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Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU-ISMC)

About the Aga Khan University

Established in 1983, the Aga Khan University (AKU) is an institution of academic excellence and an agent for social development. AKU has campuses and programmes in Europe, Africa, and South Asia, and operates on the core principles of quality, relevance, impact and access. It prepares its students to lead change in their societies and to thrive in the global economy.

Through its needs-sensitive admissions policy, the University offers the most promising leaders and thinkers of tomorrow the opportunity to serve, and the skills to help communities solve their most pressing challenges.

About ISMC

Founded in London in 2002, AKU’s Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (ISMC) promotes scholarship that opens up new perspectives on Muslim societies. We consider key issues such as tradition and modernity, religion and the state, pluralism and unity, and the nature of community in an era of global connection and change. Our mandate is to address fundamental challenges of the human condition as they are expressed across the diverse societies of the Muslim world and its diasporas.

ISMC is located in the iconic Aga Khan Centre in London’s King’s Cross. The centre is a place for education, knowledge, cultural exchange and insight into Muslim civilisations.
Muslim societies have become the focus of more international attention than ever before; however, their representation on the world stage has been greatly distorted by the spotlight on violence, extremism and hero/anti-hero politics.

The contemporary thinking of Muslims, as well as the dynamism of scholarship, the critical reassessment of heritages and histories, the rapidly accelerating impetus towards social change and globalisation, and the urgent upheavals around notions of governance and civil life that are taking place in Muslim communities today are very seldom given voice in this global debate.

ISMCPublications therefore explore the ways in which knowledge is produced in and about contemporary Muslim societies and cultures. Our books aim to broaden the debates within and about Muslim societies by producing works that contribute to a new consciousness among Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and new attitudes towards the issues faced by contemporary societies in an increasingly globalised world.
New and Forthcoming Titles

The Sorrowful Muslim’s Guide
Hussein Ahmad Amin
Publication date: October 2018
Makes available in English an important contribution to modern Muslim thought from a prominent Egyptian thinker. A timely and important read, this book challenges us to re-examine the interaction between the pre-modern Islamic tradition and modern supporters of continuity, reform and change in Muslim communities.

Part of the In Translation: Modern Muslim Thinkers series. For more information on this series and title, see pages 6-7

Gender, Governance and Islam
Deniz Kandiyoti, Nadje Al-Ali, Kathryn Spellman Poots
Publication date: Forthcoming 2019
Highlights the centrality of gender politics in understanding political change and new forms of governance across eight Muslim-majority contexts and the Muslim diaspora in Europe and the US, and critically discusses the transformations of the role of religion in intersecting layers of local, national and transnational governance.

Part of the Exploring Muslim Contexts series. For more information on this series and title, see pages 18-19

Secularism in the Arab World: Contexts, Ideas and Consequences
Aziz al-Azmeh
Publication date: Forthcoming 2019
This is one of the few studies to approach secularisation within the Arab world as a set of historical changes which affected the regulation of the social, political and cultural order, and which permeated the concrete workings of society, rather than as an ideological discussion framed from the outset by the assumed opposition between Islam and secularism.

Part of the In Translation: Modern Muslim Thinkers series. For more information on this series and title, see pages 6-8
This series aims to broaden current debates about Muslim realities which often overlook seminal works produced in languages other than English. By identifying and translating critical and innovative thinking that has engendered important debates within its own settings, the series seeks to introduce new perspectives to the discussions about Muslim civilisations taking place on the world stage.
Explores the interaction between pre-Islamic tradition and modern supporters of continuity, reform and change in Muslim communities.

Published as Dalīl al-Muslim al-hazīn ilā muqtada-l-sulūk fi’il-qarn al-‘ishrīn in 1983, this book remains a timely and important read today. Both the resurgence of Islamist politics and the political, social and intellectual upheaval which accompanied the Arab Spring challenge us to re-examine the interaction between the pre-modern Islamic tradition and modern supporters of continuity, reform and change in Muslim communities.

This book does exactly that, raising questions regarding issues about which other Muslim intellectuals and thinkers have been silent. These include – among others – current religious practice vs the Islamic ideal; the many additions to the original revelation; the veracity of the Prophet’s biography and his sayings; the development of Sufism; and historical and ideological influences on Islamic thought.

