



# Introduction

A growing number of scholars and pundits have declared that the twenty-first century will be the era of Islam. Such predictions, whether intended in a positive or negative light, err in failing to appreciate the spread and influence of Islam during the past millennium and a half, especially on the continents of Asia and Africa. Nonetheless, events during the first decade of the new millennium have underscored the importance of knowing about Islamic history and understanding the great diversity and richness of Muslim social, cultural, and religious practices. Suicide bomber attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., on September 11, 2001, killed over three thousand persons. These tragic events and the media coverage of the aftermath as well as of the two wars subsequently fought in the Muslim countries of Afghanistan and Iraq have dramatically shown how little is known in the West about Islam and the Muslim world. Islam is, and has been for nearly fifteen centuries, a global religious and political phenomenon. Muslim networks of communication, from the annual pilgrimage to Mecca to the vast new power of the World Wide Web, have enabled Muslims to establish postmodern identities in a rapidly changing world, while at the same time preserving and reinvigorating a variety of time-honored traditions and practices. The *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* is a sourcebook of information about Islam, its past and present, addressed to students and general readers as the twenty-first century begins its first decade.

The *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* presents in two volumes some 504 articles, alphabetically arranged, in incremental lengths generally of 200, 500, 1,000, 3,000, and 5,000 words. The work of some 500 scholars appears in these pages, carefully reviewed and edited in a common style for easy access by readers who may presently have limited or no knowledge of Islam. It has also been prepared as a teaching and learning resource for teachers and students, from the high school grades through university. The alphabetical ordering of articles that follow, in the List of Articles, will enable readers to locate topics of interest quickly. A synoptic outline of the contents of the *Encyclopedia*, found within the frontmatter on pages xxxi–xxxiv, provides readers with an overview by topic and subtopic of the range and kinds of information presented in the main body of the *Encyclopedia*. Approximately 170 photographs, drawings, maps, and charts appear throughout the two volumes. A glossary in the back matter of volume two, which lists commonly used Arabic and other Islamic terms, such as *shari‘a*, or “Islamic law,” will enable general readers to determine quickly the meaning of essential but perhaps less familiar terms in Islamic studies.

The *Encyclopedia* is truly an international work that reflects the diversity of ideas and practices that have characterize the Islamic world throughout its history. This diversity is reflected among the editors who organized and compiled this work and the scores of scholars who wrote the articles contained in it. The associate editors’ national origins are Canada, Iran, and South Africa; their religious affiliations or backgrounds include Sunni and Shi‘ite Islam; and their scholarly training has been in sociology, the history of religions, and Islamic studies. An even greater

diversity exists among the contributing scholars who live and teach in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, including the Middle East. They represent the fields of history, philosophy, religious studies, anthropology, sociology, political science, and the fine arts, among others. In its totality, then, this work represents a broad expanse of scholarly knowledge about Islam, accessible in two volumes.

Islam increasingly is recognized as a vital force in the contemporary world, a source of collective social identity, and religious expression for over one billion people around the world, who comprise a fifth of the global population. Public interest in learning about Islam is a very recent phenomenon, however. Events of the past few decades have generated a demand for information about Islam on an unprecedented scale in the history of Islamic studies in the West. In negative terms, these events include violence: the colonial and postcolonial encounters between Europeans and Muslims in Asia and Africa, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Hindu-Muslim clashes in South Asia, Serbian ethnic cleansing of Muslim populations in the Balkans, and the heavily televised American-led wars in the Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq. In positive terms, the recent years have seen productive Muslim diaspora communities emerge in Europe and the Americas, Islamic patterns of democracy and civil society develop in some countries in Africa and Asia, and venues of dialogue arise among Muslims, Jews, and Christians about their common moral and social concerns as well as their differences. That non-Muslims are learning more about Islam and their Muslim neighbors through tools like this encyclopedia must also be counted as a positive turn, and a much-needed one.

Scholars, journalists, and writers of all sorts have responded robustly to this newly recognized importance of Islam and the Muslim world, thus creating a wealth of information about Islam now available in bookstores, libraries, and newsstands around the world. More significant for readers of this work, the Internet hosts an expanding plethora of Web sites on Islamic teachings, practices, sectarian groups, and organizations. Many Web sites are sponsored by Muslim scholars, organizations, and institutions and provide authentic, and sometimes competing, information about Islamic beliefs and practices. Unfortunately, others offer hostile interpretations of Islam. The *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* is designed to help students and general readers cope with this growing demand and almost overwhelming supply of information.

The decision to call this work the *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* was made after considering other, less felicitous alternatives. The editors wanted to produce a work that was about Islamic cultures, religion, history, politics, and the like as well as the people who have identified with Islam over the past fourteen centuries. For the scope of the social and cultural aspects of the subject matter of the *Encyclopedia*, the editors chose the phrase “Muslim World.” The label “Muslim World” is not meant to suggest that diversity and variety are lacking in what Muslims think, believe, and do as Muslims. Nor is the Muslim World as represented in this work to be thought of as separate from the rest of the world. Indeed, it will be clear to readers of articles on virtually all topics included below that Islamic history and Muslim people have been deeply and richly engaged in and interacting with world history and are perhaps even more so in the modern world, as the late Marshall G. S. Hodgson so persuasively argued in his monumental three-volume work, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (1974).

