

History 439: Islamic History

Spring, 2017

Time: 2:25–3:15, MWF

1221 Humanities

Instructor: Michael Chamberlain

Office hours: 3:30–4:30 Wednesdays and 1:00–2:00 Fridays and pretty much any afternoon by appointment. Please email me with an approximate time of arrival.

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This course is about the formation of Islamic civilization and its historical development until the early modern era. The course is divided into three parts. In part one we examine the physical environment and human ecology of the region, long-term social and political continuities of the ancient Middle East, the foundation of Islam, and the establishment of the early Islamic empire. In part two we cover the political collapse of the empire, its replacement by regional courts, and the development of medieval Islamic political, social, and cultural institutions and practices. In part three we will examine the place of the medieval Middle East within the wider history of Eurasia and ask how Middle Eastern peoples both shaped and experienced the ever-accelerating integration of the Old World. As we shall see, it was these developments that made the expansion of Europe within it not only possible but conceivable.

The course starts where all historical inquiry begins: with how the peoples we are studying have adapted to their physical environments. This will require giving some consideration to the environment itself, both its distinctive features and how it might be compared to the environmental settings of the other agrarian civilizations of the pre-modern past. We will then examine how the region's peoples adapted to it as farmers, peasants, nomads, and city-dwellers, again trying to understand context through comparison. From there we move to something that appeared in the region before anywhere else, and that like the environment gave it its historical unity: the agrarian empire. We will then be in a position to approach a set of recorded history's greatest developments: the appearance of Islam, the Arab conquests, and the formation of an Islamic empire and Islamic civilization. The remainder of the course will be devoted to an examination of Islamic civilization as it developed in the aftermath of the breakup of the early Islamic empire. In this section we will give considerable attention to institutions that survived until the early-modern period and some, in altered form, to recent times. Please note that this is not a course that puts religion at the center, though of course we will be studying the central ideas and practices of Islam throughout. Think of it instead as an

attempt to understand how environment, economy, politics, culture, social life, and religion interacted over time to produce and sustain a civilization.

A good part of the course is devoted to the historical diversity of Muslim religious beliefs and practices. Religion is a particularly sensitive issue of course so I like to bring it up right away. Historians cannot define what authentic Islam is and is not, nor can we sort out proper from heretical Muslims. The historian's rule – we can't function otherwise – is that people who say they are Muslim are to be treated as such. This can make discussion uncomfortable, even distasteful. Just remember: the practice of history is something of a thought-experiment, its fundamental attitude skepticism rather than faith. It is interested in what particular people believed at particular moments in particular contexts. On its own the discipline is incapable of proving or disproving any of the big truths and many of the smaller ones. This approach can all too easily be perceived as offensive, but let me assure you that it is not intended to be so, nor is there any point in it beyond extending this thought-experiment to all aspects of life. We will also give some attention to a revisionist school of thought called "source-criticism" that rejects some or all of the accounts of early Islamic history, including the life of the Prophet, written down by the canonical early Muslim scholars. These accounts are not only central to how Muslims today in all their variety understand their pasts; they are also necessary to Islamic law, ethics, and religious doctrines. Please keep an open mind during this discussion: I certainly have and will continue to do so until someone makes a definitive argument. What you can expect from me is a dispassionate account of the debate rather than a grand new truth. Finally, words such as "cult" and "sectarianism" are used in their neutral scholarly senses; they have here none of the connotations of the popular or journalistic uses of the terms.

Having given you the usual due-diligence boilerplate let me suggest that many of you will find this subject amazing. I certainly do. The story we will be following is about the first world civilization, the sole pre-modern example of a global culture. The period is also one that is well known to Muslims throughout the world and to everyone in the Middle East, so much so that it is not just history but culture, part of the lived experience of many of the planet's peoples. I hope that the course will give you a sense of a past that to many people is quite vivid and very much in mind.