Key Features
- Makes available in English an important contribution to modern Muslim thought from a prominent Egyptian thinker
- Looks at how current religious practice conforms (or not) to the Islamic ideal when Islam was first revealed
- Explores the relationship between core, inner religious values and ritualistic practices
- Engages critically with the sources by using historical, literary and logical criticism

Hussein Ahmad Amin (1932-2014) was born in Egypt and graduated from the Faculty of Law at Cairo University before joining the Diplomatic Service of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his time as Deputy Director of the Diplomatic Institute in Cairo he wrote The Sorrowful Muslim’s Guide which elicited severe reactions from the official religious establishment as well as death threats and accusations of heresy from militant religious organisations in Egypt.
Approaches secularisation within the Arab world as a set of historical changes, rather than as an ideological discussion framed from the outset by the assumed opposition between Islam and secularism.

Discussions about the issue of secularism in Muslim contexts are usually framed by the unexamined assumption of an opposition between ‘Secularism’ and ‘Islam’, however defined. Both, secularism and Islam, are taken as broad and substantive categories which refer to two separate and irreducible realms of life.

Questions therefore revolve around whether Islam is compatible with secularism, rather than how concrete secular transformations in specific societies that are, for convenience, termed ‘Muslim societies’, occurred at particular times and by specific social agencies, and how these influenced the functioning of different strata and groups in these societies and the central attitudes of their members.

The discussion in this book is therefore drawn to the concrete historical changes that have taken place over a period of a century and a half from the perspectives of social and cultural history. The ideological bias that seems to dominate discussions is put aside, and is itself taken as one topic of investigation, in an approach that privileges the complexity of actual developments over the simplicity of stereotyped explanations.
The first English translation of this controversial essay that challenged fundamental ideas about political power.

Egypt, 1925: the Muslim world is in turmoil over Mustapha Kamal Ataturk’s proposal to abolish the caliphate in Turkey. The debate over Islam and politics re-ignites as traditional political systems dissolve under pressure from European powers and most Muslim countries lose their sovereignty.

Into this debate enters Ali Abdel Razek, a religious cleric trained at Al-Azhar University, arguing in favour of secularism in his essay ‘Islam and the Foundations of Political Power’, translated here for the first time.

Key Features
• A substantial introduction that places the essay in its context and explains its impact
• An appendix of Razek’s sources with full publication details
• Explanatory notes beside Razek’s original footnotes
• Additional notes about particular people, events or vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to modern readers

It is somewhat astonishing that Ali Abdel Razek’s al-Islam wa-usul al-hukm, one of the most significant books of early twentieth-century Egyptian, Arab, and Islamic intellectual history, should have gone so long without a translation into English. [...] This is, then, a valuable contribution to scholarship.”

James McDougall, Trinity College, University Oxford

Ali Abdel Razek (1888–1966) was born in Egypt and graduated from Al-Azhar University as an ’alim (cleric) in 1915 and later became a judge (qadi) in the traditional Islamic courts of Alexandria.
This book could easily be called ‘A Guide for the Modern Muslim’; someone for whom the sentiments of his or her ancestors resonate but who cannot accept the canonised formulas of a prescriptive education.

Charfi spells out what for him is the essential message of Islam, followed by a history of its unfolding through the person of the Prophet Muhammad, whom he perceives as a visionary seeking to change the ideals, attitudes and behaviours of the society in which he lived. The message and its history are delineated as two separate elements, conflated by tradition. Charfi confronts with great lucidity the difficult questions with which Muslims are struggling, attempting to reconsider them from a moral and political perspective independent of the frameworks produced by tradition.

Abdelmadjid Charfi is Professor Emeritus of Arab Civilisation and Islamic Thought at the University of Tunis and is also Director of the collection Ma’alim al Hadatha.
AKU-ISMC’s Individual Volumes include monographs, festschrifts, conference proceedings, and other academic works that illustrate the dynamism of scholarship about and taking place in and Muslim contexts.
Explores the many facets of Arab political thought from the
nineteenth century to the present day.

This book demonstrates the vitality of Arab political thought and
its major controversies. It shows that the key players involved,
far from being constrained by a theological-political straitjacket,
have often demonstrated strong critical thinking when tackling
religion and philosophy, anthropology and politics.