The growing demand for accessible knowledge about Islam in recent decades has produced a number of histories, encyclopedias, and dictionaries that serve different purposes. In addition to Hodgson’s comprehensive historical essay on Islamic civilization, *The Cambridge History of Islam* (1970) brought together substantial treatments of historical periods and geographical regions of Islamic societies. Another important and even older work that is widely used by scholars is the ongoing project known as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. The first edition was published in four volumes in Leiden (1908–1938); the second and much larger edition recently reached its completion in twice as many volumes with a significantly expanded list of contributing scholars; and the third edition is now being planned. The *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* brings to general readers in accessible form the rich tradition of serious scholarship on Islam and Muslim peoples found in the *Cambridge History* and the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, and it addresses information about Islam in the twenty-first century that is not discussed in the older sources. More recently,

*the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (1995) appeared in four volumes. The focus of this latter work is, as the title suggests, on Islam in the modern world, generally dated from the beginning the eighteenth century through the last decade of the twentieth. The *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* by contrast seeks to contextualize contemporary Islam within the longer history of Islam, and it includes discussion of significant world events involving the Islamic world over the past decade.

In preparing this new resource on Islam, the editors sought to frame some of the traditional as well as the more recent aspects of Islam in newer categories. Thus, for example, readers will find articles covering “Material Culture,” “Vernacular Islam,” “Identity, Muslim,” “Secularism,” “Disputation,” and “Expansion of Islam.” A major feature of the *Encyclopedia* is the large number of brief biographical sketches (nearly two hundred) of major figures in Islamic history, men and women, past and present. The editors also included articles on several important and sometimes contested ethical and social issues, including “Ethnicity,” “Gender,” “Homosexuality,” “Human Rights,” and “Masculinities,” along with the more traditional entries on gender (usually concentrating on the feminine roles) and marriage. The events of September 11, 2001, occurred after the Table of Contents was prepared and authors were commissioned to write the articles. Nonetheless, new articles on “Terrorism,” “Usama bin Ladin,” and “al-Qa‘ida,” among others, were added.

History, of course, will continue to unfold for humankind worldwide, including Muslims. The *Encyclopedia* includes a number of interpretive articles, such as “Ethics and Social Issues,” which provide frameworks for understanding ongoing events in Islamic history.

Editorial style is a matter of great importance in a work such as the *Encyclopedia*. Readers can easily get lost in technical terms and diacritical marks on words borrowed from Arabic and Persian. Integrating work from a great number of scholars from around the world, each with differing practices in academic expression and in transliterating Islamic languages into Latin letters, presented some challenges to the academic editors and the editorial staff at Macmillan. To make things easier on readers, especially for those not initiated into the argots of Islamic technical terms, the editors decided to minimize the diacritical marks on loanwords from Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Turkish, and other Islamic languages. We encouraged authors and copy editors to romanize those Islamic terms that have made it into the English language, such as jihad, hajj, and Ramadan, as evidenced by their inclusion in modern dictionaries such as *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary*. Where it seemed helpful, editors supplied brief parenthetical definitions and identifications, both in the text and in the Glossary.

The people who made this project possible brought great ideas to it, are extremely talented and competent, and were wonderful to work with. Hélène Potter, Macmillan’s Director of New Product Development, designed the project and brought to it a considerable knowledge about Islam. More than an industry leader, Hélène became first and foremost a friend and colleague. She is an accomplished professional with an uncanny understanding of the knowledge industry she serves. Corrina Moss, an Assistant Editor with Macmillan, worked on the project throughout and kept in touch daily on editorial matters large and small. To Corrina went the unpleasant task, pleasantly administered, of keeping the associate editors and especially me on task. Elly Dickason, who was the publisher in 2000 when this project was approved, and Jonathan Aretakis, chief copy editor, also deserve expressions of praise and gratitude—Elly for supporting the project from the moment she reviewed it, and Jonathan for making sure the articles are factually and stylistically appropriate.

My colleagues Saïd Arjomand, Marcia Hermansen, and Abdulkader Tayob served as Associate Editors. The associate editors brought broad vision and detailed knowledge to their tasks of helping to organize the contents of the *Encyclopedia*, and I am indebted to them for making my own knowledge limitations less problematic in producing it. Rochelle Davis, a specialist in Arabic and Islamic studies, served as Assistant Editor, responsible for reading page proofs and preparing the Glossary. However, she contributed much more to the *Encyclopedia*, with an eye for grammatical and content errors that greatly improved the penultimate draft. My friend and

colleague of many years, John Voll, Editorial Consultant, kindly advised H el ene Potter and me of matters we should consider in the formative stages of planning the *Encyclopedia*, and he contributed several important articles to it.

On behalf of Sa id, Marcia, Abdulkader, Rochelle, and John, I would like to dedicate this project to our many Muslim and non-Muslim colleagues around the world, with whom we share the task of teaching and writing about Islam in a high-tech, troubled world that needs to know more about itself. To that end we hope this work will help disseminate useful knowledge about one of the world's great civilizations to those who have a desire and need to know.

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