Grading is based on a map quiz (10%), mid-term (30%), paper (30%) and final (30%). All work must be completed on time. If you want an A be prepared to put a consistently high level of effort into the course. I recognize that the subject matter of this course is difficult and unfamiliar to most of you. If you do the work you should get a B, although an A will be difficult to obtain without dedication. A = excellent work in all respects. B = work that is excellent in parts and faulty in others or that is of a generally good quality. C = work that

while acceptable lacks clarity, organization, or evidence of sustained research. If you are doing D work I hope you will drop the course to spare me the pain of giving and you the humiliation of receiving a D or worse. In general I will not give grades such as AB or BC on tests or papers, and will use these grades only to average out grades. You and I both should be able to discern the difference between an A and a B paper. I am always happy to discuss a grade and willing to argue with you over one. If you think a grade should be changed come to my office with a written argument and we will make an appointment to discuss your case in depth.

I regret to inform you that all classes are mandatory. If for some reason you can't attend class on a particular day please send me an email in advance. We can then help you get up to speed on what you missed. If for some reason you have to miss a few classes in a row do let me know as soon as possible so I can record lectures and otherwise help you make up for lost time. We might even be able to get lecture materials to you while you are out of town or indisposed. If a serious problem comes up, such as an injury or illness, get in touch before making any decisions.

McBurney students are most welcome in this course – I've been working with the center recently, have nothing but admiration for them, and am committed to making this course as accessible to you as it is to any other student. The one thing I ask is that you inform me as soon as possible what we can do to that end and to remind me before every assignment and exam.

A note on Wikipedia: I realize that many of you have come to rely on it. On some subjects the writers are fairly reliable, no doubt. But for Islamic history it is terrible: full of errors, replete with factional points of view of which the editors are unaware, and an arena for the endless struggle to define what True Islam is and who the heretics are. The editors must be aware of the problem, but scholars of the Islamic world gave up on the site so long ago that no one who knows anything would ever write for them. In recent years, most students who failed their midterms admitted to relying on Wikipedia for definitions. Plagiarism cases have often – and easily – been detected through their reliance on it, easily detected these days. To conclude with a warning: it is easy to discern when students have relied on Wikipedia for an exam or a paper, at which point all confidence in them is lost. This paragraph, by the way, is taken from the syllabi of the last two years, and in each of them students flunked the midterm by relying on Wikipedia at the last minute. Please do everything you can to break this unfortunate streak.

I should warn you that the usual scams, dodges, last-second stratagems, and trusty expedients have rarely worked for this course. Every year the course dismays students who've figured out some high-grade/ minimum-effort strategy in other courses. Fair warning: it probably won't work here. The field of

medieval Islamic history is not so well established as to permit scanning a bluffer's guide before an exam. Not only does such a book not exist, the field has yet to benefit from a comprehensive textbook. The only way to acquire a decent knowledge of the field is pull together disparate materials from textbooks, translated primary sources, blog discussions, and lecture. The only way to organize the material and be ready for the next topic is to keep up, and not just keep up but synthesize the lectures and the readings at every turn. Finally, take care with resources on the web. Wikipedia is discussed above. Our learn@uw page has a list of relatively reliable links, but note the word "relatively": be skeptical at every turn and confirm everything elsewhere.

Important Dates:

- Map Quiz: Friday, Feb 17
- Midterm: Wednesday, March 15, tentatively
- Spring recess: Mar 18-Mar 26
- Paper due: Wed, April 19
- Last class day: May 4
- Final: May 7.

Textbooks:

Required, and should be available used and cheap through Amazon and other retailers. Please note that a number of the required readings are available on learn@uw.

Ahmed Ali, Al-Qur'ân: a Contemporary Translation (Princeton, 1984). It is a good thing to own a reliable translation of the Qur'an, which this is. If you are short of cash there are translations on the web aplenty. Be sure you do some research and check with me to ensure they are well-regarded.

Berkey, Jonathan, The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800 (Cambridge, 2002).

Kennedy, Hugh, The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates (Harlow, UK, 2004)

You will notice that for the first few weeks the readings are relatively sparse. I have found that this helps students get their bearings in relatively unfamiliar territory, to master the geography (this takes a lot of work), and to give you a chance to explore the immense amount of material available on learn@UW. Another reason is that understanding the context of the formation

of Islam, the early Islamic empire, and Islamic civilization requires us to go into other fields such as geography, archeology, and ancient history. These fields have their own preoccupations and questions, little of which we want to get into. If you find yourself particularly interested in any of these issues there are readings on learn@uw that will allow you to explore them in depth, just ask and I'll make specific recommendations.