Situating these thinkers and their works within two centuries
of upheaval in the Arab world, Georges Corm demonstrates
how Arab critical thought has been marginalised by powerful
external forces: the military, the academy and the media.
In its place has risen a hegemonic Islamist thought, used
cannily by certain Arab regimes and their Western protectors.
Closely tracing the successive transformations of modernist
Arab nationalism, Arab Political Thought offers a blueprint
for understanding the libertarian Arab Spring, as well as
the counter-revolutions and external interventions that
have followed.

This invaluable guide comprehensively distils the complexity
of Arab intellectualism, which is both critical and profane,
and a far cry from the outdated politico-religious image it
has acquired.

Georges Corm is Professor at the Institute of Political Sciences at Saint-Joseph University in Beirut,
Lebanon. He was formerly a public-sector economist and an international economic consultant.
Between 1998 and 2000 he was Lebanese Minister of Finance. He has published extensively on
the contemporary history of the Middle East and relations between the Arab world and the West.
There is no single academic work that asks what the sharia is at multiple levels – this essay is the first to fill that need.

An indispensable introduction to the evolution and implementation of Sharia law within the Muslim world.

In the West, ‘sharia’ often calls to mind antiquated laws founded upon gender discrimination and barbaric punishments. In the East, for some it means the ideal standards by which Muslims strive to live; for others, it is the greatest obstacle to modernisation of their societies. These clashing views sometimes lead to violence. Clarification of the term has therefore become an urgent necessity.

Sharia is all of these things and much more. It is the legal system of Islam, a series of guidelines and prohibitions. But it is also a concept invested with a whole range of meanings, from the virtuous attributes of an ‘ideal’ society, to the confinement of particular elements to otherness and adversity.

Moving through history, society and Islamic thought to explore the sources of sharia law, Baudouin Dupret gets to the heart of its uses and abuses in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This short, accessible book provides an invaluable guide for those seeking to understand a matter more complex and pressing today than ever before.

“Just when Western society—academia especially—looks to have surrendered to a convenient Sharia, Dupret ushers in an epistemological unravelling of the concept… Combining continental legal and social science approaches, Dupret points to the fallacies of ‘Islamism’ and confronts the ideological realities born out of the ‘Arab Spring’ … This book should be required reading for both graduate students and scholars in the field.”

Malik R. Dahlan, Professor of International Law and Public Policy, Queen Mary University of London
Explores the aesthetic dimensions of the Arab Spring and the protest movements that followed.

From Egypt to India, and from Botswana to London, worker, youth and middle class rebellions have taken on the political and bureaucratic status quo and the privilege of small, wealthy and often corrupt elites at a time when the majority can no longer earn a decent wage.

A remarkable feature of the protests from the Arab Spring onwards has been the salience of images, songs, videos, humour, satire and dramatic performances. This book explores the central role the aesthetic played in energising the mass mobilisations of young people, the disaffected, the middle classes, the apolitical silent majority, as well as enabling solidarities and alliances among democrats, workers, trade unions, civil rights activists and opposition parties.

Comparing the North African and Middle Eastern uprisings with protest movements such as Occupy, the authors bring to bear an anthropological and sociological approach from a variety of perspectives, illuminating the debate by drawing on a wide array of disciplinary expertise.

Key Features
- Includes over 150 colour illustrations showing how visual media is used in protest movements across the globe
- Shares perspectives from political, media, visual, economic and linguistic anthropology, and the anthropology of work, art, social organisation and social movement
- Looks at the use of social networking and new media technologies such as Twitter
Understanding the Qur’an Today
Mahmoud Hussein
Translated by David Bond

An international bestseller, Understanding the Qur’an Today offers a contemporary perspective on one of the world’s most influential texts and adds an invaluable contribution to the debate on Islam and modernity.

Paperback:
March 2013 • £10
9780863568497 • 176pp

Published in association with Saqi Books

The Construction of Belief: Reflections on the Thought of Mohammed Arkoun
Edited by Abdou Filali-Ansary & Aziz Esmail

The authoritative reference study on the work of Mohammed Arkoun, The Construction of Belief offers a comprehensive selection of critical engagements with Arkoun’s work, reflecting on his considerable influence on contemporary thinking about Islam and its ideological, philosophical and theological dimensions.

