing Sunni–Shariʿa (orthoprax)–Sufi Islam. There were ecstatic visionary Sufis in the tradition of Ibn al-ʿArabi and the gnostic forms of Islamic mysticism, as well as the popular forms of Sufi Islam expressed in veneration of saints, faith in their charismatic powers, and belief in the magic of their shrines. Throughout the Muslim world, Sufism in all its forms became the most widespread and popular expression of Islam.

THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN ERA

By the eighteenth century, Islamic societies had begun to decline in political power. The Safavid state had been defeated by Afghan invaders and, deserted by its tribal vassals, disintegrated completely. The Ottoman Empire went through a period of decentralization that impaired the imperial state. The Mughal Empire disintegrated into numerous competing provincial and feudal regimes. In Southeast Asia, a centralized regime had never been established over the Indonesian archipelago or the Malay Peninsula. In North Africa, Muslim states were being subverted by their declining commercial position in the Mediterranean while provincial, tribal, and Sufi resistance was on the increase. The Sudanic states had long passed the peak of their commercial prosperity, although Muslim communities were growing in influence.

A critical, but hardly the only, factor in the political decline of many Muslim regimes was the rising power of Europe. European societies were generating technological inventions, economic wealth, and military power that would profoundly change the conditions of life not only for Muslims, but for all the world's peoples. On the northern flanks of majority-Muslim areas, the steppes of Inner Asia came under Russian control. The Russian conquests culminated in the colonizing of Transoxania and the Transcaspian regions in the late nineteenth century. At the same time, China established its suzerainty in eastern Turkestan in the eighteenth century and made it a province of China in the late nineteenth. Russia and China took control of most of the Muslim populations of Inner Asia.

On the southern flanks of majority-Muslim areas, European expansion began with Portuguese, Dutch, and British merchant adventurers, who won naval and trading empires in the southern seas and ended by establishing colonial regimes. The Portuguese established a series of bases in the Indian Ocean and at Malacca in the early sixteenth century, but they were displaced by the Dutch, who took control of the Southeast Asian trade in the seventeenth century, made themselves suzerains of Java by the middle of the eighteenth century, and conquered the rest of the Indies in the course of the nineteenth. The British also began by establishing trading bases and ended by conquering an empire in India. In 1858, in the wake of the Indian mutiny, the British removed the last of the Mughal emperors and brought India under their direct control. They took control of the Indian Ocean – with bases in Malaya, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and East Africa – and Egypt. The French took territorial control of North Africa. Africa was the last region with a large Muslim population to be subjected to colonial domination. At the Congress of Berlin in 1884–85, Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, and Germany agreed on the partition of Africa and seized pieces of the continent for themselves. All of Africa except Liberia and Ethiopia came under European rule by World War I. Only the Ottoman Empire and Iran maintained their political identities without experiencing direct colonial rule.

By the nineteenth century, Europe was not only seizing the trade and the territory of Muslim states; it was beginning to seize the imagination of Muslim peoples. European military and technological efficiency and artistic styles, as well as political (especially nationalist) concepts and moral values, began to influence Muslim populations. These influences opened a new era in the history of Muslim peoples. This book, then, concludes with the Muslim world on the eve of its modern transformations.

The scope of the book itself implies that it is not a narrative history, a telling of stories, but history seen as a holistic process in which the relations among and the variations in state, economic, religious, communal, and cultural forms help us to analyze both the organization and the evolution of societies. It is not a history of events, but a history of civilizations.

As a historian, however, my primary interest is not in theory but in the adaptation of theory to the needs of a coherent and meaningful exposition. The central

problem of this book is how to present a history of enormous diversity – the history of societies that to sight and sound are utterly different – and yet preserve some sense of their historical and institutional relatedness. For the reader, this book is intended to provide a coherent overview of Islamic history. As a teacher, I think that the endless everyday flow of events and news confuses rather than enlightens us and that a large "map" of the subject as a whole is essential to the understanding of particular occurrences. Only from an overall point of view can we acquire the poise, distance, and perspective that make it possible to identify basic contextual factors and long-term historical trends, and to distinguish them from accidental and short-term considerations.

The reader should be cautioned, however, that the factual narrative approach of this book conceals great uncertainties of historical judgment, incomplete knowledge, conflicts of opinion and interpretation among experts, and constantly changing research that brings new knowledge and new points of view to the fore. Little has been said about the degree of reliability or the margin of error in the presentation of information, but the book is based on the most reliable research and interpretation. The reader should be aware that parts of the work are provisional and exploratory in nature and represent the author's best judgment about particular subjects.

A few comments about the organization of the book may help readers find their way through this large volume. The book is divided into three parts, each of which has an introduction and conclusion that deals with the organizing concepts on which the book is based and summarizes the important themes implied in the narrative chapters. For an overview of the transformation of Islamic societies, these introductory and concluding chapters may be read separately or in conjunction with selected period or regional histories. The table of contents and the index are of course the reader's guide, but the reader or teacher using this book as text could also create an alternative table of contents, following particular regional or state histories – Middle Eastern, South Asian, African – through successive periods, or following subjects such as women and family, scholars and law, Sufism, art, and philosophy.

The definition of geographic regions requires some arbitrary simplifications. Muslim world areas are by and large defined in regional terms such as Middle East, North Africa, Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and West and East Africa. For convenience of reference, and despite the obvious anachronism, these areas or parts of them are commonly identified by the names of present national states such as India, Indonesia, or Nigeria. This is to simplify identification for readers unfamiliar with the geography of these vast regions and to avoid such cumbersome locutions as "areas now part of the state of ___," but it should be clear that the use of these terms does not necessarily imply any similarity of state and social organization or of cultural style between pre-modern and contemporary times.

Transliterations from the numerous native languages of Muslim peoples have been simplified for the convenience of English readers. In general, I have tried to follow standard scholarly usage for each world area, modified by the elimination of diacritical marks and sometimes adapted to give a fair sense of pronunciation. Certain standard Arabic terms and names are given in their original, usually Arabic, literary form despite actual variations in spelling and pronunciation the world over. Dates are given in the Common Era.

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Kevin Schwartz was my informant about new writing on Persian and Indian history, and the construction and diffusion of Persianate culture throughout western,

Central, and southern Asia and in the Indian Ocean region. He was an alert and forthright critic of the previous versions of these topics and helped bring me up to date with current scholarship.

Heather Ferguson provided a fresh orientation to the new historiography on Ottoman history and helped me interpret it and integrate it into the revised account in this volume. She alerted me to the new historiography on empire formation in the early modern period. Her dissertation on the circle of justice gave me a fresh conceptual approach to understanding Ottoman government.

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