Also note that other required readings, maps, various charts and outlines, most of the sources for the paper topics, and other materials are available on the course learn@uw page. There is an enormous and to some people overwhelming amount of material on learn@uw, so if you try to read all the suggested readings in other courses you will quickly find yourself overwhelmed in this one. There are two things you can do if you find yourself in that position: first, just ask; and second, check out the Recommended Readings and look for something that deals with the period we are covering.

Topics and sources for your papers.

Suggested paper topics with readings can be found below. If you wish to develop a topic on your own please consult with me early and often. The first thing to do is to define a topic and turn it into a question, then set out a plan for addressing it. Once you've done so come up with a list of sources and make an appointment to talk to me about the project. I do not want to discourage any of you from developing your own topics but there are many interesting questions for which there are neither primary sources nor secondary scholarship. So please consult with me and keep me up to date regularly on your project.

Course Outline and Reading List:

First day: Introduction to the course: content, expectations, a chance to take care of registration problems after the preliminaries are done.

- I. Human Geography and the Rise of the Empire in the Ancient Middle East.
How did the distinctive modes of human adaptation to the environment in the Arid Zone lead to region's distinctive mode of political organization: the cosmopolitan empire?

- Physical and human geography of the Middle East
- Physical and human geography, continued
- Empires and imperial cultures from Sumeria to Late Antiquity.
- The Middle East and Arabia in Late Antiquity.

Reading (full references are in the resources section below).

Ibn Khaldun, selections on learn@uw

Robert Irwin, "The Pagan Poets." (learn@uw)

National Geographic short piece on recent discovery of monumental architecture pre-dating agriculture

As books arrive:

Berkey, J., The Formation of Islam, pp. 3–52.

Kennedy, The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, 1–14.

Recommended though definitely not required:

"al-Arab," art., Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd. Ed.

Bagnall, Roger S., Egypt in Late Antiquity.

Brown, P., The World of Late Antiquity, pp. 11–21; 96–112; 160–171.

Fowden, Garth, Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity, 12–36, 138–75.

Hodgson, M.G.S., The Venture of Islam, vol 1, introduction (learn@uw).

McNeill, W. M., The Rise of the West, pp. 64–84; 110–144.

Shahid, I., "Pre-Islamic Arabia," in The Cambridge History of Islam, vol. I.

Shahid, I., Rome and the Arabs.

Sherratt, A., articles on early agriculture and early history on learn@uw).

Hoyland, R.G., Arabia and the Arabs from the Bronze age to the Coming of Islam.

II. The Early Islamic State and the Formation of Islam: how did ad hoc responses to problems arising in a rapidly expanding state result in enduring institutions?

—The "source-criticism" debate and the sources for early Islamic history; the career of the Prophet I: prophecy and community in a "tribal" society.

—The career of the Prophet II: The formation of the early Islamic state

—The formation of the Caliphate and the Ridda Wars

—The Arab Conquests

—The consolidation of the Caliphate under `Umar and the early conquest state; relations with conquered peoples

—Continuing consolidation of caliphal authority under `Uthman; conflicts among the Arabs; the political center of gravity shifting from Medina to the garrisons

—The murder of `Uthman and the first fitna; conflict between `Ali and Mu`awiya and their followers

—The first fitna as the foundation myth of Islamic sectarianism; critique of the standard account of the "Sunni-Shi`ite split".

Readings (in rough order):

Ibn Ishaq, Biography of the Prophet, selections (learn@uw)
Berkey, J., The Formation of Islam, pp. 57–75.
Kennedy, The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, 15–81.
Donner, F., “The Arab Conquests.” (learn@uw).
Tabari, selections from the conquest of Jerusalem to Ziyad ibn Abihi (learn@uw)
Tabari on Kharijites

Recommended readings on the Prophet and the Qur’an:

Bell, R., Introduction to the Quran.
Crone, P., Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam (learn@uw).
Gabrieli, F., Muhammad and the Conquests of Islam, pp. 103–104, 143, 184.
Gibb, H. A. R., The Arab Conquest of Central Asia.
Grabar, O., The Formation of Islamic Art. (learn@uw)
Hawting, G.R., The ideal of Idolatry and the Formation of Islam: from Polemic to History (Cambridge, 1999).
Hawting, G.R., Approaches to the Qur’an (London, 1993).
Hodgson, M. G. S., The Venture of Islam, I, pp. 145–186 (learn@uw).
Ibn Hisham, The Life of Muhammad.
Madelung, W., The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate.
Morony, M., Iraq after the Muslim Conquest (learn@uw).
Rodinson, M., Muhammad.
Watt, W. M., Muhammad at Mecca (learn@uw).
Watt, W. M., Muhammad at Medina (learn@uw).
Watt, W. M., Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman (learn@uw).

