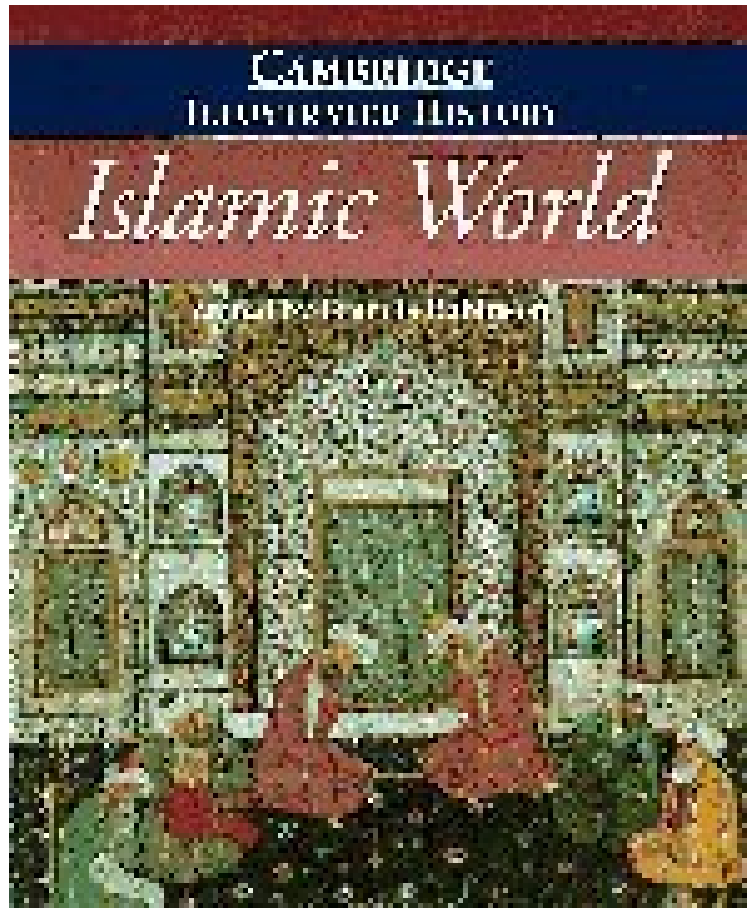


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Islamic peoples account for one fifth of the world's population and yet there is widespread misunderstanding in the West of what Islam really is. Francis Robinson and his team set out to address this, revealing the complex and sometimes contrary nature of Muslim culture. As well as taking on the issues uppermost in everyone's minds, such as the role of religious and political fundamentalism, they demonstrate the importance of commerce; literacy and learning; Islamic art; the effects of immigration, exodus, and conquest; and the roots of current crises in the Middle East, Bosnia, and the Gulf. Throughout, emphasis is placed on the interaction between Islam and the West, from the first Latin translations of the Quran to the fatwa on Salman Rushdie. This elegant book deliberately sets out to dismantle the Western impression of Islam as a monolithic world and replace it with a balanced view, from current issues of fundamentalism to its dynamic culture and art. Francis Robinson is the editor of two outstanding reference works: *Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500* (Cambridge, 1982) and *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India* (1989).

"It is a challenging task to describe the contributions of one billion Muslims who inhabit the Middle East and much of Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia. However, the editor and the contributors of *The Islamic World* managed to put it all in perspective with accurate information, selective emphasis, and well-chosen photographs distributed fairly and with good taste throughout the book. The subject progression, the easy style of writing, and the black-and-white and color illustrations make the book easy to read, particularly for college students and the general reader." *Digest of Middle East Studies*"This book helps to dispel myth and hearsay with solid information about one of the world's most maligned religions. Accessible, interesting, and thorough, this volume serves students who want to be more informed about a religion that is so often in the news." Rebecca Woodcock, University of Exeter" This richly illustrated volume is one of the first of this growing number of works to make the world of Islam accessible to a wide range of readers while keeping to high standards of scholarship. Written to make the world of Islam readily accessible to the student and general reader, this volume fulfills its aims and makes a generous contribution to the field." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*