Hardback:
January 2013 • £35
9780863564246 • 216pp

Published in association with Saqi Books

Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World
Edited by Gerhard Endress

Offers the first comprehensive effort to describe and analyse the collection, classification, presentation and methodology of information in the knowledge society of medieval Islam in the disciplines of religious and legal learning, as well as the rational sciences of Hellenistic origin – philosophy, mathematical and medical sciences.

Hardback:
June 2006 • €70,80
9789004146976 • 238pp

Published in association with Brill
Rapid political, demographic, technological and cultural transformations are shaping many Muslim societies today. The series examines the processes that drive these local and global changes and the ways in which Muslim populations participate in and engage with them.

Questions pertaining to social change, development and new forms of socio-economic, political and cultural practices and differentiations in Muslims contexts are addressed. The series brings together leading specialists from a variety of disciplines to explore these critical issues.
This book critically interrogates the interplay of gender, governance and Islam across eight Muslim majority contexts and the Muslim diaspora in Europe and the US.

In the 25 years since Deniz Kandiyoti’s seminal publication of ‘Women, Islam and the State’, the universe of action and meaning surrounding the key terms of its title have been radically transformed. There has been no comprehensive attempt, to date, to revisit the original debate or to set new terms of reference. The manner in which the state and governance were conceptualised therefore requires a radical reformulation.

This book looks at key global developments that include the effects of neoliberal restructuring (and the demise of post-independence social contracts), contested and fragmented sovereignties, and the disarticulation of states enmeshed in a variety of external interventions, (armed or otherwise). The politics of gender is explored systematically in the following case studies: Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Pakistan, and diasporic communities in Europe and North America.

Key Features

• Highlights the centrality of gender politics in understanding political change and new forms of governance
• Critically discusses the transformations of the role of religion in intersecting layers of local, national and transnational governance
• Explores trajectories of failed and fragile states (such as Iraq and Afghanistan)
• Nine case studies explaining different contexts in which the relationship between gender, Islam and governance play out
Explores the influence of centres of Islamic learning in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt.

Claims abound that Saudi oil money is fuelling Salafi Islam in cultural and geographical terrains as disparate as the remote hamlets of the Swat valley in Pakistan and sprawling megacities such as Jakarta.

In a similar manner, it is often regarded as a fact that Iran and the Sunni Arab states are fighting proxy wars in foreign lands. This empirically grounded study challenges the assumptions prevalent within academic as well as policy circles about the hegemonic power of such Islamic discourses and movements to penetrate all Muslim communities and societies. Through case studies of academic institutions the volume illustrates how transmission of ideas is an extremely complex process, and the outcome of such efforts depends not just on the strategies adopted by backers of those ideologies but equally on the characteristics of the receipt communities.

In order to understand this complex interaction between global and local Islam and the plurality in outcomes, the volume focuses on the workings of three universities with global outreach, whose graduating students carry the ideas acquired during their education back to their own countries, along with, in some cases, a zeal to reform their home society.

Key Features

- Focuses on case studies of three of the most influential international centres of Islamic learning in contemporary times: Al-Azhar University in Egypt, International Islamic University of Medina in Saudi Arabia, and Al-Mustafa University in Iran
- Traces the activities and influence of graduates in their home communities to show how ideas are transmitted between locales and how this often induces adjustments of those ideas
- Takes a comparative approach with cases from North and West Africa and Southeast Asia

Masooda Bano is Associate Professor at the Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford; Keiko Sakurai is Professor at the Faculty of International Research and Education, Waseda University, Tokyo.
Established in London in 2002, the Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations aims to strengthen research and teaching about the heritages of Muslim societies as they have evolved over time, and to examine the challenges these societies face in today’s globalised world. It also seeks to create opportunities for interaction among academics, traditionally trained scholars and other professionals in an effort to deepen the understanding by Muslims and non-Muslims alike of issues affecting Muslim societies today.

This series seeks to address salient and urgent issues faced by Muslim societies as they evolve in a rapidly globalising world. It brings together the scholarship of leading specialists from various academic fields, representing a wide range of theoretical and practical perspectives.