III. From “Conquest State” to Arab dynasty: how did the Arabs selectively adopt aspects of the institutions and cultures of the conquered peoples to preserve the unity of the umma and the authority of the caliphate?

—Mu`awiya and the early Umayyad (or Sufyanid) Caliphate; relations between Damascus and the turbulent garrisons of Iraq. Dynastic politics and the first steps toward an imperial form of political organization

—The Second Fitna, the reestablishment of Umayyad (now “Marwanid”) authority under `Abd al-Malik; centralization and systemization of a courtly but not yet fully imperial caliphal state. The beginnings of a specifically Shi`i attitude towards politics and history

Readings:

Kennedy, The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, pp. 82–122.

"Umayyads, Selections." (learn@uw).

Recommended readings on the Umayyad Caliphate:

Dennet, D. B., Conversion and the Poll-Tax in Early Islam.

Hawting, R., The First Dynasty of Islam, pp. 21–71.

Juynboll, G. H. A., Studies on the First Century of Islamic Society

Sharon, M., Black Banners from the East

Veccia Vaglieri, L., "The Patriarchal and Umayyad Caliphates," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1, pp. 57–103.

Wellhausen, J., *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*.

Wellhausen, J., *The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam* .

IV. From Arab dynasty to Islamic Empire: to what problems was the universal cosmopolitan agrarian empire a solution? To what extent can the Abbasid empire be seen as the culmination of tendencies towards universal empire originating in early imperial Iraq, Sistan, and Egypt?

—Tensions between Arabs and non-Arab Muslims, between elites and the
`Arabs of the garrisons, and anti-Umayyad movements in the 720's—740's;
“`Alid loyalism”

—The `Abbasid revolt or da`wa

—The `Abbasid Caliphate, 750–820.

—Imperial culture and court life, architecture, the impact of Hellenistic learning,
adab

—Cult, ritual, and basic doctrines of Islam

—The formation of Islamic Law

—Shi`ism through the `Abbasid Caliphate.

—Collapse of the `Abbasid Empire and the formation of successor states

—Discussion, Review

Reading (in rough order):

Berkey, J., The Formation of Islam, pp. 76–158.

Kennedy, The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, pp. 123–197.

Translations of `Abbasid-period sources on learn@uw.

Irwin, selections on learn@uw

Recommended:

`Abbasids:

Bowen, H., The Life and Times of `Ali Ibn Isa.

Crone, P., Slaves on Horseback (learn@uw).
Donner, F., Narratives of Islamic Origins (learn@uw)
Kennedy, H., The Early `Abbasid Caliphate: a Political History.
Lapidus, I. M., "The Evolution of Muslim Urban Society."
Lassner, J., The Shaping of `Abbasid Rule.
Lassner, J., The Topography of Baghdad in the Early Middle Ages.
Melchert, C., The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law, 9th and 10th Centuries
Schacht, J., The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence.
Zaman, M.Q., Religion and Politics under the Early `Abbasids: the Emergence of the Proto-Sunni Elite

V. Successor States: Collapse of Empire and the formation of successor states in the early middle period: why was it only in the aftermath of Abbasid political collapse that the majority of Middle Eastern peoples began to convert to Islam? Why were the consequences of Abbasid collapse so different from those following the fragmentation of the Roman Empire?

—Successor states and regional courts, 945–1092, the Fatimid and Buyid Shi`i Dynasties among others, and the "Early Middle Period"

—The emergence of local inflections of a universal Islamic culture; "golden ages" from Egypt to Iran; the period of mass conversion to Islam. The survival of the Caliphate and its changed, even transformed, roles and self-presentation.

