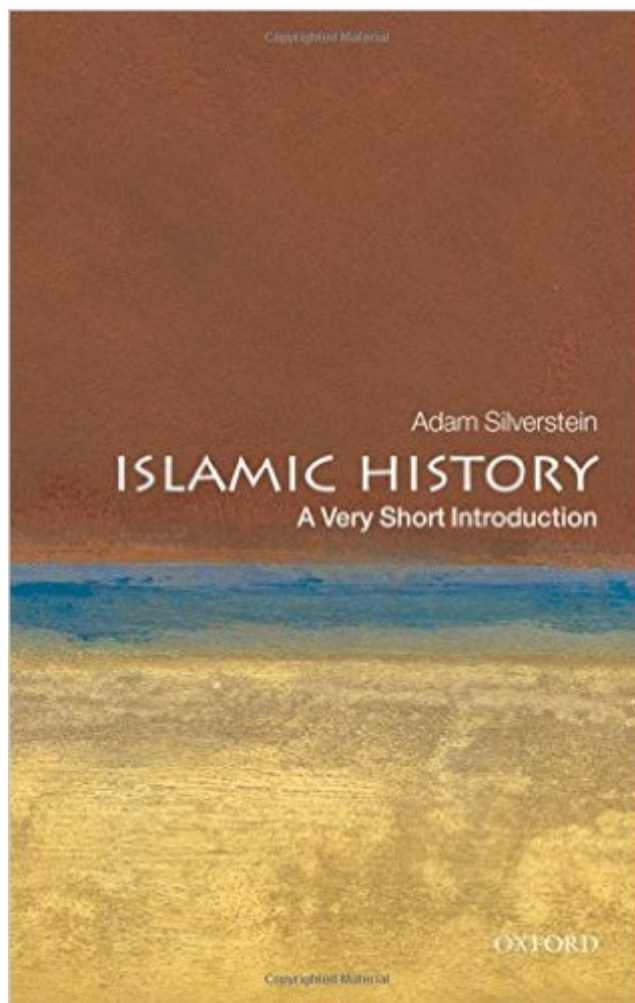


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Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction



Synopsis

Opening with a lucid overview of the rise and spread of Islam, from the seventh to the twenty-first century, this Very Short Introduction introduces the story of Islamic history, charting the evolution of what was originally a small, localized community of believers into an international religion with over a billion adherents. The book examines how Islam rose from the obscurity of seventh-century Arabia to the forefront of modern global concerns, and it highlights how we know what we claim to know about Islam's rise and development. Historian Adam J. Silverstein also discusses the peoples--Arabs, Persians, and Turks--who shaped Islamic history, and sheds light on three representative institutions--the mosque, jihad, and the caliphate--that highlight Islam's diversity over time. Finally, the book analyzes the roles that Islamic history has played in both religious and political contexts, while stressing the unique status that history enjoys among Muslims, especially compared to its lowly place in Western societies where history is often seen as little more than something that is not to be repeated.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is valuable not only for a historical overview of Islamic tradition, but for the insightful last chapter on current Islam and world perception of it. This book is respectful of the religion while being forthright about some of the less pretty parts of its history. The style of the book is very accessible... some scholars may say it is too broad and not deep enough, but it met my needs... I may want to read a multi-volume work in Islam in the future, but not this weekend.

This was a decent intro to Islamic history from a Western historian's point of view. Most books about Islam that are written by Western scholars tend to be overly critical (in my opinion). Generally I prefer to read an anthropologist's take on Islamic issues if I'm to read a piece written from a non-Muslim, simply because they are less biased. I took a chance with this one, and found it to still be pretty good.

It's sometimes a difficult slog, but that's because the history of Islam is long and very convoluted. It's necessary reading for those who wish to have a deeper understanding of Islam. He proves points throughout the book then sums them up at the end. Clear and as concise as can be to do justice to a history most westerners have almost no knowledge of.

Most people are surprised that I am reading a book on Islam written by a westerner, that too, being a Muslim myself. But this is a very honest summary of the cultural and historical impact and importance of Islam. It's a very honest assessment and it got me hooked on Islamic history so much that I couldn't stop browsing the net for two weeks, scouring for more info. Very informative and provides several arguments and counter arguments, so that you can decide for yourself.

I felt the author did not really focus on the HISTORY of Islam and Islamic Civilization, instead he gave an extremely vague overview of certain peoples of the Islamic World, after which he proceeded to focus on MODERN Islam and the controversies surrounding the Islamic World today, which he assumes (probably correctly) the reader would really be interested in.

Before reading this book, I really know nothing about the Islamic world. This book greatly helps you have an overall understanding of the entire Islamic world history. If you want to learn something about the Islamic world, you should try this book first!

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