Exploring Muslim Contexts
Series Editor: Farouk Topan

This volume explores the ways in which ethnography can create a greater understanding of Islam in particular social contexts. It does so by advancing a pluralistic use of ethnography in research about Islam in anthropology and the other social science disciplines. The contributors have used ethnography to engage with and relate to specific empirical realities in regions around the world. The aim is to show the strength of this approach, despite variations in terms of the object of analysis, the theoretical frameworks or the disciplinary traditions of the researcher. They argue that this approach, which could also be called an epistemology, allows for a more precise and complex understanding of the practices and discourses that constitute social realities constructed and perceived as ‘Islamic’ by those who live them. Furthermore, the book encourages ethnography in the study of Muslim practices that have seldom been approached in this way.

Key Features
• Counters political discourses and stereotypical media portrayals of Islam as a monolithic civilisation
• Demonstrates the benefit of using ethnography to engage with and relate to specific empirical realities
• Includes case studies on rituals and symbols in Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Britain, Pakistan, Brazil and Lebanon
• Covers veiling, students’ religious practices, charitable activities, law and scholarship in Egypt, Jordan, Singapore, Turkey and Yemen

Baudouin Dupret is Research Director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).
Paulo G. Pinto is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil.
Thomas Pierret is a Lecturer in Contemporary Islam at the University of Edinburgh.
Kathryn Spellman-Poots is an Associate Professor at the Aga Khan University’s Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations.

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www.euppublishing.com

Contemporary Islamic Law in Indonesia: Sharia and Legal Pluralism
Arskal Salim

The first ethnographic account of legal pluralism in the post-conflict and disaster situation in Aceh, Indonesia exploring the national legal system and the regional legal structure in the province.

Hardback: February 2015 • £70
9780748693337

eBook (ePub): £70 • 9781474403429

eBook (PDF): £70 • 9780748693481

Published in association with Edinburgh University Press

Genealogy and Knowledge in Muslim Societies: Understanding the Past
Edited by Sarah Bowen Savant & Helena de Felipe

Explores the generation, preservation and manipulation of genealogical knowledge that shape communal and national identities in Muslim societies.

Hardback: April 2014 • £70
9780748644971

eBook (PDF): £70 • 9780748644988

Published in association with Edinburgh University Press

Ethnographies of Islam: Ritual Performances and Everyday Practices
Edited by Baudouin Dupret, Thomas Pierret, Paulo G. Pinto & Kathryn Spellman Poots

Reflects on how ethnography allows the description, representation and analysis of the social and cultural complexity of Muslim societies in anthropology.

Paperback: September 2013 • £24.99
9780748689842

Hardback: July 2012 • £65
9780748645503

eBook (ePub): £24.99 • 9780748654796

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<td>Explores cosmopolitanism as a key concept which until recently was situated within Western self-perceptions. This volume explores it from Muslim perspectives.</td>
<td>The first political economy study to address the vital question of which models will guide development in Muslim-majority countries, as well as the closely related issue of the centrality of governance to development.</td>
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Muslim Civilisations Abstracts
Series Editor: Aptin Khanbaghi

Cities as Built and Lived Environments:
Scholarship from Muslim Contexts, 1875 to 2011
Edited by Aptin Khanbaghi

A collection of over 200 abstracts in 3 languages (Arabic, English, Turkish) of academic publications from Muslim contexts on cities.

Hardback:
October 2014 • £75
9780748696185 • 512pp

Published in association with Edinburgh University Press

Interpretations of Law and Ethics in Muslim Contexts
Edited by Aptin Khanbaghi

Features 200 abstracts in 3 languages (English, Arabic and Turkish) of scholarly publications from Muslim contexts in the fields of law and sharia.

Hardback:
April 2012 • £90
9780748645008 • 432pp

Published in association with Edinburgh University Press

Encyclopedias about Muslim Civilisations
Edited by Aptin Khanbaghi

Reference catalogue of 200 abstracts (in Arabic, English and Turkish) of encyclopedias about Muslim civilisations, both by Muslims and non-Muslims, published during the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Hardback:
September 2009 • £90
9780748639700 • 520pp

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