Readings:

Kennedy, The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, pp. 198–247, 307–342.
Mottahedeh, R., Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society, selections on learn@uw

Recommended:

Bosworth, C. E., Sistan under the Arabs: from the Arab Conquest to the Rise of the Saffarids.

Bosworth, C. E., The Ghaznavids.

Bulliet, R., The Patricians of Nishapur (learn@uw)

Daftary, The Isma`ilis: Their History and Doctrines.

Saunders, P., "The Fatimid State, 969–1171" (learn@uw)

VI. The Middle Period and the accelerating integration of the old world: how did a diverse collection of ephemeral states, mainly of foreign origin, keeping

themselves at a disinterested remove from their subjects, nonetheless develop a set of institutions that survived into the early modern period? How did a period that appears to our eyes politically chaotic nonetheless begin a process of economic, intellectual, scientific, and technological fusion that was to result in the modern world?

- The Saljuqs (Saljuks, Seljuks) and the movements of Turkic peoples
- The ephemerality of the “Saljuq Empire” and the staying power of its institutions: “the military patronage state”
- The uses of waqf, the `ulama, and the social order, education and law
- Sufism and sufis from the `Abbasids through the Middle Period
- Crusades and the Ayyubid Dynasty
- The Mongol invasions and the integration of Eurasia
- The high medieval Mediterranean: how divided was it between Muslim and Christian shores?
- Cities and urban life: how were cities governed? How did western observers and scholars get it so wrong?
- The rise of the “Gunpowder Empires” and the evanescence of pastoralist military power. New possibilities for universal empire.
- Implications, preparation, and review for the take-home final.

Reading: (Note that the reading is light in this part of the course. The reason is not to give you a chance to relax but to allow you to devote your energies to your papers. Attendance at lecture will be essential to success on the final).

Berkey, J., The Formation of Islam, pp. 159–269.

Kennedy, The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates, 343–345

Chamberlain, M., “Military Patronage States and the Political Economy of the Frontier, 1000–1250” (learn@uw)

Chamberlain, M., “The Crusader Era and the Ayyubid Dynasty” (learn@uw).

Irwin, selections on learn@uw.

Highly recommended: how did a cultivated Arab view Europeans in the era when the latter were beginning to make their presence known? Usamah Ibn Munqidh, An Arab–Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades (learn@uw)

Recommended:

Abu Lughod, J., Cairo: 1000 Years of the City Victorious.

Bagley, F. R. C., al-Ghazali's Book of Counsel for Kings.

Berkey, J., *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education*.
 Bulliet, R., *Islam: The View from the Edge*
 The Cambridge History of Islamic Egypt
 The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 4
 Chamberlain, M., *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus*
 Coulson, N. J., *A History of Islamic Law*.
 Coulson, N. J., *Conflicts and Tensions in Islamic Jurisprudence*.
 Darke, H., *Nizam al-Mulk's Book of Government*.
 Ephrat, Daphna, *A Learned Society in Transition: The Sunni Ulama of Eleventh-Century Baghdad*
 Gibb, H. A. R., "Constitutional Organization."
 Goldziher, I., *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*.
 Goldziher, I., *Muslim Studies*, 2 vols.
 Humphreys, R.S., *From Saladin to the Mongols: the Ayyubids of Damascus*
 Hillenbrand, Carole, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*.
 Hodgson, M. G. S., *The Order of Assassins*.
 Kafardar, C., *Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State*.
 Lambton, A. K. S., *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government*.
 Lapidus, I., *Middle Eastern Cities*.
 Morgan, D., *The Mongols*.
 Morgan, D., *Medieval Persia, 1040-1797*.
 Petry, C., *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages*
 Schacht, J., *Introduction to Islamic Law*.

Paper Topics:

Papers are due April 19.

Most sources for the paper can be found on learn@uw.

1. "The career of the prophet Muhammad can only be understood as a response to the social and economic transformation of Mecca caused by changing patterns of world trade." Comment.

Crone, P., Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam (Princeton, 1987).

Shaban, M. A., Islamic History: a New Interpretation, vol. 1 (London, 1971).

Watt, W. M., Muhammad at Mecca. (Oxford, 1953).

2. Ibn Khaldun was the first scholar to suggest that interactions among pastoralists, city people, and agriculturalists shaped the central dynamic in Middle Eastern state formation, in other words that political history cannot be understood without reference to human ecology. How did Ibn Khaldun try to explain the rise, fall, and decline of dynasties? How have his ideas shaped the approaches of modern historians?

Ibn Khaldun, al-Muqaddima, F. Rosenthal trans. (various editions since 1958, most available online).

Hodgson, M. G. S., The Venture of Islam, vols 1 and 2 (Chicago, 1977).

Chamberlain, M., "Military Patronage States and the Political Economy of the Frontier, 1000–1255", in Y. Choueiri ed., Blackwell Companion to the History of the Middle East (Oxford, 2005), pp. 135–154.

3. "The Arab conquests wrought a revolutionary transformation of the social, political, cultural, and economic structures of the ancient Middle East." Do you agree or disagree?

Morony, M., Iraq after the Muslim Conquests (Princeton, 1983).

Grabar, O., The Formation of Islamic Art (New Haven, 1973).

Fowden, Garth, Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity (Princeton, 1993),

4. "As the Arabs conquered the settled peoples of the Middle East, they were in turn conquered by them." Comment.

Morony, M., Iraq after the Muslim Conquest (Princeton, 1983).

Grabar, O., The Formation of Islamic Art. (New Haven, 1973).

Dennett, D. B., Conversion and the Poll-Tax in Early Islam. (Cambridge, MA, 1950).

5. How did the military elites who dominated the Middle East in the Middle Period exploit the societies they ruled? Were states administered by formal bureaucratic structures and hierarchies? If not, what accounts for the success of ruling groups in administering large and complex societies over time?

Lapidus, I., Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, MA, 1967).

Mottahedeh, R., Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society (Princeton, 1980).

Chamberlain, M., Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350 (Cambridge, UK, 1994).

6. "Medieval Muslim cities were not governed by city councils or bureaucratic administrations. Civilian elites had none of the landholdings, charters, or military training that guaranteed the autonomy of urban notables elsewhere. Artisans and craftsmen were without guilds or trade organizations to defend their interests." How did these societies hold together as complex human communities?

Lapidus, I., Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, MA, 1967).

Mottahedeh, Roy, Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society (Princeton, 1980)

Chamberlain, Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350 (Cambridge, UK, 1994)

8. To what extent was the Jewish community of Cairo culturally, politically, and economically integrated into the larger society of Egypt? To what extent can the well-documented social and economic life of this community be taken as representative of Egyptian society at large.

Goitein, S. D., A Mediterranean Society: the Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza, 4 vols and index., (Berkeley, 1967-78). Available as an ACLS e-text through Memorial

Cohen, Mark, Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages (Princeton, 1994)

9. Military Slavery: The phenomenon of military slavery became nearly universal from Egypt to Central Asia in the medieval period. Many Europeans were shocked at the thought that the roles held by kings, nobility, and aristocracy were held by soldiers of such humble beginnings. What accounted for this phenomenon? Why did it become so widespread? Is it possible to speak of a "classic mamluk system" as some scholars have?

Ayalon, D., Eunuchs, Caliphs, and Sultans
Levanoni, Pipes,

10. Eunuchs: In the medieval Islamic world eunuchs played many different roles, some of them politic and and military, and could enjoy high status. Why did important institutions employ eunuchs?

Marmon, Eunuchs and sacred boundaries
Ayalon, Eunuchs, Caliphhs, and Sultans

Resources in English:

Library and Research Resources: HYPERLINK <http://www.library.wisc.edu/guides/MidEast> w ww.libra ry.wisc.edu/guides/MidEast
Middle East Studies Program: www.mesp.wisc.edu

I. General:

Encyclopedia of Islam. The major reference work for the field. Thousands of entries with bibliographies. The first edition, 4 vols and supplement, Leiden 1913-1942, is complete but dated. The second edition, Leiden, published beginning in 1954-, has finally neared completion. Entries are alphabetical, most under their Arabic, Turkish, or Persian word, so if you are looking for Cairo you will be directed to al-Qahira. Ignore the Arabic definite article al-.

Cahen, C., Sauvaget's Introduction to the History of the Muslim East A